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**TEACHING EXPERIENCE AND INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP IN VARIED
SCHOOL SETTINGS**

A Dissertation in

Educational Leadership

by

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Abstract

The role of the public school principal has evolved over the years, from the position of middle manager, to a political, transformative change agent. Principals shape the school environment for teaching and learning towards vibrant learning communities where faculty and staff collaborate to help every student. The challenge of shaping the environment requires a dynamic leader who first understands teaching and learning, yet also grasps and values relationships with colleagues. The purpose of this study is to examine how the professional career path of school leaders, specifically principals, can impact their daily practice as instructional leaders, while carrying-out the administrative and managerial aspects of their role. The following questions guided this study: (1) What is the relationship between principals' prior teaching experiences and their development and practice as an instructional leader? (2) How does an aspiring principal's teaching experience impact their pathway into the principalship? (3) In primary and secondary schools in varied settings, what role does the principal have in identifying building-wide instructional goals? This inquiry relies on the methodology of a qualitative case study analysis. Data was collected through interviewing teachers with various levels of experience, observing professional learning sessions and analyzing documents relating to professional development. The conceptual framework stems from the ASA Framework, to which I have applied additional concepts: sponsored mobility, boundary spanners, instructional leadership and shared leadership. Findings from this study suggest that teachers and administrators both value classroom experience as an important quality for instructional leaders. Teachers in particular value instructional leaders to possess classroom experience within the contextual setting that they are supervising. Though teaching experience is an important quality for potential candidates pursuing careers in school administration, the most important factor that helped them to attain administrative positions was

sponsorship from mentors within the school in which they worked. In addition, both teachers and administrators who participated in this inquiry seemed to reveal affinity bias when discussing the qualities that they valued for an instructional leader to have. This study contributes to research, and informs policymakers and practitioners by distinguishing the importance of school leaders having specific experiences that impact the ways in which they provide instructional leadership within specific educational contexts.

Keywords: teaching experience, instructional leadership, principals, teachers, shared leadership.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Even though teaching and administering today are viewed as separate jobs, since the origin of public schooling both occupations have shared dominant images and core roles that merge the two positions into one de facto career, that of educator (Cuban, 1988, p. 219). As these educators leave the ranks of the faculty for jobs in administration, their classroom experiences play a big factor in determining the kind of principal that they could become. What does it mean to be a good principal today? According to the 2016 Washington state middle school principal of the year, “You can’t get anywhere without everybody playing a role” (Cornwell, 2016). While being an effective facilitator of the staff and faculty as a whole is important, the school must always operate with the goal of student achievement as the primary objective. The 2016 Virginia state principal of the year, Brandon Davis, expands on this notion, every moment should be spent helping students achieve at the next level, making sure that they are progressing at all times (Teale, 2016). By focusing on continual student achievement, Principal Davis’s school has been able to repeatedly meet its state and federal mandated benchmarks and students have been better prepared for what happens after high school (Teale, 2016). Student achievement is something that successful teachers and principals must understand in order to flourish in their careers as educators (Schleicher, 2012). The notion that teachers and administrators share the same de facto career of an educator is certainly valid because student achievement occurs within individual classrooms and the primary goal of both teachers and principals is to help students achieve (Cuban, 1988).

Significance

The role of the principal has evolved over the years, from the position of middle manager, to a political, transformative change agent (Bolman & Deal, 2003; Button, 1966; Tschannen-Moran, 2004). Principals shape the environment for teaching and learning, with the most effective principals creating the vibrant learning communities where faculty and staff collaborate to help every student (NEA, 2008). The challenge of shaping this environment calls upon a dynamic leader who first understands teaching and learning, yet also understands and values relationships with colleagues. With a sharpened grasp on the experiences that help shape these qualities in a leader, more effective leaders can be selected by practitioners during the hiring process (Lund, 1977). Additionally, through this increased level of understanding, researchers and policymakers can better shape principal preparation programs, to produce more effective, aspiring school leaders who are better equipped to create these communities while fostering a culture of collaboration. Effective school leaders are able to motivate teachers to improve upon the quality of instruction (Schleicher, 2012). Long-term, sustainable school improvement depends largely on the faculty assuming increased levels of ownership in their school (Hallinger, 2003).

While school principals have many different roles, the primary purpose of the schools that they lead is fostering student achievement (Cuban, 1988; Hallinger, 2005; Hattie, 2005; Marks & Printy, 2003). Recent studies have found that school leadership does have an effect on student achievement (Marks & Printy, 2003; Ross & Gray, 2006; Waters et al., 2003; Witziers et al., 2003) in elementary, middle and high school settings (Marks & Printy, 2003). Significant correlations between leadership and achievement have been discovered in studies dating back to

the 1970s (Brookover et al., 1978; Waters et al., 2003). As instructional leadership has evolved into more of a shared model, integrated leadership, involving both administrators and teachers in leadership roles on educational matters has led to higher student achievement in schools (Marks, 2003). With the nature of leadership changing, the attributes of effective principals have also changed (Button, 1966; Hallinger, 2003; Leithwood, 1994) for example, before principals were expected to be managerial leaders but they have since taken on an increased role as instructional leaders.

Rationale

With an emphasis on student achievement within our schools (Cuban, 1988), the impact of school leadership on achievement is important to understand and ultimately school leaders are charged with helping the students within their schools achieve. The purpose of this study is to clarify how the background of school leaders can impact their role and attributes as instructional leaders. While there is a significant body of scholarship that explains the qualities of leaders who are successful in schools (Day et al., 2016; Leithwood et al., 2008), less empirical work exists that explores the particular classroom and professional experiences that help to foster these qualities within individuals. This should be explored further, to gain understanding of the role experience plays in the way a person is a good fit for the demands of a job. Candidates are compatible with jobs when their knowledge, skills, abilities and other attributes are compatible with what the job requires and their needs and desires commiserating with what the job provides (Ballout, 2007; Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). Optimal candidates, by reviewing their prior achievements to understand their professional competencies, can be selected in future leadership searches. Therefore, the following research questions guide the analysis of this study: (1) What is the relationship between principals' prior teaching experiences and their development and

practice as an instructional leader? (2) How does an aspiring principal's teaching experience impact their pathway into the principalship? (3) In primary and secondary schools in varied settings, what role does the principal have in identifying building-wide instructional goals?

School principals typically ascend from the ranks of teachers, often from within the same school districts in which they teach (DeAngelis & O'Connor, 2012; Marshall, 1985; Myung et al., 2011; Teran & Licata, 1986), but scholars have not typically explored the particular characteristics of the teaching experiences of principals selected, such as the amount of time that they taught, or the grade levels or subjects that they taught. However, a recurring theme in the literature is the role that sponsorship plays in principal selection (Marshall, 1985; Myung et al., 2011). For example, good candidates that have encouragement and support from their own administrative leaders tend to transition into administrative jobs at a higher rate (Marshall, 1985; Myung et al., 2011). A gap exists, as there is limited empirical work that examines *how* teaching experience can play a role in the selection of teachers for sponsorship. Understanding this relationship, between teaching experience and hiring decisions could help us understand the trends that exist in the hiring of school leaders. With this knowledge, schools could improve upon the selection process, which could lead to the hiring of more qualified candidates. High performing and dramatically improving schools are led by strong leaders, who are recruited based on criteria that meet the district's goals of improving teaching, learning and school performance (Clifford, 2010; Masumoto & Brown-Welty, 2009; Wilson, 2011).

In the following sections, I will examine the scholarly literature to explore the relationship between the principals and their teaching experience, and how it can help or hinder them while serving in a leadership capacity. While findings from the empirical scholarship consistently demonstrate that instructional leadership is essential in leading a school effectively

(Button, 1966; Hallinger, 2005; Waters et al., 2003), the perceptions behind what is effective instructional leadership are constantly changing (Blasé & Blasé, 2000; Clifford, 2010; Hallinger, 2003; Leithwood, 1994). Thus to better understand the current ideas behind what is perceived to be good instructional leadership and what this looks like in practice, I will review the following research strands in this literature review: (1) the pathway to the principalship, (2) the impact of teaching experience on the selection and leadership of school principals, (3) the role of the principal as a school leader and the (4) specific role of the principal as an instructional leader. Through the exploration of these factors, a better understanding can be ascertained of the experiences that can better compose future instructional leaders, and the current role that principals have as instructional leaders.

A qualitative approach is taken in this study to investigate how teaching experience impacts instructional leadership approaches of school leaders in various settings. The study explores several different schools within a district, using a collective case study approach (Stake, 1995), with six different schools within the district serving as separate cases. In addition to the schools, the district central office is also treated as a separate case. The teachers and administrators interviewed in the study served as embedded units of analysis. The ASA framework, which asserts that individuals within an organization have a large influence on the culture of the organization (Schneider, 1987) is utilized within the study as a lens to analyze the data. This framework has been used in studying group dynamics in different work places (Halfhill, et al, 2008) including education (De Cooman, et al, 2007). These units of analysis were compared with one another, as a way to better understand the contrasting styles and interpretation of instructional leadership among the various cases within the inquiry.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Research Strands

In this literature review I examine four strands of scholarly research, including; (1) the pathway to the principalship, (2) the impact of teaching experience on the selection and leadership of school principals, (3) the role of the principal as a school leader and (4) the specific role of the principal as an instructional leader. Through this literature review I examined the pathway to the principalship, dating back to the 1950s when principals were first viewed as administrative scientists (Button, 1966). Understanding this pathway helps to clarify the course that aspiring candidates have taken to the principalship over the last sixty years. I further examined the impact that particular teaching experience has on aspiring principals. In addition, I reviewed the scholarly research on how teaching experience can impact the hiring process of aspiring principals. As the role of the principal is constantly evolving, I examined the literature on school leadership that explores notions of the principalship dating back to the 19th century (Button, 1966). This gave the study a firm historical base upon which to understand the evolution of the duties of school leadership. I examined literature on instructional leadership, and how this has evolved conceptually over the years, with particular attention given to the contemporary literature theorizing the current model of instructional leadership. By understanding the current idea of what an effective instructional leader is, we can better understand the kinds of qualities that can culminate in exceptional practice as an effective instructional leader. Following the review of the empirical research, I introduce my conceptual framework, Attraction-Selection

Attrition Theory, (Schneider, 1987) and its related scholarship. I used this framework to analyze data I gathered and to better understand how instructional leadership is perceived in different school settings along with how it relates to teaching experience.

Background

The pathway to the principalship in public schools in the United States has been dominated by males over the years, particularly in the 1960s (Baker et al., 2010; Newtown et al., 2003; Pirouzina, 2013; Rosenberger, 1960). Individuals typically rise through the ranks of the districts in which they work (DeAngelis & O'Connor, 2012; Teran & Lacata, 1986). Salary is a major motivator for teachers who pursue jobs as administrators (Cooley & Shen, 2000). Recent literature suggests that applicants possess a wide range of skills including leadership skills, decision making skills, and political skills (Cruzeiro & Bone, 2009; Klein, 2002; Winton & Pollock, 2013).

The empirical work that examines the impact of teaching experience on the selection and performance of school leaders is limited. Selected teachers tend to be sponsored and tapped by their building administrators (Marshall, 1985; Myung et al., 2011). Female principal applicants tend to be younger, with less teaching experience (Marczynski & Gates, 2013). Teaching experience has helped principals identify good teaching in their building, understanding it through their own classroom experience (Weldy, 1979). Teaching experience is also a factor that encourages aspiring administrators to advocate for teacher creativity in the schools that they will lead (Clayburn et al., 2012).

While scholars explore and explain the changing role of school leadership in their research work, there is little emphasis throughout the work, beyond talking about how school leaders were formally teachers (Jenkins, 1972; Marczynski & Gates, 2013; Myung et al., 2011;

Stevenson, 2000; Teran & Licata, 1986) on the linking of teaching experience to school leadership practices. The role of school leader has evolved from its origin, as a head teacher to a bureaucratic middle manager (Button, 1966), to a change agent (Harris & Jones, 2018; Leithwood et al., 2008). The recent trends show that effective leadership has shifted from being unilateral to distributed (Gronn, 2002; Spillane et al., 2001, 2004). Significant correlations also exist between leadership and student achievement (Branch et al., 2013; Waters et al., 2003).

Recent scholarship increasingly emphasizes the role of the principal as an instructional leader (Cuban, 1988; Grissom & Loeb, 2011; Hallinger, 2005; Hattie, 2005; Marks & Printy, 2003). The first books written about the principalship describe principals as being bureaucrats and instructional leaders (Cuban, 1988). As the United States became increasingly industrialized, the principalship would become increasingly focused on scientific management (Cuban, 1988). In the 1970s the principal was thought to carry out instructional leadership as strong directives focused on academic outcomes (Hallinger, 2005). This leadership model would evolve through the 1980s into a shared instructional leadership role, involving teachers to take on additional instructional leadership responsibilities (Marks & Printy, 2003).

Despite robust scholarship in each of these areas research, limited empirical work has explored how they are linked. Some scholarship explains how teaching experience could play a role in both the hiring and influence of a principal (Myung et al., 2011; DeAngelis & O'Connor, 2012), however the specifics of this relationship are not explored. Several studies discuss the years of experience and the sponsorship of teachers by their supervisors (DeAngelis & O'Connor, 2012; Marshall, 1985; Myung et al., 2011), but fall short in explaining what kinds of specific experiences can influence hiring and practice (DeAngelis & O'Connor, 2012; Marshall, 1985; Myung et al., 2011). This literature describes the role of school leaders and the changing

context of instructional leadership in great detail, but fails to link the ways in which the teaching experiences of principals are connected to their leadership effectiveness (Cuban, 1988; Marks & Printy, 2003). Upon reflection on these literature strands, wide gaps exist between the research questions and the prior research and scholarly work.

The Path to the Principalship

Historical Path to the Principalship

In a chronological exploration of literature on the pathway to the principalship, we begin in the 1960s, when little was written on this topic to present-day. Literature from the 1960s focuses on the development of management and administrative skills as being essential for an aspiring principal, who is characterized as male (Rosenberger, 1960). Scholarship from the 1970s was more leadership-development oriented, exploring the need to improve, prepare and select more qualified candidates (Barrilleaux, 1972; Bridges & Baehr, 1971). While the role of social networks is continually explored in the 1980s, the desire for principal candidates to be instructional leaders is emphasized (Cuban, 1988; Ploghoft & Perkins, 1988). Principal hiring practices were debated in the 1990s with a call for more internship experiences in the training programs of principal candidates (Maha, 1993). The dominant theme of the most contemporary scholarship calls upon principal candidates to have a full complement of leadership skills that stretch beyond instructional leadership (Cruzeiro & Boone, 2009; Hess, 2003; Winton & Pollock, 2013).

Aspiring principals of the 1960s had different conceptions of leadership. While these differences existed among both accepted and unsuccessful candidates searching for leadership positions, accepted candidates tended to have a more homogeneous understanding of leadership,

and that ideally it is a moderate interpretation of how leaders should conduct themselves (Arkoff & Shears, 1961). Leadership references tend to be predominately made towards men in literature from this time period (Rosenberger, 1960). While little emphasis is put on instructional leadership in this era of scholarship, suggestions are made that business courses and business curriculum is best suited to train aspiring principals (Rosenberger, 1960).

Scholars critiqued the pathway to the principalship during the 1970s as a pathway that was inadequate in properly vetting principal candidates. Findings from the scholarship asserted that in-house assistant principals should be rejected if they are associated with a weak administrative team, instead the school should seek to infuse more qualified outside candidates into leadership roles (Brown & Rentschler, 1973). Before making the leap to the principalship, vice principals should be encouraged to take advantage of professional development opportunities to build upon their own skill sets (Brown & Rentschler, 1973). To better prepare aspiring principals, internships should have been implemented into principal preparation programs as a means to provide more valuable experiences for principal candidates (Barrilleaux, 1972). To improve the process of selecting the best principal candidate, questions focusing on goals, objectives, characteristics and competencies should have been infused into the interview process (Lund, 1977). During the process of hiring the candidate, superintendents should have involved members of all different constituencies including parents, students and professional staff to help the newly hired principal succeed (Lund, 1977).

The Role of Social Networks

The role that social networks play in hiring a principal, along with the increased emphasis on instructional leadership emerged as one of several themes from the scholarship in the 1980s. The pathway to the principalship tended to take place within the school districts in which

candidates worked, with virtually all principal candidates moving up through the ranks of these districts, many of them having social relationships with their superiors (Teran & Licata, 1986). This period is characterized with an emphasis on quality principal candidates possessing instructional leadership skills in the scholarship of the 1980s. Principal preparation programs of this time had an over-emphasis of teaching management skills and lacked focus on teaching instructional leadership skills (Hallinger & Murphy, 1986; Ploghoft & Perkins, 1988). These skills include supervision, evaluation of teachers, and curriculum development; and, should have been made a priority by the program developers and certification boards of education to bring about positive change in training educational leaders (Hallinger & Murphy, 1986; Ploghoft & Perkins, 1988).

Desired Skill Sets of Principal Candidates

In the 1990s, scholars examined the politics involved in hiring school leaders. Findings of this scholarship highlighted the importance of various leadership skills such as critical thinking and leadership skills (Maha, 1993; Pashiardis, 1993). In the United States, as well as abroad, factors that lead to the promotion of principals include getting the attention of superiors, as well as teaching experience, leadership experience and educational qualifications (Maha, 1993). As an alternative selection method to school politics and the over-influence of interview performance, scholarship suggests that emphasis should instead be put on qualities such as writing skills, critical thinking skills and instructional leadership skills (Pashiardis, 1993). The coveted skill set of a principal candidate persisted to evolve through the various decades of literature.

In the contemporary literature, the range of skills desired in principals continued to expand. While candidates with leadership skills are increasingly sought after, these skills were constantly expanding (Cruzeiro & Boone, 2009). Successful principals were expected to be

capable of using a combination of objective and subjective information in the decision-making process, with the most successful principals relying most heavily on objective information to drive decisions (Klein, 2002). To be suitable for the principalship, vice principals would need to possess managerial skills, communication skills, presentation skills, community relationship skills and the necessary knowledge and experience (Kwan, 2013). In a study focusing on the importance of principals preparing their assistant principals for the principalship, assistant principals in the study expressed desire that their principals help to prepare them and support them through coaching and support (May, 2016). Political skills were also considered to be a prerequisite for success as a principal and should be emphasized in training programs as part of the educational process for aspiring school leaders (Winton & Pollock, 2013).

Motivation to Pursue the Principalship

Scholars also examined the reasons why individuals pursue school leadership positions and the characteristics surrounding those that were chosen. Changing external pressures altered the nature of the principalship, which had an impact on the way that the role was learned about (Stevenson, 2000). Scholars found that salary was an important motivator for candidates applying for principal positions (Baker et al., 2010; Cooley & Shen, 2000; Newton et al., 2003). Women continued to be underrepresented in the principalship compared to their male counterparts (Baker et al., 2010; Cellini, 2016; Davis et al., 2017; Gates et al., 2004; Newton et al., 2003; Pirouzina, 2013). Age was also a factor, with the greatest likelihood of principal candidates coming from the 45-54 age bracket (Walker & Kwan, 2009). In Texas, while Black and Hispanic teachers were more likely to earn principal certificates than White teachers, though White teachers were more likely to be hired than Black teachers to principal positions (Fuller et al., 2007). Additionally, a disproportionate number of physical education teachers were hired to

principal positions in the state of Texas (Fuller, et al., 2007) which gives us insight into the hiring patterns within one of the largest school systems in the United States.

Principal Preparation Programs: Areas for Growth

Weaknesses in the principal preparation and selection process were also thoroughly investigated in the contemporary literature. Typical pathways for principals usually began with the candidate earning teaching experience and completing a state approved principal preparation program (Strauss, 2003). A lack of preparation from principal education programs has made the principalship a less desirable career ambition, as first year principals appeared to be overwhelmed on the job (Lattuca, 2012). State educational standards were recommended for implementation into principal preparation programs, to provide programs with hands-on, real world experiences to close gaps between the expertise of teachers and the professional practices of future principals (Hearn, 2015). When the weaknesses in the hiring process were considered, some concerns arose within the research. One example of this would be in the state of Iowa, where 46% of the schools surveyed did not have a written criteria used to hire principals (Schlueter & Walker, 2008). While there tended to be an overemphasis on interview questions, alternative vetting processes were proposed in the literature, such as using outside resources and various assessment tools to gauge the strengths and weaknesses of different candidates (Schlueter & Walker, 2008). Instead of only relying on questions, assessment of work-related task performance was recommended to judge the competence of principal candidates (Wildy et al., 2011).

Other debates around principal hiring criteria revolve around the concept of “fit” (Palmer et al., 2016). Examining “fit” has revealed that the selection and support of a school leader is not always an egalitarian process and societal politics would often have a strong influence over who

is the right “fit” for the job (Tooms et al., 2010). The use of “fit” within the selection process revealed advantages and disadvantages, using “fit” did not guarantee that principal will “fit” the school and district community (Palmer et al., 2016).

The Principal Pipeline

Concerns exist about shortages of qualified individuals who seek to serve as school principals (DeAngelis & O’Connor, 2012). Because schools cannot always depend on an applicant pool to hire qualified individuals to fill school leadership positions, current school leaders focus on building the capacity of future leaders within their own ranks (Huggins et al. 2017; Peter-Hawkins et al. 2018). This often results in principals employing distributed leadership strategies in order to allow others to take on additional responsibilities (Huggins et al. 2017). Serving as an assistant principal also provides valuable experience for future principals who strive to be strong instructional leaders to bolster school achievement (Bowers & White, 2014; Petrides et al., 2014). The focus of this inquiry is on the process through which teacher’s instructional leadership capacities are developed prior to the principalship, however the issues with the principal pipeline does have an impact on the individuals who become school principals.

Analysis: Various factors impact the Path to the Principalship

The scholarly literature helps us to understand how the pathway to the principalship has changed over the years. The position was opened up to a wider range of candidates over the years, but the personal and professional qualities in these individuals were extremely generalized in the literature. We know that principals were typically men and while that has changed in recent years, men are still over-represented in the principalship. The kinds of career experiences that influenced the people hired into the principalship were often experiences gained within the school systems in which they worked. Some of these experiences included the social factors and

interpersonal relationships of teachers, which in some cases had social relationships with superiors that helped them move up in their careers.

The purpose of this study is to understand the particular kind of career experiences that influence ascension into administration, information about these experiences is largely absent from the literature. Some of the scholarship examined the influence of leadership experience as an influential factor in helping people get hired into the principalship. The scholarly literature described leadership experience ranging from committee work, to communication skills and political skills (Kwan, 2013; Winton & Pollock, 2013). The emphasis on leadership skills relates to part of the question, but connections between leadership skills and instructional leadership are not made in the literature. While the literature, addresses in part, the “what” components of the career experiences that influence being hired into the principalship, it falls short in explaining the relationship between experience and professional development as an educational leader.

Summary

A gap exists between the research base and the question of the relationship between principal’s prior teaching experience and their development and practice as an instructional leader. Work within a school system, particularly work that exposes an aspiring principal to leadership experience has helped that individual get hired, but it is still unclear how these experiences influenced their development as a leader. While teaching experience is a very consistent quality with those hired into the principalship, the specifics of this teaching experience are still unclear. We know that principal candidates are sought that have a variety of skills, ranging from leadership, decision-making, communication and political skills (Klein 2002; Kwan, 2013; Winton & Pollock, 2013). More literature is being written on this topic and it seems

that as schools continue to change, and as the role of the principal is becoming increasingly complex, aspiring principals must pass muster to an ever-widening range of criteria.

Teaching Experience

Relationships between teaching experience, hiring principals and instructional leadership were explored throughout the scholarship, in part within the literature centered on the prior teaching experience of principals. This has been an understudied intersection of research dating back to the 1960s. Scholars initially focused on the importance of principals to possess problem solving ability. It was discovered that teachers with more experience tended to exhibit better problem solving ability (Hoyle & Randall, 1967). There is a shift in the scholarship from the 1970s, with the focus being on instructional leadership, because it was believed that principals had drifted far from their original roles as master teachers, and that school's increasingly needed them to reassume this mantle (Jenkins, 1972). A principal's classroom experience was thought to be an important contributing factor in helping them to understand what good teaching looks like, as a supervisor later observing classrooms (Weldy, 1979). The research base of the 1980s focused more on the kinds of teachers that advanced to administrative levels in their careers. Teachers that tended to leave the classroom typically took on administrative tasks while they were teaching (Marshall, 1985). Scholarly work of the 1990s revealed that teaching experience helped leaders build rapport with their faculty (Ballou & Podgursky, 1995). Some of the modern literature on this topic seems to revolve around the kinds of teachers that are being "tapped" or sponsored by administrators to pursue principal positions (DeAngelis & O'Connor, 2012; Myung et al., 2011). Teachers who are sponsored by educational leaders tend to attain principal jobs at a much higher rate (DeAngelis & O'Connor, 2012). Many of these teachers tend to be

male and possess leadership experience from the opportunities they were given (Myung et al., 2011).

A study from the 1960s talked about a key difference between teacher and administrator as being the careful consideration of all important information before making key decisions (Brockmann, 1965). As problems arise in the building, administrators must know the policies and procedures of the school to help guide them in decision-making (Brockman, 1965). Principals with at least 6 years of experience tended to exhibit more effective problem solving ability than principals with 5 or fewer years of experience (Hoyle & Randall, 1967). Literature from this time period lacked connections between teacher experience and instructional leadership.

Principals as Instructional Leaders

The gradual shift of principals being valued as instructional leaders began in the 1970s. An article detailing the history of the principalship claims that principals have drifted too far from their original instructional roles and need to once again return to the role of being an “master teacher” (Jenkins, 1972). Through their own experiences in the classrooms, principals are able to recognize good teaching, regardless of the subject matter being taught (Weldy, 1979). The notion of the principal as an instructional leader would gain momentum in coming years.

Teacher Sponsorship

The teaching experience for principal candidates was increasingly analyzed in scholarly literature of the 1980s. One study concluded that principal candidates had inflated scores for their teaching experience in job interviews due to their appearance and other job experiences (Batchelor et al., 1987). The study of sponsorship gained traction during this time period as well. Teachers who decided to leave the classroom were typically sponsored by administrators while

taking on administrative tasks during teaching (Marshall, 1985). Male teachers tended to be less experienced when they applied for principal positions than female teachers (Marshall, 1985).

The Relationship between the Principal and the Faculty

A dimension of the research base that has emerged more recently is the impact that teaching experience has on the relationship between the principal and the faculty. The only kind of experience associated with the positive rating of a principal, by teachers, was teaching experience (Ballou & Podgursky, 1995). In another study, the background of the principal along with the environment of the school both played a role in the job satisfaction of the teachers within the school (Shen et al., 2012). The conception that teachers have on principals also varies based on their own years of experience. Teachers with less experience would tend to view a principal as a disciplinarian, teachers with more experience would tend to view the principal as a visionary (Browne-Ferrigno, 2003). When reflecting upon their own teaching experience, principals explained that teaching helped them to establish a professional reputation while inspiring them to pursue a career in administration (Restine, 1997). While these articles explained the effect of teaching experience on the pursuit of administrative jobs and the impact that the experience has in building a relationship with the faculty, they did little to explain how the experience has an impact on hiring decisions.

Successful Candidates

Before examining leadership within a school context, it's important to make mention of it across the larger scope of society. White men still hold the majority of all leadership positions in fields ranging from sports to business, translating into white men having the highest income averages and holding the highest positions of influence and power (Reed, 2012). In education, the principalship continues to be dominated by white men as female principal candidates

progress slower to the principalship than men (Davis et al., 2017; Reed, 2012). The inequities associated with the process of selecting school leaders may be impacted by systemic bias (Davis et al.).

Sponsorship involves the identifying and nurturing of a potential leader by existing leaders (Bush & Jackson, 2002). Sponsorship can play a big role in determining the individuals who transition into leadership positions within schools with race and gender being significant factors in who is being tapped (Myung, et al., 2011). Teachers with administrative sponsorship pursued and attained these administrative positions more frequently than those who lack sponsorship (DeAngelis & O'Connor, 2012). Much of the existing scholarship discusses the importance of sponsorship for an individual seeking an administrative position but does not delve into the factors that can help a person attain sponsorship, beyond a general experience level (DeAngelis & O'Connor, 2012; Marshall, 1985; Myung et al., 2011).

Gender plays a role in the sponsorship of teachers as administrative candidates as male teachers tend to be twice as likely to be tapped as administrative candidates (Myung, et al., 2011). Though there is not a lot of scholarship that examines the role of gender in the sponsorship of principal candidates, there is a significant research base that illustrates the male dominance of the principalship historically (Baker et al., 2010; Newtown et al., 2003; Pirouzina, 2013; Rosenberger, 1960). Females account for a growing share of school principals on the national level but in many individual states, a woman's likelihood of becoming a principal is substantially less than their male colleagues (Davis et al., 2017). Females tend to be disfavored on the pathway to the principalship, particularly females of color (Davis et al., 2017).

Race tends to increase the probability of tapping more than gender as teachers are almost 30% more likely of being tapped if their race matches the race of their principal (Myung, et al.,

2011). Though a larger percentage of white and male individuals enter the principalship than those gaining certification, whiteness alone does not always lead to the highest probabilities of becoming a principal (Davis et al., 2017). Being Black or Latino male is associated with a higher likelihood of becoming a principal compared to White females, with the influence of gender on the interaction being substantial (Davis et al., 2017). What this translates into is the reality that men of the same race are more likely than their same-race, female counterparts to not only enter the principalship but to do so sooner (Davis et al., 2017).

Much of the current scholarship focused on who was being hired from the teacher ranks, and the characteristics that were common among these successful candidates. Teachers with administrative sponsorship pursued principal positions more actively and attained these positions more frequently than those who lack sponsorship (DeAngelis & O'Connor, 2012). The individuals being tapped, or identified for sponsorship by their principals tended to be male at a higher rate, usually possessing leadership experience (Myung et al., 2011). In Texas, younger teachers would tend to earn certificates at a higher rate than older teachers, with physical education teachers getting a disproportionate amount of principal positions (Fuller et al., 2007). In a separate Texas study, female principal applicants, who are typically older than their male counterparts pursued the principalship at a younger age (Marczynski & Gates, 2013). This scholarship explained some of the personal and professional attributes of successful principal candidates.

The Impact of Teaching Experience

Instructional leadership continues to be a current theme in the research base. Qualitative work reveals that principals in Singapore pointed to their teaching experience as helping them recognize good teaching in the classroom while also helping them to empower their staff as a

leader (Boon & Stott, 2003). Aspiring principals in The United States of America, whose teaching experience was concurrent with the *No Child Left Behind* era, felt that their own creativity was stymied by over-regulation, and felt responsible for encouraging creativity throughout the classrooms in the schools they will lead in the future (Clayburn et al., 2012). While this scholarship helps to explain the impact that teaching experience would have on administrative practice, it does not delve into how experience impacted the principal selection process.

Negative Perceptions of the Principalship

Many teachers experienced a negative socialization to the principalship due to the rigor of the job and high turnover; these issues were analyzed by scholars (Howley et al., 2005; Stone-Johnson, 2012). Lower achieving schools tended to have higher teacher turnover and a higher likelihood of a principal who failed a certification exam at some point (Fuller et al., 2007). Scholars have found that many teachers holding principal certificates found the job to be unattractive (Howley et al., 2005; Stone-Johnson, 2012). A major disincentive, perceived by teachers to not pursue a principal position is that they would have less time with family while having to deal with school politics, government mandates and societal pressures (Howley et al., 2005). Another significant deterrent for teachers to pursue jobs as principals was the perception they had; that the job had changed so much that principals were increasingly removed from students and the educational process (Howley et al., 2005; Stone-Johnson, 2012). It seemed that as the job had become increasingly complicated, and more deterrents detracted from the teacher pool of applicants who chose instead to remain in the classroom.

Analysis: Sponsorship is a Factor in Hiring Principals

Upon review of this research base, scholars drew on a balance of both qualitative and quantitative methods in the studies. However, their scholarship does not explicitly explore the relationship between teaching experience and instructional leadership, and teaching experience as a hiring factor, which is the central concern of this study. Teaching experience did not surface as a major factor in the hiring decisions for principals in this scholarship. There is little emphasis put on specific teaching experience, and how it related to hiring principals outside of general references to building experiences within a school (DeAngelis & O'Connor, 2012; Marshall, 1985; Myung et al., 2011) and a study that talked about physical education teachers being hired as principals in the state of Texas (Fuller, et al., 2007). Scholarship on my inquiries was more abundant in recent years but seemed to focus on themes such as the sponsorship of teachers for the principalship (DeAngelis & O'Connor, 2012; Marshall, 1985; Myung et al., 2011). Though the literature did address, in part, the relationship between teaching experience and leadership practice and some of the effect that teaching experiences played in being hired as a principal, it lacked specificity as a gap seems to exist in the literature and my inquiry questions (DeAngelis & O'Connor, 2012; Marshall, 1985; Myung et al., 2011).

Summary

While scholars have attended to some of the factors related to the role of prior teaching experience, a gap exists between the literature and specifically how a principal's prior teaching experience is related to their development as an instructional leader. While the research base did connect the ways that classroom experience helped principals to recognize what good teaching is and how they are perceived by their faculty, it failed to explain the dynamics of this relationship. While teaching experience is a very consistent quality with those hired into the principalship, the specifics of this teaching experience are still unclear. We know that teachers who ascend to

leadership positions tend to be sponsored by administrators and they had generally taught in the districts that hired them (DeAngelis & O'Connor, 2012; Marshall, 1985; Myung et al., 2011), but the details of their classroom experience are lacking in this literature (DeAngelis & O'Connor, 2012; Marshall, 1985; Myung et al., 2011). Judging by the trend of the literature, the teaching experience of principals does seem to be an increasing path of scholarship, but a larger focus seems to be on the shortage of qualified principal candidates (DeAngelis & O'Connor, 2012; Myung et al., 2011).

School Leadership

The body of literature described the evolving role of school leaders from the position of head teacher to a bureaucratic middle manager, to a political, transformative change agent. The role of administrators went from being a teacher of teachers, to being managers (Button, 1966), to being instructional leaders (Leithwood, 1994) and ultimately transformative leaders (Hallinger, 2003). Contemporary scholarly literature strongly supported the notion that leadership is most effective when it is distributed throughout the school (Leithwood et al., 2008; Spillane et al., 2004; Stoll, et al., 2006). The scholarship also attempted to clarify the link between leadership and student achievement (Böhlmark et al., 2016; Marks & Printy, 2003; Waters et al., 2003; Witziers, et al., 2003). Contemporary scholars clarified the ever increasing scope of leadership responsibilities for school principals.

The Evolution of School Leadership

Within the scholarship, the description of the evolution of the school principal begins when the role of school principals was described in the 1860s United States of America, but few empirical studies existed prior to 1950, and because of this much of the knowledge is derived from stories from prior administrators, rather than data (Heck and Hallinger, 2005). School

leaders from 1870-1885 were considered to be a teacher of teachers, similar to that of a head teacher in European schools (Button, 1966). From 1885 to 1905, the administrator evolved into a more learned administrator, and looked at as the authority on all things related to education. As the United States became increasingly industrialized in the 20th century, societal pressures from increased industrialization and global competition would change the need for schools to keep up with the demands of the American economy, changing the roles of school leaders.

Principal as Business Manager.

From 1905 to 1930, the principal took on the role of business manager, with students as the product, the teacher as workers and the school serving as the factory (Button, 1966). Public school enrollments grew dramatically during this time period, and were charged with increasing efficiency, much like the factories of The United States during this time (Kochan & Reed, 2005). This trend continued in varying degrees, for several decades as principals of the 1960s focused on discipline, scheduling and record-keeping (Knezevich, 1962). The original role of the principal had dramatically changed as it had become loosely coupled with activities in the classroom as administrators were focused on managing people through standardized, authoritarian and centralized ways (March, 1978).

Managerial Model and Collaborative Approaches.

The managerial model of school leadership remained very popular for much of the 20th century, but was still argued against by scholars throughout that time. John Dewey argued for collaborative leadership in learning as a way to create a new democratic learning community where power is shared in the early 20th century (Dewey, 1923; Kochan & Reed, 2005). Democratic atmospheres were thought to have a positive impact on the climate of a school, changing attitudes from hostility to friendliness among the stakeholders (Lewin, 1944). Though

schools took on more of an industrial environment for much of the 1900s, the ideas of democratic, collaborative leadership began to shape the leadership models of schools by the end of the century (Leithwood, 1994).

Instructional Leadership. Instructional leadership would rise to prominence and become the preferred method of school leadership throughout the 1980s and 1990s (Edmonds, 1979; Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; Leithwood, 1994). Instructional leadership was defined as a strong, directive leadership focused on curriculum and instruction (Hallinger, 2003). Within the context of instructional leadership, educational leaders provided leadership by counseling teachers and providing a curriculum (Sergiovanni, 1984). Instructional leadership eventually evolved into shared instructional leadership, which meant that the teacher would take on more of a leadership role in instructional matters (Marks & Printy, 2003).

Transformational Leadership. As the expectations of schools continued to change approaching the new millennium, transformational leadership arose in popularity as a preferred method of leadership in schools (Leithwood, 1994). One of the facets of the transformational leadership model is building the capacity of the organization (Hallinger, 2003). This is done through vision building, consensus and leadership distribution (Leithwood, 1994). Leadership distribution was described as the ways that leadership tasks are spread over leaders, followers, the situation and the context of the school (Spillane et al., 2001; 2004). School leadership has had a greater impact when it is widely distributed (Leithwood et al., 2008). This collaborative approach was an integral part of a professional learning community, in which leaders improve their school by modeling desired behaviors and managing the contextual challenges of their

individual schools (Stoll et al., 2006). By maintaining a tight instructional focus and designing school improvement strategies, school leaders were better able to meet the rigor of the accountability standards in today's educational accountability climate (Elmore, 2000).

In more recent literature, the notion of successful school leaders possessing political skills became evident in some of the scholarship. To be a change agent, leaders would also need to possess the political skills to effectively set agendas, map the political terrain, network and negotiate with stakeholders to help gain support for their initiatives (Bolman & Deal, 2003). While proposing organizational changes, trust was an important aspect of the dynamic between the leader and the other stakeholders (Tschannen-Moran, 2004). A skilled principal was able to build trust in all of these functions through flexibility during problem solving and collaborating to find solutions (Tschannen-Moran, 2004).

School Leadership and Student Achievement

Several scholars focused on the links between school leadership and achievement (Grissom & Loeb, 2011; Marks, 2003; Waters et al., 2003; Witziers et al., 2003). This research base varies on the correlation between school leadership and student achievement. For example, one study suggests that leadership has a positive effect on student achievement, but a very small, limited effect (Witziers et al., 2003). In another study, it was argued that in a meta-analysis over the last 30 years, leadership is a significant contributor to student achievement (Waters et al., 2003). By integrating both instructional and transformational leadership models, higher pedagogical quality could be realized in schools, leading to higher student performance (Marks, 2003). A more recent study suggests that principals had a substantive impact on student

outcomes, though it is difficult to determine which principal characteristics form a basis for successful school management (Böhlmark et al., 2016).

Analysis

Upon review of this literature, it was obvious that the role of school leaders has changed dramatically throughout history, and continues to change in our present times. In relationship to my research questions of exploring the relationship between teaching experience and school leadership, it appeared that there is a lack of exploration on this inquiry. Teaching experience did not really seem to surface as a major factor in influencing school leadership in any of this literature. There was a thorough analysis of what school leaders were at one time, and what they have become. While school leaders were once looked at as a teacher of teachers, this notion is absent through the majority of the expanse of the 20th century job description, according to the literature. The scholarship provided a detailed description of the skills needed by contemporary school leaders, but references the importance of modeling behaviors, not teaching behaviors (Stoll et al., 2006). While the research base provided a clear understanding of the skills a school leader needs today, the scholarship lacked specific links to the role that teaching experience played in helping the leader cultivate skills, illustrating the gap between the literature and my inquiry questions.

Summary

Though scholars have attended to the ways in which leaders have changed, we still do not know how a principal's prior teaching experience is related to their ability to lead a school effectively. Though the scholarship does describe the historical transformation of school leaders dating back to the 1860s, in great detail, it failed to connect the influence that teaching experience had in how these schools were led. We know that school leaders have morphed from

being bureaucratic managers to instructional, political and transformative leaders of schools, but the scholarship did not connect their prior career experiences to their ability to successfully execute their job in these diverse capacities. Leadership appeared to be increasingly distributed in the literature, but the impact of prior experience in helping to facilitate effective distributed leadership remains unclear. In analyzing the trend in this research base, the responsibilities and expectations of school leaders seem to be on a path of continual expansion.

Instructional Leadership

Instructional leadership was an integral part of the principalship at the onset, though the principal as a scientific manager superseded it during the industrial age, it would resurface again in more recent years (Cuban, 1988). Instructional leadership models would arise in the early 1980s due to the research on effective schools (Hallinger, 2003). Instructional leadership scholarship emphasized leadership focused on curriculum and instruction from the principal (Hallinger, 2003). The concept of instructional leadership would change over time, becoming more of a shared model (Marks & Printy, 2003). Effective instructional leaders were thought to be good communicators in addition to their willingness to share responsibility (Bartell, 1989). Effective instructional leaders are also effective networkers, connecting with outside resources to help with principal's instructional practices (Coldren & Spillane, 2007). Instructional leaders were also able to design effective professional development activities, which focused on enhancing student achievement (Hattie, 2005). Ultimately, instructional leaders must possess an ever-growing skill set to lead their schools effectively.

The Evolution of Instructional Leadership

The first books written about the principalship describe principals as bureaucrats and instructional leaders (Cuban, 1988). As the United States became increasingly industrialized, the principalship became increasingly centered on scientific management (Cuban, 1988). The role of the principal as an instructional leader resurfaces in the literature in the 1970s and 1980s. The 1970s principal was thought to carry out instructional leadership as strong directives focused on academic outcomes (Hallinger, 2005). The leadership model improved through the 1980s into a shared instructional leadership role, involving teachers to take on additional leadership responsibilities (Marks & Printy, 2003). As instructional leadership became increasingly important to the principalship, debate ensued about how it should be measured and conceptualized (Murphy, 1988). An alternative form of leadership, known as transformational leadership, which centered on vision and consensus building, emerged in the 1990s (Leithwood, 1994). Different leadership models were better able to cope with different institutional challenges; at risk schools seemed to benefit more from instructional leadership while long-term sustainable improvement depended on staff assuming increased levels of leadership, consistent with the transformational leadership model (Hallinger, 2003). While an uneasy marriage between the bureaucrat and instructional leader existed within the job of being a principal, many principals wished they could focus more on their instructional leadership roles (Cuban, 1988).

Characteristics of Instructional Leadership

Some of the characteristics that were part of the common understanding for good instructional leadership included effective communication skills, good listening skills and shared responsibility (Bartell, 1989). Communication skills coupled with collaboration efforts seemed to be a common trend throughout this literature (Bartell, 1989; Blase & Blase, 2000; Southworth,

2000). Principals who were effective communicators in the ways that they make suggestions, gave feedback, modeled, used inquiry and gave praise tended to be received well by the faculty of the school they supervised (Blase & Blase, 2000). Effective instructional leaders improved their craft by talking to teachers, fostering reflection and giving praise (Southworth, 2000). Effective leaders were highly visible and spent a substantial amount of time out of the office and in the classrooms around the building, typically at least twice per week and some almost daily (Supovitz, 2001). While instructional leadership includes content knowledge of subjects, practical expertise was often only developed when leaders were able to link theory to the surface features of problems (Robinson, 2010).

Boundary Spanners

Effective instructional leaders were also able to span boundaries to network effectively for the cause of improving instructional leadership and student achievement, while solving contextual problems that would arise in the day to day running of the school (Coldren & Spillane, 2007; Harmon & Schafft, 2009; Ladson-Billings, 1995). By spanning over leaders, teachers and tools, instructional leaders were able to connect with outside resources in the learning network to help inform instructional practice for teachers (Coldren & Spillane, 2007). This was particularly important in different school settings (Harmon & Schafft, 2009; Ladson-Billings, 1995). In rural schools, collaborating with faculty and community members was essential for leadership to be effective, so the school was able to account for the needs of students in the 21st century (Harmon & Schafft, 2009). In urban schools, better teacher candidates were recommended to be recruited to disseminate culturally relevant pedagogy in the classroom (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Common throughout this literature was the impact of the contextual factors of schools that required different needs from school leadership.

Professional Development

Much of how instructional leadership was disseminated was through designed professional development, facilitated by school leaders (Floden et al., 1988; Hattie, 2005; Heck & Marcoulides, 1990). Assertive leadership models seemed to dominate the early scholarship on this topic as principals in effective schools were looked at as running a “tight ship” and exercising a practical use of in-service design (Jackson, 1983). This idea was contrasted by the notion of teacher autonomy leading to success in classrooms (Floden et al., 1988). Many schools flourished with a compromise between autonomy and control, enhanced by providing teachers with at least 5 in-service days per year in which they could focus on improving their instructional techniques (Floden et al., 1988). Effective professional development formulated shared values of what student learning looked like in order to foster student achievement (Hattie, 2005). In addition to clearly communicated goals, high achieving schools also directed efforts towards faculty enthusiasm and morale building (Heck & Marcoulides, 1990). Leaders should have the ability to create and sustain settings in which teachers feel safe to admit mistakes and even fail at times, while disclosing aspects of their teaching (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 2011). Much of what effective instructional leaders are tasked with doing revolves around building productive school environment through effective professional development.

Analysis

Upon review of this research base, it became apparent that the definition of instructional leadership had changed over time, though it continued to be an integral part of the principalship (Cuban, 1988; Hallinger, 2003). In relationship to my research question of examining the link between prior teaching experience and instructional leadership, there is a gap between the literature on the topic and my inquiry. Teaching experience was not discussed as a major factor

influencing effective instructional leadership. The literature primarily focused on the changes of instructional leadership over time and expanding attributes of effective instructional leadership. The scholarship did go into depth about the role that a principal plays in identifying building-wide instructional goals, another of my research questions. The research base explored in depth how this role for principals had evolved over the years into an ever increasing shared leadership model (Hallinger, 2003; Marks & Printy, 2003). The scholarly literature also called up principals to be effective networkers to foster successful instructional leadership (Coldren & Spillane, 2007; Harmon & Schafft, 2009; Ladson-Billings, 1995). Additionally, principals should facilitate appropriate professional development activities to be effective instructional leaders (Floden, et al., 1988; Hattie, 2005; Heck & Marcoulides, 1990). While extant scholarship thoroughly explains the role that a principal as an instructional leader has in schools, it lacks specific links between instructional leadership and teaching experience, illustrating a gap between the literature and my overarching research question.

Summary

A gap exists between the research base and specifically how a principal's prior teaching experience and their development and practice as an instructional leader. With increased understanding of this relationship, more compatible candidates could be hired to fill leadership vacancies (Ballout, 2007). The scholarship did provide a detailed foundation in understanding the role that school leaders play as instructional leaders, but does not connect the impact that teaching experience may play in the fulfillment of these responsibilities. Instructional leaders must possess a diverse set of skills, many of which are context specific. The scholarly work

seemed to focus squarely on what instructional leaders are, but not who they were specifically. The question still remains how can a principal's prior experience help to shape the desired skill set of a school leader? By recruiting strong leaders, with a process based on criteria that meet the districts goals (Clifford, 2010) schools were in a better position to improve while performing at a higher level. In analyzing the trend in the literature, responsibilities of instructional leaders seem to be on a path of continual expansion.

Pathway to the Principalship

The research base explained the changes of the pathway to the principalship. Within the profession, principals were traditionally men (Rosenberger, 1960). In contemporary times, women were still underrepresented as principals (Gates et al., 2004; Newton et al., 2003). Social networks also played a large role in the selection of principals, as the pathway to the principalship tended to be within the same district in which the candidate works (Teran & Licata 1986). While teaching experience played a factor in getting hired as a principal (Maha, 1993) the specifics of this experience were not explored. Age played a role, with candidates in the 45-54 age bracket having the best chance to be hired as a principal (Walker & Kwan, 2009). In Texas, white teachers were more likely to be hired than black teachers to the principalship even though black teachers were more likely to pursue principal certificates (Fuller et al., 2007). The scholarship provided a detailed, in depth look at many of the characteristics associated with successful principal candidates, including the role that gender, socialization, experience, and age play in those being hired.

Teaching Experience

The literature provided a limited explanation of the links between teaching experience and the hiring and leadership performance of principals. Teachers with more experience tended

to exhibit better judgment when solving problems (Hoyle & Randall, 1967). The prior classroom experience of principals seemed to help them lead in a variety of different ways. Prior teaching experience helped principals understand how effective teaching should appear in the classroom (Weldy, 1979). Teaching experience was also a contributing factor to building rapport with faculty (Ballou & Podgursky, 1995). A recurring trend that surfaced in the scholarship was that teachers who were sponsored by educational leaders tended to attain principal jobs at a higher rate (DeAngelis & O'Connor, 2012; Myung et al., 2011). Teaching experience is examined as a factor in both hiring and performance of school leaders, but the magnitude that experience plays in regards to hiring and performance is not thoroughly examined within this strand of literature.

School Leadership

The research base explained in detail, the changes of the role of school leader and their impact, without going into depth about the relationship between teaching experience and school leadership. Since the post-Civil War Era, school leaders would morph from being a teacher of teachers, to scientific managers, to instructional leaders and finally to being transformative leaders (Button, 1966; Hallinger, 2003; Leithwood, 1994). The increasing trend of leadership style, regardless of the label, seemed to be one that is shared and distributed throughout the school between leaders and other stakeholders (Leithwood et al., 2008; Spillane et al., 2004; Stoll et al., 2006). The literature explained the impact that leaders have on achievement (Marks, 2003; Waters et al., 2003; Witziers et al., 2003), but did not specify the links between teaching experience and the effectiveness of leaders.

Instructional Leadership

The scholarship did not go into depth about the links between teaching experience and instructional leadership, but did explain the role that principals had as an instructional leader,

though this was ever-changing. Early scholarship described the principal's role in this process as being unilateral, issuing strong directives focused on academic outcomes (Hallinger, 2005). The role of instructional leaders is one that became increasingly shared with teachers (Marks & Printy, 2003). Good communication skills were important and included making suggestions to teachers, modeling desired behaviors and giving praise to the faculty. Instructional leaders were also expected to be effective networkers, able to reach outside of the organization in the interest of student achievement (Coldren & Spillane, 2007; Harmon & Schafft, 2009; Ladson-Billings, 1995). Effective professional development, facilitated by instructional leaders was considered to be a collaboration of the shared values of school stakeholders about what objectives should be to foster student achievement (Hattie, 2005). The role of instructional leaders is ever-changing and becoming increasingly diversified.

Motivations to Pursue the Principalship

Reference groups within social theory and social structure help to explain the conceptual foundation of career socialization and enculturation (Merton, 1968). These concepts are particularly useful in understanding the complex motivations of people seeking the principalship. Reference groups are groups in which an individual or another group is compared to (Merton, 1968). Reference groups are used to compare oneself with people who occupy a role to which the individual aspires (Merton, 1968). These comparisons provide the basis for career socialization and enculturation in which decisions about careers come from career stereotypes, opportunity for success, access to training, role models, mentors and sponsors (Marshall, 1985). Social cognitive theory provides an additional conceptual base in understanding how individuals use their knowledge, based on observing others, to pursue a career path in school administration. The capacity to exercise control over one's own thought processes, motivation and action is a distinctively human characteristic, enabling people to change themselves and their situation

through their own efforts (Bandura, 1989). In the context of school leadership, socialization is a big factor that influences the growth of educators and their attraction to the principalship (Browne-Ferrigno, 2003). Working directly with school administration was an influential experience within this socialization process (Browne-Ferrigno, 2003). These were the conceptual foundations that are present in the literature that deal directly with that attraction that individuals have to pursue positions of educational leaders.

The Career Mobility of Teachers

Scholars in the field have found that the particular level of teaching experience of a candidate does not seem to influence the selection process as much as the sponsorship of the candidate (DeAngelis & O'Connor, 2012; Marshall, 1985; Myung et al., 2011). The roots of this concept, discussed within a school setting can be traced back to Ralph Turner's (1960) comparison between sponsored mobility and contest mobility. Contest mobility is when elite status is the prize in an open contest, with every effort made to keep all contestants in the race until the outcome is decided (Turner, 1960). Sponsored mobility involves the controlled selection in which agents choose recruits early and carefully induct them into elite status (Turner, 1960). Turner (1960) asserts that contest mobility is more prominent in American schools and sponsored mobility being more prominent in English schools. The notion of sponsored mobility supports the idea that school leaders are recruited from the ranks of teachers because they possess particular qualities or traits that the leaders value (Myung, et al, 2011). The degree of teaching experience also gives context to different kinds of leaders. These contextual factors can be examined at the micro, meso and macro levels (Gronn & Ribbins, 1996). Based upon the career model of leadership (Gronn, 1999), the early formative years of a leader play a significant role in shaping the values and beliefs that underpin the practice of the principalship (Boon & Stolt, 2003). Teaching experience may or may not have an influence on those who are sponsored

by other leaders for positions of educational leaders, but sponsorship does indeed seem to play a major role in the selection process. Teaching experience may however play an important role in shaping the kind of leader the principal becomes and what they value.

The Evolution of School Leadership

Distributed Leadership. A recurring concept that is linked with school leadership is the idea of distributed leadership (Gronn, 2000; Leithwood et al., 2008; Spillane et al., 2001; Spillane et al., 2004; Stoll et al., 2006). Leadership distribution is described as the ways that leadership tasks are spread over leaders, followers, the situation and the context of the school (Spillane et al., 2004). School leadership has a greater impact when it is widely distributed (Leithwood et al., 2008). Understanding this emergent perspective within psychology is recognizing how social context is an important part of understanding human activity (Spillane et al., 2004). Much of this work derives from Heidegger's (1962) emphasis on the "in-the-worldness" of the human experience. This concept situates thinking within the context of the person who is doing the thinking, based on their own human experiences (Heidegger, 1962). Human cognition is more than just a function of mental capacity as it is shaped by interaction, communication and wider cultural forces (Resnick, 1991). The mind cannot be understood in isolation from the surrounding society, but instead, society provides the individual with technology that can shape the private processes of the mind (Vygotsky, 1978). Much of the psychological foundation of distributed leadership is based upon the context in which it is taking place.

Collaborative Leadership. A collaborative leadership approach is an essential component to the professional learning community, in which schools strive to improve upon their own contextual problems (Stoll, et al, 2006). A teacher's participation in these roles occurs

both formally as well as being manifested through informal roles (Prestine & Bowen, 1993). This relationship is one in which leaders in formal roles step aside and let others step into leadership roles (Prestine & Bowen, 1993). The schools within this case study (Prestine & Bowen, 1993), along with the schools within my own inquiry have designed their professional learning approach around the model of a professional learning community. The context of these schools and the individuals leading them, both formally and informally was important in understanding the overall approach to instructional leadership throughout the different buildings within my inquiry.

Transformational Leadership. As the roles of schools have changed in our culture and more recently, the concept of transformational leadership has been discussed more within a school context (Leithwood, 1994). James Burns (1978) first introduced this concept in his work on political leaders. The focus of transformational leadership is based upon the relationship between leaders and followers, in that a transformational leader precipitates change, with followers bound to leaders throughout the change process (Burns, 1978). Transformational school leadership involves a teacher commitment to change (Rowan, 1990). Dimensions used to define transformational leadership behaviors within a school include; articulating a vision, fostering acceptance of group goals, conveying expectations, providing appropriate models, providing intellectual stimulation and individualized support (Podsakoff et al., 1990). Because schools are considered professional organizations, they respond differently to transformational leadership than other types of organizations (Leithwood, 1994). Because of this, building organizational capacity includes building consensus and distributing leadership throughout the building (Leithwood, 1994). In these ways, transformational leadership in a school setting possesses similar qualities to shared, distributed leadership models.

Boundary Spanners within a Shared Leadership Model

Though many different leadership models can be used to cope with different institutional challenges, effective instructional leadership has become more of a shared model (Marks & Printy, 2003). An important tool that was used for mediating leaders' actions were boundary spanners that sustained connections between teachers and administrators and provided a forum about instructional practices (Wenger, 1998). In the case of boundary spanners, individuals rather than routines constitute the mechanism that linked the leader and the teacher practice (Coldren & Spillane, 2007). Within the context of this study, the conceptual base of boundary spanners derived from the concepts of domain, community and practice (Wenger, 1998). Together, these are the components for the community of practice, which is a group of people who share a common craft or profession (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Boundary spanners have also been investigated in the context of how central office administrators implemented policies and collaborative education initiatives in buildings through the district (Honig, 2006). This conception of boundary spanners is also pertinent in this study, as administrators from central office were included as imbedded units of analysis. As the schools within the case study have adopted a distributed model of leadership, boundary spanners at all levels of the operation were important to understand as they are an integral part of the way that instructional leadership and practice are carried out through the different schools, serving as units of analysis within the case study.

The literature supports the idea that teaching experience plays an important role in helping a principal in a variety of different ways (Ballou & Podgursky, 1995; Hoyle & Randall, 1967; Weldy, 1979). Specifically, scholars have found that teachers who were sponsored by educational leaders became principals at a higher rate (DeAngelis & O'Connor, 2012; Myung et

al., 2011). Further, the role of a school leader has changed over time; teachers have taken on more leadership responsibilities as principals increasingly share this role with teachers (Leithwood et al., 2008; Marks & Printy, 2003; Spillane et al., 2004; Stoll et al., 2006). In the following section, I present my conceptual framework. It was developed in a way that aligns with my research questions so that I can better understand how the culture and leadership within the individual cases have come to influence each other.

Conceptual Framework: The ASA Cycle and Additional Concepts

The following research questions have guided my study: 1) What is the relationship between principals' prior teaching experiences and their development and practice as an instructional leader? 2) How does an aspiring principal's teaching experience impact their pathway into the principalship? 3) In primary and secondary schools in varied settings, what role does the principal have in identifying building-wide instructional goals? I have used theory to inform and describe the data gathered in the study. Specifically, my theoretical framework aligned with my research questions, is called the Attraction, Selection, Attrition framework (Schneider, 1987). This theory suggests that organizations are a function of the people that work within them (Schneider, 1987). This theory is influenced from the cognitive psychology and developmental epistemology of Jean Piaget, which argues for the inseparability of person and situation (Schneider, 1987). Much of the concept is based on the debates around interactional psychology, during which Bowers (1973) presented logic that persons cause human environments at least as much as human environments cause persons to act a certain way. By employing this theory in my conceptual framework, along with additional concepts, I will have a frame of reference to analyze how leadership is influenced by the culture of the school, but also

how leaders and others working within the school help create this culture, based on their own experiences and role within the leadership structure.

The ASA Framework

The ASA Framework has been used in studying many different kinds of dynamics within various workplaces (Halfhill et al., 2008; Pfeffelmann, et al., 2010; Wright & Christensen, 2010). Support for this framework has risen from studies surrounding small group performance within the military, and teams with increased levels of both agreeableness and conscientiousness receive higher performance ratings than other types of teams (Halfhill et al., 2008). Within the corporate sector, the website usability of the company is positively correlated to the attraction to a company of female participants, more than male participants (Pfeffelmann, et al., 2010). Among lawyers, attraction is often influenced by public service motivations and often leads to lawyers taking jobs in the public sector, if not initially than eventually (Wright & Christensen, 2010). My own inquiry focused more on the ASA framework within the public sector, in education. I have done this while including some additional concepts; specifically, sponsored mobility (Myung, et al, 2011), boundary spanners (Coldren & Spillane, 2007), instructional leadership (Hattie, 2005).and shared leadership (Marks & Printy, 2003) into a conceptual framework that covered all of the components of my research questions.

The ASA Framework in Education

Within education, this framework has also been used in different ways. Teachers entering a workplace environment within a school often experienced a change in their own values through the socialization at the workplace, and in some circumstances, people whose values do not fit the organization left the organization over time (De Cooman, et al, 2009). The relationships between the leaders and teachers seem to have led to greater follower satisfaction and to a greater

willingness to exert extra effort on behalf of the organization when the leader is able to define themselves in a way that the followers can relate to (Dick, et al, 2007). The framework's flexibility allows the researcher to use it in exploring different aspects of leadership within a school setting.

The ASA Cycle and Additional Concepts. For this analysis my conceptual framework consists of the following components: (1) Schneider's 1987 ASA cycle, (2) sponsored mobility (Myung et al., 2011), (3) boundary spanners (Wenger, 1998) ,(4) instructional leadership (Hattie, 2005) and (5) shared leadership (Marks & Printy, 2003). The conceptual framework fits together in that it provides a filter to understand how teaching experiences are involved in the socialization of school leaders, how they are attracted to leadership positions, how their classroom experiences related to their selection into leadership positions and how these experiences are draw upon as they perform instructional leadership responsibilities. Another factor that plays an important part in the selection process, sponsored mobility is also included in the framework. Because leadership within the contexts of the cases is distributed, the concepts of boundary spanners and shared leadership fit into the framework to help make sense of how instructional leadership is disseminated within different school settings.

According to the ASA framework, the group culture of an institution attracts particular job candidates who are selected based upon how their personal traits align with others working in the institution. Beyond this component of the theoretical framework, I also analyzed how the degree of sponsored mobility, as defined in the literature, plays a role in both the decision to pursue the principalship along with the selection process. From this point, the individual's tenure in the organization is determined by how consistent their own traits are with the dominating traits of the individuals within the institution that have created the group culture of that institution

(Schneider, 1987). It is through this aspect of the framework that I have analyzed their development as a leader, particularly an instructional leader. In addition to this aspect of the theoretical framework, I have also analyzed how the concept of distributed leadership comes into play, with particular attention given to the role of boundary spanners and how they are used within shared instructional leadership models. As the schools within the case study are employing a professional learning community model, I found these concepts to be particularly pertinent. A detailed graphic of this cycle is included within Appendix A. I wanted to understand how this cycle plays out in a school setting, involving principals and instructional leadership.

Summary and Conclusion

I designed a conceptual framework to help me better understand the dynamics of instructional leadership and teaching experience within different school settings across a school district. Teaching experience is valued in different ways by teachers with different levels of classroom experiences and administrators with different backgrounds. To understand the value of teaching experience and the impact that it had on instructional leadership, I wanted to understand how teaching experience played a part in the selection process and leadership style of administrators. Through the scholarship, sponsored mobility was talked about at length as a big factor for individuals transitioning from the classroom into school leadership (Myung, et al, 2011), so I added this to the framework. Other concepts from the scholarship that pertained to contemporary instructional leadership were boundary spanners (Coldren & Spillane, 2007) within a shared leadership model (Marks & Printy, 2003), so these concepts were added to my conceptual framework. As it turns out, the school district that I researched is one that utilizes the shared leadership structure, relying heavily on boundary spanners to disseminate leadership with sponsored mobility playing a large part in the selection process of school leaders. This theory,

augmented with the use of additional concepts to analyze the data was well suited to make meaning from the data, as it supported the notion that administrators with more time in the classroom will emphasize instructional leadership more than those who do not. In the next chapter, I will discuss the design of my research and the data that I collected in more detail.

Chapter 3

Research Design and Data Sources

I conducted an explanatory case study, seeking to achieve a complex, full understanding of the phenomena surrounding the relationship between teaching experience and instructional leadership (De Vaus, 2001). By studying more than one case, I employed the collective case study method (Stake, 1995). The following research questions guided this case study inquiry: 1) What is the relationship between principals' prior teaching experiences and their development and practice as an instructional leader? 2) How does an aspiring principal's teaching experience impact their pathway into the principalship? 3) In primary and secondary schools in varied settings, what role does the principal have in identifying building-wide instructional goals? In this chapter I present the design for this qualitative research study. Specifically, in the methodology section I examine the scholarship on case study that informs my use of the collective case study method in the exploratory analysis. Following the methodology section, I present the context and tools that I used to gather my data for my study in the methods section. I describe the site selection process, data sample and the process and procedures that informed data collection.

Six different schools within one school district in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States were each treated as separate holistic units of analysis; or, different cases were analyzed. Teachers and administrators interviewed throughout the inquiry served as embedded units of analysis. These units of analysis were compared to one another when interpreting the data collected in the study. Data collection took place within the time frame of an entire calendar year, overlapping two different school years. Different types of data were gathered throughout the course of this study. Administrators and teachers throughout the school district were

interviewed. I recorded the audio of all of these interviews and transcribed them so that the responses could be coded. I observed all of the school district's Act 48¹(1999) in-service days throughout an entire calendar year. Additionally, faculty meetings within the high school were also observed. A thorough document analysis of all in-service materials used during the in-service days was conducted. All pertinent district and school wide policies and initiatives that are both in place or newly implemented that related to instructional programs throughout the district were analyzed. By gathering data from a variety of different sources, I was able to triangulate the data, verifying my findings as they came from multiple sources.

A selective coding strategy (Creswell, 1998) was implemented, highlighting data that relates to the variables within the study. The independent variable is the degree of prior teaching experience and the dependent variable being the value and quality of instructional leadership. The dependent variable was operationalized in my literature review. Data was analyzed through the prism of my conceptual framework that includes elements of the Attraction-Selection-Attrition framework theory, putting forward the notion that the people make the place (Schneider, 1987) while including additional concepts such as sponsored mobility (Myung, et al, 2011), boundary spanners (Coldren & Spillane, 2007), instructional leadership (Hattie, 2005).and shared leadership (Marks & Printy, 2003) into a conceptual framework that covered all aspects of my research questions. In addition, the responses of different subjects were juxtaposed based on their levels of teaching experience. I conducted a comparison of different elementary schools with each other, along with comparing the elementary schools to the secondary schools to better make sense of the data. The interest of this study was to understand how, in varied settings, teaching experience can influence how leaders are selected and how they lead a school towards

¹ In 1999 the Pennsylvania General Assembly passed a law requiring teachers to continue to earn professional education hours. <https://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/legis/li/uconsCheck.cfm?yr=1999&sessInd=0&act=48>

achieving instruction goals. The nature of the data collected helped to clarify the relationship between these variables in this particular case.

Methodology

The case study approach has been debated over time by different scholars (Creswell, 1988). One position is that a “case” is an object of study (Stake, 1995). A different perspective is that a “case” can be an object or a policy, as long as it is bounded (Merriam, 1998) while others consider it a contemporary phenomenon within a real life context (Yin, 2002). My own interpretation of this particular methodology is consistent with Merriam’s in that a case study is particularistic on how it focuses on a certain situation or phenomenon; descriptive, in that it yields thick and rich data of what is being studied and heuristic in that it illuminates the reader’s understanding of the phenomenon under study (Yazan, 2015). As a research strategy, a case study has been used in many settings including public administration and organizational and management studies (Yin, 1989). With the context of my inquiry being the impact of teaching experience on instructional leadership within various school settings, the case study methodology, as it is defined by various scholars, was a well suited approach to understand these particular issues in a descriptive way. A case study approach has often utilized qualitative data collection methods, such as interviewing, observation and document analysis (Merriam, 1998).

The Case Study Approach and School Leadership

The case study approach and the methods surrounding it have been used frequently when investigating various questions surrounding school leadership (Darling-Hammond, et al., 2007; Hoppey & McLeskey, 2002; Marks & Printy, 2003; Masumoto & Brown-Welty, 2009; Sanders & Harvey, 2002). In one study, the principal served as the “case” for examining effective leadership, defined as being a change agent and creating an effective inclusive program at a

school (Hoppey & McLeskey, 2002). In this study, the principal was selected because of his relationship with the authors and his professional record of experience and success (Hoppey & McLeskey, 2002). The principal was interviewed and observed throughout the school year and the data was transcribed, coded and analyzed (Hoppey & McLeskey, 2002). In another case study, an elementary school serves as the “case”, and is investigated on the basis of its development of community connections with various organizations in a period of reform (Sanders & Harvey, 2002). This study drew primarily upon interview and observation data (Sanders & Harvey, 2002). The school-community interrelationship is also explored at the high school level in an inquiry in which rural California high schools serve as individual cases (Masumuto & Brown-Welty 2009). In this study, generalizations were made from comparing data found in a cross-case analysis (Masumuto & Brown-Welty 2009).

Elements of case study methodology have also been used in mixed methods inquiries. In a study focused on the collaboration between principals and teachers around instructional leadership, researchers compared different leadership concepts to better understand how instructional leadership and student achievement can be enhanced (Marks & Printy, 2003). Interview, observations and documentation data were collected at 24 different schools, each of which constituted a case (Marks & Printy, 2003). Once the data was coded, it was converted into variables and taken with the survey data in the quantitative portion of the study to construct the leadership measures (Marks & Printy, 2003). Principal development programs also serve as individual cases when exploring facets of educational leadership (Darling-Hammond, et al., 2007). To better understand how these programs functioned, researchers interviewed program and faculty administrators, participants, graduates and personnel along with reviewing documents and observing courses and workshops (Darling-Hammond, et al., 2007).

Methods

Sample

In conducting a case study approach, six different schools within one district were treated as separate holistic units of analysis, or as separate cases that were analyzed and compared to each other. In addition to the schools, the central office of the school district was treated as a separate case. Embedded units of analysis took on the form of the teachers and administrators interviewed throughout the inquiry. These units of analysis were compared to one another when interpreting the data collected in the study. Of the six different schools within the study, four are elementary schools, one is a middle school and one is a high school. These cases consisted of multiple levels that will include teaching staff, administrative staff and central office administrators, along with data gathered from observations and document analysis (De Vaus, 2001).

Site Selection

This site was purposefully selected because it could better help me understand the variables within my research questions (Creswell, 2009). Additionally, this site was chosen because as a researcher, I have deep knowledge of the local context of education within this school district, as I have spent a great deal of time within this community. Because of my extensive knowledge of the school district and the community, I have a better underlying understanding of the culture of the setting that will be beneficial while conducting observations, given that I already have existing knowledge of the professional learning model being utilized by the district. This district includes schools in varied settings, including schools classified as suburban, town and rural. The school district encompasses over 100 square miles and currently serves roughly 2,700 students. Demographically, the district is predominately white, with white students make up roughly 94% of the student population.

This conceptual framework has informed the development of my research methods by guiding me in selecting a site to conduct the research. As I am interested particularly in a school that has employed a shared leadership model because I am interested in how time in the classroom has an impact on instructional leadership, I selected schools that fit into this framework. The conceptual framework has also guided me in determining who to interview and what to observe within the inquiry. As I analyzed the entire organization in the context of being a shared leadership model, I talked to individuals throughout the different schools in each individual case. Further, the conceptual framework also guided the creation of the interview protocols. Specifically, the concepts that I am curious about were included in the questions that I posed to subjects within the units of analysis.

Data Collection

The staff that I interviewed within this inquiry included the superintendent, the assistant superintendent (who doubles as the director of curriculum and instruction), the director of special education, six building principals, two assistant principals, a dean of students and twelve teachers. The twelve teachers varied based on their level of teaching experience. Six teachers categorized as veteran teachers were interviewed; who had at least ten years of teaching experience. Six novice teachers were interviewed, with five years of full-time teaching experience or less to their credit. The school leaders were selected based on their formal position of leadership within the district. Teachers were selected based upon their levels of experience and the buildings in which they teach. I interviewed at least one teacher from each school and used my own experience criteria to guide in the selection process. I created a specific interview protocol based on these different embedded units of analysis that were broken into different sets of questions directed at central office administrators, building administrators and teachers.

The participants in this study all offer different perspectives on the research questions that I sought to understand. To best understand the phenomenon of instructional leadership, and how it relates to teaching experience in this particular setting, I discussed these topics with stakeholders who come in contact with these variables. Talking to school leaders while considering my conceptual framework helped me to understand how individuals ascend within the organization and how their experiences have shaped them as instructional leaders. I have come to understand how sponsored mobility plays a role in the selection process of these school leaders. I have gained understanding on how teachers relate to different leaders and how they interpret instructional leadership within the shared leadership dynamics of the school. In talking with both administrators and teachers, I have gained an understanding of how they see the roles of boundary spanners contributing to instructional leadership within the different sites. Talking with all of these different stakeholders has helped me to triangulate the data gathered on different levels throughout the case and better understand the interaction between teaching experience and instructional leadership within this setting.

Procedures

I developed semi-structured interview protocols for central office administrators (Appendix B), building level administrators (Appendix C) and teachers (Appendix D). I developed these protocols based upon how the different participant's positions align with my stated research questions. The transcription and memo-writing took place, generally within seventy-two hours of the conclusion of the interviews with teachers and administrators.

In addition to gathering data from interviewing, I also collected data from various observations and analysis of different documents. I gathered the data within the time frame of a calendar year, overlapping two different school years. The data was gathered in a variety of different ways. I

observed twenty-seven Act 48 in-service days throughout the course of a year, from March of 2018 to March of 2019. Teachers throughout the school district presented at thirteen of these sessions. Building administrators presented at six of these sessions. Outside presenters, who were invited in by the professional learning committee to present would lead four of these sessions. Central office administrators would lead three of the sessions. Guidance counselors would lead three of the sessions and instructional coaches would lead two of the sessions. Four of the sessions were collaborated between different groups of presenters.

I completed a thorough document analysis of in-service materials used during the Act 48 in-service days. I completed a document analysis of all pertinent district and school-wide policies and initiatives that were both in place or newly implemented that relate to instructional programs throughout the district.

Documentation Related to Instructional Leadership Opportunities

While attending these sessions throughout the course of a year as a teacher and researcher, I received seven documents that related to direct instructional leadership. These were given out at Professional Learning Sessions by the presenters at these sessions. Of the seven documents, one was created by a teacher, one was created by a coach and three were created by outside presenters. One of the documents was created by a principal, who used to be an English teacher. This session and document related to reading strategies. The other document was created and presented by a Central Office administrator, the director of special education. Her professional learning session revolved around special education regulations. This administrator used to be a special education teacher. The sources of these documents that relate to professional learning and instructional leadership further illustrate the model of shared instructional leadership that this school district has embraced.

Data Collection

By gathering data from a variety of different sources, I was able to triangulate the data, verifying my findings as the data came from multiple sources. Detailed field notes accompanied every piece of data within this study, along with writing descriptive memos and reflection pieces to the data that was collected. I analyzed the data using an open coding approach, from which I formed initial categories of information (Creswell, 1998) surrounding the variables within the study; the independent variable is the degree of prior teaching experience and the dependent variable being the value and quality of instructional leadership. I then implemented a selective coding strategy, creating a “storyline” about the data as it relates to the variables (Creswell, 1998).

Instructional leadership has conceptually changed over time, becoming more of a shared model (Marks & Printy, 2003). Effective instructional leaders were in many cases, considered to be good communicators and expressed a willingness to share instructional leadership responsibilities (Bartell, 1989; O'Hair & Reitzug, 1997). Effective instructional leader's excelled as networkers, connecting with outside resources to help with principals instructional practices (Coldren & Spillane, 2007). Instructional leaders were able to enhance student achievement by designing effective professional development activities aimed to enhance student learning (Hattie, 2005).

I juxtaposed the responses of different subjects, based on their levels of teaching experience. I compared different elementary schools with each other, along with comparing the elementary schools to the secondary schools in this collective case study (Stake, 1995). I provided a detailed description of each case and the themes within the case to complete a within-case analysis while also completing a thematic, cross-case analysis across all of the different

cases (Creswell, 1998). The interest of this study was to understand how, within schools in varied settings, teaching experience can influence how leaders are selected and how they lead a school towards achieving instructional goals. The nature of the data collected helped to clarify the relationship between these variables in these particular cases.

Data Analysis

In the following section I describe my procedures for data analysis in this qualitative case study. I coded my raw data using both inductive and deductive coding procedures. In my secondary coding phase I analyzed my data by looking at patterns across my codes. I describe this process further in the subsequent sections.

Data Collection and the Coding Process: Interviews

From Spring 2018 to Spring 2019, I conducted twenty-four interviews of teachers and administrators throughout the school district. Twelve teachers were interviewed throughout the district, two from each school building in the district. Six of these teachers were considered “veteran teachers” because they had at least ten years of teaching experience². There was one veteran teacher interviewed from each building. Six of these teachers were considered “novice teachers” meaning that they had no more than five years of full-time teaching experience as classroom teachers. There was one novice teacher interviewed from each building. There were twelve administrators interviewed throughout the district. Nine of the administrators interviewed were building-level administrators. Three of these administrators were central office administrators. Six building principals were interviewed in the inquiry. The two high school

² Scholars have not come to a shared consensus on the definition or criteria that informs whether an educator is a veteran teacher (Day & Gu, 2009; Zuckerman, 2001). Similarly, scholars draw on a range of definitions to identify novice teachers (Chubbuck et al., 2001; Tait, 2008).

assistant principals were interviewed along with an elementary school dean of students, from the largest elementary school in the district. The director of special education, the assistant superintendent and the superintendent were all interviewed for this study.

Interviews: Coding

I recorded and transcribed all of the interviews that took place within this inquiry. I typed up the field notes that corresponded with each interview. These notes included details from the interview along with my own memo notes from the conversations I had with individuals throughout the data gathering process. These notes and memos were included in my initial round of open coding.

A second round of open coding was conducted for everyone within the study grouped by positions. This was a coding of the responses to interview questions. Interview transcripts from twelve teachers were open coded within their group, nine building level interviews with administrators were coded within their group and the interviews with three central office administrators were coded within their group.

I further broke down the responses to these interview questions based on the experience level and professional level of the respondents. Another round of open coding was conducted for the six novice teachers. This was a coding of the responses of the interview responses.

Separately, another round of open coding was conducted for the six veteran teachers based upon their responses to the interview responses. I then coded interview transcripts for the two assistant principals and the dean of students, as these administrators shared similar job descriptions of dealing with student discipline within their buildings, the coding was based on their responses to the interview questions. This was a coding of the responses of the interview questions.

Additional opening coding was conducted for the six building principals, who were alike in their responsibilities of supervising the different schools within this school district. This was a coding

of the responses of the interview questions. Finally, I did additional open coding in the interview responses of the central office administrators, as different questions were asked to them within their interview protocols than the building level administrator's questions.

I then conducted additional open coding, based on the kinds of schools that educators worked within. I did another round of open coding for all of the elementary school teachers and administrators. This was a coding of the responses of the interview questions. I did the same for all of the secondary teachers and administrators, coding of the responses of the interview questions, so I could better compare the responses within elementary and secondary schools.

Deductive Coding. After extensive open coding of all interview responses, I used my research questions to both inform and create codes for the six buildings. The buildings were used as individual cases within the study. This was a coding of the responses of the interview questions, with the research questions helping to form the codes.

In addition to using my research questions to inform the coding for the various buildings, I also used my literature review create codes for all of the interviews. This was a coding of the responses of the interview questions, with the literature review helping to form the codes. This was done to better link the literature to the data found in the study, to analyze some of the findings that existed in the scholarship with my own research.

I incorporated my conceptual framework to inform and create questions and codes for all of my interviews. This was a coding of the responses of the interview questions, with the conceptual framework helping to form the codes. I wanted to analyze the data through the lens of the conceptual framework to better understand the pathway to the principalship and the dynamics of instructional leadership across the district and within the different cases being examined. An example of this would be when I asked "What does instructional leadership look like?" in an

interview with a veteran elementary school teacher. One of the things that he said in an extensive response was “It’s important, not just how to run a building but how to motivate your people to employ best practices” which I coded using deductive codes that pertained to instructional leadership. For further examples of coding, please refer to Appendix J titled “Example of Codes”.

The conceptual framework (Appendix A) was used in the develop a method to appropriately code the data, to further make meaning from it in reference to the research questions. I was able to gain a better understanding of how these experiences influenced leadership decisions within a shared leadership model, and who was used as boundary spanners within this model. This theory also guided me in understanding the teacher’s perspectives as well, in that in accordance with the ASA cycle, those with more classroom experience looked at leaders with similar experiences as more effective instructional leaders. I was able to gain insight on how these experiences may have played a role in the sponsored mobility of the teachers seeking the principalship. It was through the lens of this conceptual framework that I coded and made meaning of the data that I collected from a variety of different sources throughout the inquiry.

I used my research questions to inform and create codes for the central office administrators as well, as they are ultimately the supervisors of the instructional leadership taking place across all of the buildings throughout the district. They were not included when coding the schools with the codes informed by the research questions. Within my study, central office data is treated as a separate case. This was a coding of the responses of their interview questions, with the research questions helping to form the codes.

Observations: Coding

I observed professional learning sessions, which were the district-sponsored instructional leadership that was offered to faculty and staff. These sessions were held on Act 80 days from the Spring of 2018 to the Spring of 2019. During this time, I observed twenty-seven different professional learning sessions, and was able to better understand the nature of instructional leadership within the school district being studied, by observing it first-hand.

I created a set of field notes that corresponded with each session observed. I typed these notes up using the same format for all of the sessions I observed. These documents included detailed notes from the observation along with memo notes from some of my impressions of the session. These notes served as an initial round of open coding.

After this initial open coding, I used my research questions to inform and create codes that I used to analyze these observations. This was a coding of what I observed, with the codes based upon the research questions. In the same matter, I turned to and applied my literature review, using concepts from the scholarship to inform and create codes for all of the observations after my initial round of open coding. Thus I deductively coded my observations using codes based upon the literature review. I also completed an additional round of coding using the conceptual framework within my inquiry to inform and create the codes that I then used as an additional round of coding of the observation data.

Documents: Coding

I collected twenty-five documents from March of 2018 to March of 2019, that pertained to instructional leadership initiatives within the school district. These documents came from different sources and included literature that was disseminated at professional learning sessions that I attended, along with emails from various school administrators. These documents were coded and studied with the intent of understanding the nature of instructional leadership within

the school district for this inquiry. I created a set of field notes that corresponded with each document collected. My initial reflections included detailed notes about the content of the document along with memo notes about my impressions of the documents. I created these field notes using the same format for all of the documents collected and they served as my initial round of open coding.

After my open coding, I used my research questions to inform and create codes for the documents. This was a coding of information from the document, with the codes being based upon the research questions. I did the same thing using some of the important ideas from the literature review to inform and create codes in which I used to analyze the content of the documents. I completed a final round of coding the documents, using my conceptual framework to inform and create questions and codes to further analyze the documents that I collected during this study.

Coding Common Themes

After the coding was completed, I created an outline of themes that were linked to the common, recurring codes within the data set. Themes emerged from my analysis of the codes both within cases and across cases in the inquiry. Themes also emerged from the data collected from the interviews with central office administrators. Several recurring themes helped me to better understand the different philosophies and beliefs of various stakeholders across the district, and how their ideas related to the research questions within my own inquiry.

Limitations

Validity and Reliability

Recent writing from constructivist perspectives calls for a careful consideration of conceptualizations of validity and reliability (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Patton, 2015). Validity

deals with the issue of how the findings within the research match with reality (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Denzin and Lincoln (2000) express concern about evaluating validity, generalizability and reliability, calling it “the legitimation crisis” and asking for a serious re-thinking of the terms. In an effort to ensure the validity and reliability of this study, I collected data over the course of a year and utilized several strategies such as triangulation, adequate engagement and reflexivity.

Triangulation is a principal strategy to ensure validity and reliability within an interpretive-constructivist perspective (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Triangulation involves using multiple sources of data to confirm emerging findings (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). By using multiple methods of data collection such as interviews, observations and document analysis, I was able to consider what somebody told me in an interview and check against it in what I observed or read in related documents. Triangulation is an effective strategy to increase the credibility and validity of research (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015) and it was something that I deployed in this inquiry.

Adequate engagement is another strategy that I utilized in an effort to better make sense of the participants’ understanding of reality within my study. I talked to twenty-four people and spent a calendar year collecting data that spanned over two different school years. What I noticed throughout this process was that the data and emerging findings began to feel saturated; I was hearing and seeing the same things again and again.

In addition, I incorporated reflexivity in my work as a way to improve the integrity of the study was reflexivity, to understand how I was affecting the research process as the primary researcher (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). I sought to understand and explain my own biases and assumptions as it related to what I was investigating; and there by improved the integrity of the

study. Qualitative research is conducted so that researchers can describe and explain the world as those in the world experience it (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). By utilizing different strategies such as triangulation, adequate engagement and reflexivity, I was able to enhance the validity and reliability of the reality that surfaced amongst the various participants across the different cases within this study.

Instructional Leadership as a Phenomenon

The case study methodology has been used frequently when investigating various questions surrounding school leadership (Darling-Hammond, et al., 2007; Hoppey & McLeskey, 2002; Marks & Printy, 2003; Masumoto & Brown-Welty, 2009; Sanders & Harvey, 2002) which my study was designed to do. The ethnography method could have been used in this study to better understand the culture of the buildings and how they could have an impact on instructional leadership within the different schools (Creswell, 1998). However, I was less concerned with spending extensive time in gaining a depth of knowledge about this culture due to my own extensive knowledge of the district and the community, having already spent an extensive amount of time within these locations. While prolonged observation of the group culture would make behaviors more understandable during observations (Creswell, 1998), I feel that the time I have already spent within the group culture has helped me to understand the behaviors and culture within the school district. I had rapport with many of the people that I talked with in this inquiry. I think that this was beneficial to me as a researcher because these individuals were comfortable talking to me and opening up to me about the questions that I asked them. In many cases, they gave such personal anecdotes about their co-workers in their responses. In talking with other individuals that I did not have a prior rapport with, they seemed more guarded in their responses. In some cases it felt like they were answering questions in a job interview and they

were using different buzz-words in their responses. Because the participants were being interviewed by a colleague, this may have caused them to be more guarded in the responses that they gave to questions. Talking to people using this approach helped me to understand how individuals viewed instructional leadership differently, based on the setting they worked in and their past experiences. In my research, I collected data over the course of two different school years, which was not my original intention but just the way that my research timeline unfolded. It did not have a big impact on who I was able to interview, because I was still able to interview all of the individuals that I initially identified, but it may have had an impact on their responses, based on the kind of school year that they were having. The data I collected from professional learning days through observations and document analysis was similar across both school years, as the same kinds of sessions were offered. For a two month period while I was collecting data, I was also filling in as an assistant principal for the High School. Most of my interviews had been concluded by this time, the interviews that I did conduct were with some teachers from different buildings and some higher level administrators. I estimate that my position at the time of this data collection had little, if an impact as I was not working directly with the teachers that I spoke with and the administrators that I talked with were either my own supervisor or a principal in another building. By conducting a case study, I was able to better understand the particular relationship (Yazan, 2015) between teaching experience and instructional leadership and how it varies within different building cultures throughout a school district.

Situational Interpretations

An important limitation to ASA theoretical framework is that it does not account for a situationist interpretation of what made for positive job attitudes (Schneider, 1987). Attitudes about the job or the setting have come with workers from outside of the organization (Schneider,

1987). Another important limitation is that the framework may not account for how individual supervisors may have an impact on the overall group culture of the organization. The culture may not be the product of the overall group values, but rather a reaction between those values and the agenda of an individual in a supervisory role. Exploration of shared leadership may not be uniformly interpreted the same way by all of the subjects within the inquiry. Also, the concept of sponsored mobility could be misconstrued or marginalized by respondents during interviews.

Trustworthiness

Qualitative validity means that the researcher checks for the accuracy of findings by employing certain procedures, while qualitative reliability indicates that the researcher's approach is consistent across different researchers and different projects (Creswell, 2009). Because of this, I made it a priority to accurately transcribe my interviews, to make sure that important themes were being accurately recorded. The coding process was conducted consistently and accurately, so that I had a consistent interpretation of the data across the board. This included a clear, operationalized definition of the dependent variable in my study. It was also important to triangulate different data sources of information by examining evidence from the sources and using it to build a coherent justification of the themes (Creswell, 2009). The success of this design was contingent on describing the findings in a clear, detailed way. This study did not generalize my findings to instructional leadership in all suburban, town and rural schools. The value of this type of inquiry lies in the particular description and themes developed in context of a particular site, focusing on particularity instead of generalizability (Creswell, 2009). An important aspect to ensure the validity of the work was to appropriately code the data that resulted in the analysis of the themes that surfaced through the data collection.

Researcher's Role

I had to both understand and clarify my own personal bias that I bring to this study, and understand that the interpretations of my findings can be shaped by my own background (Creswell, 2009). In my case, it would be the background of a veteran teacher. This background has contributed to the selection of the research setting, as it took place in a district in which I have taught. Many of the subjects know me on a personal level. In the past, I have had a working relationship with many of them for several years. In addition to having worked closely with several of the teachers being interviewed in this study, I have also worked closely with several of the administrators. In the past, I served this district as a principal intern, working closely with several building-level and central office administrators. I have also worked closely with these administrators as a member of several building-wide and district wide committees. I think that in many ways, my own experience in working closely with many of the individuals in the study was to the benefit of the study, as I feel that individuals felt comfortable in opening up to me, giving me candid, detail-laden responses to my interview questions. At the same time, it may have led to some of the individuals I interviewed not being as open with me, because they knew that I worked within the school district and they perhaps, did not want their true opinions to be known by a colleague.

My years as a veteran teacher also bring certain biases to the study. I commenced this study with the opinion that classroom experience as a teacher is a useful quality to be possessed by a school administrator. This bias could have shaped the ways in which I formulated questions and interpreted responses. In addition to consideration of this bias, I needed to also maintain an ethical approach to this study. I took several steps to safeguard the rights of the participants including; verbally articulating the objectives of the research, written permission to proceed with

the study that is articulated by the informant, explaining to the informant the different kinds of data collection activities and devices, verbatim transcripts made available to the informant and the final decision of anonymity will rest with the informant (Creswell, 2009).

The design of my inquiry was based on an explanatory case study approach, using the collective case study method (Stake, 1995). I explained design for this qualitative research study within this chapter including the context and tools that I used to gather my data for my study in the methods section along with the site selection process. Finally, I described the limitations and trustworthiness of my inquiry along with my role as a researcher within the study. In the upcoming chapter, I present the details of the seven cases within my inquiry.

Chapter 4

In this chapter I present six school-level cases and one case for the central office administration of the Chief Logan School District. For each case, I begin with the context of the particular school or district before drawing on my data to present the case in more detail. I discuss perspectives of teachers and administrators within these cases, and how their ideas relate to my research questions. Additionally, I draw upon data collected from my observations and document analysis as it pertains to the research questions of my inquiry.

Findings: Teachers value leaders with similar experiences

District Context: Chief Logan School District

This district includes schools in varied settings, including schools classified as suburban, town and rural. The school district includes six different schools within it, four elementary schools, a middle school and a high school. The school district encompasses 118 square miles and currently serves roughly 2,700 students. Demographically, the district is predominately white, with white students making up roughly 94% of the student population.

Instructional Leadership Observations

Based on my observations over the course of one year, instructional leadership is divided throughout the district with the teachers taking on the biggest share of delivering instructional leadership. The school district offers district-wide professional learning days, at which all teachers are able to sign up for sessions that they find pertinent to their own professional development. The days are organized by a professional learning committee, comprised of teachers and administrators throughout the school district, chaired by the middle school principal. It is at these committee meetings where the schedule of sessions offered to the entire school district is devised. These professional learning days are thematic, ranging from wellness days to safety days. As the primary researcher, I made it my objective to attend sessions that

were pertinent to instructional leadership, as defined in the literature review as activities focused on enhancing student achievement (Hattie, 2005). The instructional leadership in the school district is being shared by the different stakeholders and the teachers have taken the largest role in presenting on these professional learning days.

Washington Elementary School

Washington Elementary School is the largest elementary school in Chief Logan school district. As the primary researcher, I interviewed two teachers and two administrators that work within this school. After speaking with teachers and administrators, there seems to be some different perspectives on how instructional leadership happens within the school. In particular, the veteran teacher feels that principals are not as involved with instructional leadership as they should be, while the principal described how they were heavily involved with instructional leadership, in particular, with setting up a supervision program within the school.

Washington Elementary School - Teachers

Jimmy Rainee is a K-5 music teacher with five years of teaching experience. Jimmy teaches elementary general music classes and fifth grade chorus classes. Jimmy talked about teaching a “specials” class like music makes it more difficult to receive specialized training that is specific to his discipline. As a result of this, he has attended several “All-State” music conferences that have helped him to grow. He also talked about how his own reflections, and conversations with his wife, who is an elementary music teacher in another school district have helped him to improve his craft.

Steve Allman is a fourth grade teacher with twenty-three years of experience. Steve offered some interesting perspective about the development of instructional leadership in this

school district over a twenty-three year period and was discouraged with the present state of it within his school and the district as a whole. He talked about how the principals from earlier in his career had spent a significant amount of time teaching and how the trend now had been to hire individuals with less than ten years of experience into the classroom. He also talked about how much of the role of instructional leadership had been delegated to instructional coaches, who he deemed to be not as knowledgeable with instructional practices within the classroom.

Washington Elementary School - Administrators

Mary Gregg is the dean of students of Washington Elementary School. Mary just finished her second year in the dean of students role; having twenty-one years of experience in education overall. Mary had been a principal of a small Catholic elementary school prior to working in the school district. She had taught at the elementary level for about nine years prior to her administrative roles. She never intended to go into school administration, she hails from a family of teachers. She was encouraged by colleagues to get into administration, in large part because she was a good listener. She gained valuable teaching experiences from communicating with families and was always heavily involved with community service groups such as the Kiwanis and Rotary, roles that helped to prepare her for her current position. Her current role does not deal nearly as much with instruction as it does student discipline, though she does support teachers in the ways that she can.

Sarah Owens is the principal of Washington Elementary School. Sarah had seven years of teaching experience prior to entering administration. Sarah's teaching experience came at the high school level, where she taught all subjects within a special education setting. After teaching for a couple of years, Sarah knew that she wanted to pursue a career in administration and was strongly encouraged by her building principal to pursue various leadership roles within the

school district. Sarah talked about the importance of reflecting upon her time in the classroom as an administrator, particularly on how to support teachers as a principal. Sarah has been an administrator for the last thirteen years and has twenty years in education overall.

Teachers Value Teaching Experience. When talking with the teachers, it became very clear that they valued their principals to possess teaching experience, so they could better understand what happens in the classroom on a day to day basis, along with and how their role as educators has changed over the years. Jimmy Rainee, the novice teacher interviewed at Washington Elementary commented that principals should “know what good instruction really is and they should be able to do it themselves”. Jimmy said that, “they should know what it is to be in my shoes”. The veteran teacher interviewed from Washington, was also very descriptive when talking about a principal’s teaching experience. When asked if it was important for a principal to have significant teaching experience, his response was, “I believe they have to”. Steve Allman would also go on to describe his beliefs in more detail:

Our assistant superintendent says, “Well when I was in the classroom twenty years ago and I know what it’s like”, not even close. That was pre-internet. That was pre-social media. That was longer attention spans. That was pre-opiate, the impacts of opiate addiction. If a principal hasn’t been in a classroom recently, they really just don’t know.

Jimmy Rainee went on to describe instructional leaders as not necessarily being principals but being veteran teachers, specifically, Steve Allman. Jimmy described the veteran teachers as helping him understand how to teach and interact with students better. Jimmy Rainee said that he “absolutely relates better to teachers with experience” and that he doesn’t “know all of my principal’s teaching experience”.

Veteran teacher Steve Allman went on to describe in detail his views of the principal's teaching experience and how it relates to their practice as an instructional leader. In Steve's view, the principals today lack classroom experience which has had a negative impact on the way that instructional leadership happens within his building. He said that "we have well-meaning individuals in administrative leadership positions but I can name too many that have spent fewer than ten years in the classroom and one who was never a classroom teacher". He said that:

The leadership that used to come from principals who we knew possessed the same skills as we do have more or less been replaced by what we call instructional coaches. Peers, knowledgeable peers, well-intended peers, but none-the-less peers, who might have more training than I in a certain area or might just have an interest and they receive these coaching positions.

In talking about the new role of the instructional coaches and how they are involved with instructional leadership, he would go on to say:

To me, that is a marginally acceptable substitute for a well-trained principal or assistant principal, but for whatever reason, that's just not where our district is right now and that's a shame because if you haven't done it, I don't want to be told how I should do it.

When asked how principals play a role in identifying instructional goals or guiding the instructional vision of the school, Steve felt that principals no longer play a role in this. He said:

I don't anymore, at least the last two principals that have been at Washington Elementary, one was never in the classroom and the other was a high school learning support teacher. Both fine people, but I rarely had instructional discussions with either of them.

This particular veteran teacher made it apparent that he is discouraged with the way that instructional leadership is being disseminated in his building and clearly feels that these practices have changed in a negative way, over the course of his career.

How Principals Apply Their Teaching Experience. The Dean of Students, Mary Gregg had taught in elementary schools for nine years, preschool through grade six. She does not have a direct role in setting instructional goals within her building, given that her role is primarily student discipline; however, she did talk about how she draws on her teaching experiences as a dean of students. Her experiences in speaking with parents as a teacher have helped her in her current role. She talked about how being a teacher helped her to become a good listener, which is important when trying to help parents and students. Mary described her teaching experience as helping her to relate to the teachers in the building in that she understands what they go through, “They all put in above and beyond, so when you have a passion for teaching and children, that’s a piece of it”.

Principal Sarah Owens described her own experience in the classroom as teaching special education at the high school level for seven years, teaching the subjects of Math, Science, English and Social Studies. She discussed the importance of knowing what goes on in the classroom and talked about the importance of being a good listener. She emphasized the importance of giving good feedback within her role as an instructional leader and talked about how she valued it as a teacher, saying:

When I was a teacher, it was really important for me to have feedback, whether it was critical feedback, positive feedback, whatever it was, constructive feedback. I needed that, I crave that and I feel that a lot of us in the world of education crave feedback.

She talked about how this feedback can lead to valuable discussions that can help a teacher grow.

Both of the administrators at Washington Elementary school talked about how their teaching experience guides them in their current roles in a variety of different ways. It is the task of the principal in this building to steer the teachers of Washington Elementary towards meeting the instructional goals of the school. Building rapport and providing positive feedback are things that this principal valued. She talked in depth about how she implemented a supervision cycle for all of the teachers within her building, something that did not exist prior to her becoming the principal at Washington Elementary School. She described this, saying:

I don't want to talk poorly about the past, this building, literally, this is the first year in I don't know how many years where they have a real supervision cycle, where they have sat down, where we have a had a pre-obs, obs, post-obs, where we have sat down and made goals and discussed those goals together, this building has never had that.

Now, for the first time in years, the teachers of Washington Elementary School are being observed by an administrator and getting feedback about their lessons.

Teachers and Principals Value Different Kinds of Experiences. The teachers and principals looked at the relationship between a principals' teaching experience and their instructional leadership in different ways. The teachers believed that the principals needed to possess prior teaching experience to be an effective instructional leader. They really valued this experience; the novice teacher valued it so much that he did not seek advice from administrators but rather, from veteran teachers in his building. The veteran teacher was clearly discouraged in that he believed the principal was falling short in providing this kind of leadership. The administrators talked at length about their experience and how it helps them in their current

administrative roles. They talked about the importance of supporting teachers, relating with teachers and communicating with parents and other stakeholders. The principal talked specifically about the importance of feedback and how she valued it as a teacher. She talked about how she implemented a supervision schedule for her school, in which she would observe all of the teachers in the building and provide them with feedback, the feedback she valued herself as teacher.

Teachers Value Principals' Prior Teacher Experiences

Teachers described teaching experience as being a necessary attribute for administrators to possess. Jimmy Rainee, a music teacher with five years of experience said that “I wouldn’t want to have somebody telling me what to do in my classroom and how to have my classroom or how to approach and treat students in certain ways if they had no experience themselves”. Steve Allman talked at length about how the classroom had changed over the last twenty years and how if the principal had not been in the classroom recently, then they don’t really know. The desire of teachers for their principals to possess significant classroom experience was consistent across the interviews of these teachers among others throughout the different buildings within the study.

The Experiences of the Principals

The dean of students spent nine years teaching various elementary grade levels. The principal spent seven years teaching high school special education. The principal talked about the importance of always knowing what goes on in the classroom, and how this is essential to support teachers. She said that:

You can't forget what goes on in the classroom, we can't forget how important this is, that's for sure. And often I still reflect, even though I'm a few years beyond starting in an admin. role on what it's like to be in a classroom full of kids.

The dean of students had a lot of experiences with community service prior to going into school administration. She worked with Rotary, Kiwanis and her church. The principal worked at several youth camps but said that, "teaching and being a principal is all I really know".

Teachers and Principals Both Value Classroom Experience.

The teachers interviewed want their principals to have significant prior teaching experience. The principals described similar sentiments to the teachers in relation to prior teaching experience, and described the value of their experiences, both in and out of the classroom, and how these experiences have helped them in their current positions. The common thread in all of the interviews is that classroom experience is highly valued as a necessary prerequisite for individuals to possess prior to entering the principalship.

Teacher Thoughts on Principal's Leadership Towards Meeting Instructional Goals

Jimmy Rainee misinterpreted this question and did not discuss the role that the principals have in identifying building wide instructional goals; instead he discussed how he applies his own principles towards meeting his own instructional goals. Steve Allman talked at length about how principals at his school have lacked instructional experience and have not been effective instructional leaders. He talked about how the leadership now comes from instructional coaches, who were just more or less other teachers, and how this was a "marginally exceptional substitute". Steve explained the dynamics between teachers and coaches saying that "a coach is a conduit on information. The coach gets all of the instructional resources and classroom resources

to the teacher and provides professional development to the different grade levels”. When talking about how this has changed the role of the principal, he said that:

I’ll be honest, this is my principal’s end of her first year coming up and we never have talked about instruction. So you hope to get it from your peers, you get it from coaches, but it does not come from administrators.

Steve was consistent with his responses and was noticeably discouraged about the state of instructional leadership in his school.

Administrator Thoughts on leading towards meeting instructional goals

The Dean of Students, Mary Gregg did not discuss the creation of building-wide instructional goals, as she had already explained how that was not her role, her role is to deal with student discipline. For Principal Sarah Owens, the job of goal-setting is one of her most important responsibilities, saying, “that is one of my primary jobs, what we do as an admin. team will determine what our district goals are for the year.” She went on to describe about how these district goals are created every year by the administration team and how the needs of her own building are woven into these goals. She talked about how she helps her building work towards these goals throughout the year by keeping the momentum of the building moving towards these goals.

Different opinions on the role of a Principal as an instructional leader.

The veteran teacher interviewed at this school feels that the principal does not play enough of a role with instructional leadership and painting the instructional vision of the school. The principal conversely, described this as one of her primary responsibilities. She talked about her role as a facilitator in moving her building towards these goals and how she valued and

implemented a supervision program within her school which has helped her lead teachers by providing them with valuable feedback.

Summary and Next Steps. Based on the conversations that I had with teachers and administrators within Washington Elementary School, the dilemma that surfaced, according to the teachers was administrative supervision and how it provides instructional leadership. In the future, Principal Owens should consider how her administrative leadership is providing teachers, particularly veteran teachers with meaningful instructional leadership. Sarah Owens talked at length about how important this was for her as a teacher, and how important it is for her currently as an instructional leader within her building in helping to provide valuable feedback for teachers. Observations and supervision were not mentioned by the teachers interviewed within this school during interviews. As a researcher, it would be interesting to talk to them specifically about what this supervision looks like to them and how they have benefitted from it.

Stoney Pointe Elementary School

Stoney Pointe Elementary School is the second largest of four elementary schools in Chief Logan school district. I interviewed two teachers and the principal that work within this school. After speaking with teachers and administrators, there was a consensus on the value of teaching experience and how it helps a principal relate to teachers, with the principal going as far as to describe the difficulty of adjusting to the role of a principal, particularly when one lacks extensive classroom experience. The teachers and principal had different impressions on the principal's role as an instructional leader; the teachers did not view the principal as being heavily involved with instructional leadership, while the principal talked about how they provided support for their teachers, while being heavily involved in moving the building toward meeting instructional goals.

Stoney Pointe Elementary School - Teachers

Nicole Weston is an elementary school learning support teacher with three years of teaching experience. Nicole is a special education teacher whose primary focus is teaching remedial math and reading. Nicole talked at length about her perspective of a special education teacher, and how her experience is unique when compared to the grade-level teachers of an elementary school. In her view, she thought that professional growth was tailored to the grade-level classroom teachers and was frustrated about a lack of opportunities offered by the district for her own professional growth.

Kendra Rogers is a kindergarten teacher with thirty three years of experience. Prior to teaching kindergarten, Kendra taught first grade for twenty-five years. More than any other teacher interviewed within the study, Kendra frequently mentioned the role of the curriculum in guiding the instruction being delivered to students across the district. She did not talk about the curriculum process, because she was not asked about it. With her extensive experience, she could describe some of the different dynamics that existed between herself and various school leaders over the course of her career.

Stoney Pointe Elementary School - Principal

Sally Smith is the principal of Stoney Pointe Elementary School. Sally had seven years of teaching experience prior to entering administration. Sally did not teach within a traditional school setting but for the Private Industry Council, which is a private, non-profit organization. Sally taught career classes within this capacity, similar to that of a co-op teacher. Sally never intended on pursuing a career in administration, but instead “fell into it”. She was strongly encouraged to pursue administrative positions by the administrators that she worked with in the

public schools, with one of these principals serving as her mentor. Sally has been an administrator for the last seventeen years and has twenty four years in education overall.

Teachers value teaching experience

When discussing the relationship between teaching experience and instructional leadership, the responses of these teachers varied based on their own experiences. Part of this was amplified by one of the teachers being a regular education classroom teacher and the other being a special education teacher. Kendra Rogers, a teacher with thirty three years of experience teaching kindergarten and first grade said repeatedly that the curriculum limits the instructional leadership the principals can provide but went on to talk about how principals are able to help out in their area of expertise, saying “the last principal, hers was Language Arts, her background, so she was very good at giving guidance of what’s needed”. She said that teaching experience is important for principals to have because “they need to know what goes into the day and what the kids are doing and what it’s like to be in the classroom at that age level”. She went on to say that, “I have had principals, who have not had a lot of experience at the primary level, but they had had intermediate and they were not sure what goes on in the classroom”. She told the story of a former principal who thought her classroom was too “busy” but then “later he realized and he actually apologized and said he didn’t realize what went on in a primary classroom”. This principal had previously taught at the high school level. These ideas were similar with those of other teachers in other buildings, who talked about how not only teaching experience, but experience specific to the level of the school that the principal is supervising is beneficial to the principal, as it helps them relate to the unique challenges of different classrooms.

Nicole Weston, a special education teacher at Stoney Pointe Elementary School with three years of experience offered some different perspective as a learning support teacher. She

said that principals “do not understand special ed. as effectively as those who teach it”. She felt that she lacked opportunities for instructional leadership saying that “this past year, we did not have that opportunity at all. So we were pretty much on our own in that regard.” She would go on to emphasize the importance of principals to possess teaching experience saying that it makes them more relatable. She said that “by being in the classroom and then moving up to become a principal, you have that experience and you are more likely to relate to them.” Both of the teachers from this school felt that teaching experience is an important factor in the growth of development of the principal as an instructional leader.

How the Principal Applies Teaching Experience

The principal of Stoney Pointe Elementary School, Sally Smith, has seven years of teaching experience as a Co-op teacher in Career Education. She did this at the private industry council, and worked with different school districts in the area. She taught career classes and worked with employers. She has never taught at the elementary level. When asked about how long she had taught for, her response was, “I taught for seven years, not long enough I might add.” She talked about when she first began working at the school district as a vice principal at the middle school, how a district administrator helped to mentor her into becoming an instructional leader. This administrator told her, “you have to step up, they won’t have respect for you if you are always dumping it on someone else, you’re not showing them that you are an instructional leader.” She said that “I did not have experience teaching middle school classes at all, so and she worked with me as some sort of mentor, and helped me develop some of that confidence to do professional learning”. When she opened up about how her teaching experiences impact her development and practice as an instructional leader, she would go on to say that:

Where I think I fell short I think, I didn't teach long enough. I didn't know. I just felt like I needed more experience in the classroom to be, not have such a learning curve as a principal. I think there is a bigger learning curve if you didn't teach long enough.

She talked about her role as an instructional leader as being a resource to her teachers. She talked about how her teaching experiences did help her to relate with kids better, saying that "whatever experience you have, I think you can use with whatever kids you are working with." She said that used her:

Mom experience, you use your teacher experience, you use whatever you are doing, if you are doing stuff at church, that kind of stuff, you use all those experiences and try to just relate and realign to people, the parents and the teachers, it all just blends together and you figure it out.

Sally Smith was adamant about the importance of her teaching experience and wished she had had more of it to prepare her for her current role as a principal.

Different Ideas About Teaching Experience and Instructional Leadership. The teachers offered contrasting perspectives in part, because they had very different roles within the school, the role of a kindergarten teacher and the role of a learning support teacher. The veteran kindergarten teacher talked about how the school is essentially led by a pre-existing curriculum, though sometimes, based on that principal's area of expertise, they are able to lead effectively. The special education teacher talked about how she did not feel supported by the principal, and that principals have a hard time relating to her, the principal talked at length about the importance of teaching experience in her role as an instructional leader and wished that she possessed more experience prior to entering administration.

Principals Should Have Significant Teaching Experience Prior to the Principalship

Kendra Rogers and Nicole Weston both found it necessary for principals to have teaching experience. Kendra Rogers said that she has a lot more in common with school leaders who have teaching experience. She specified that it is even more beneficial for principals to have experience teaching the age group within their school, saying:

I think a principal has knowledge and a background at that grade level or close to that grade level. They may not have taught kindergarten but some people can't do that. So yeah, at least to know what it's like to get in there, get your feet wet.

Nicole Weston said that teaching experience can help a principal to relate better with teachers, saying that, "by being in the classroom and then moving up to become a principal, you have that experience and you are more likely to relate to them." She said that as a teacher, "if you can relate more closely to a principal, you are going to have a better relationship with them". Both of these teachers found teaching experience to be a valuable asset for a principal to possess.

The Experiences of the Principal

It was not teaching experience that Sally Smith drew upon on her pathway to the principalship, but instead it was her close work with public school administrators while working at the Private Industry Council. She said that she was encouraged by the principal and superintendent of the first school district that hired her, they said to her, "We want you to get your principal certificate". Sally Smith was able to draw from her wide range of work experiences that included the Private Industry Council, the Meadows Psychiatric Center, a Juvenile Detention Center and McDonalds to help her better relate to different groups of people, including parents. Though she does regret not teaching longer before entering administration, she

is able to draw upon her wide range of experiences to work with people from all different groups. In talking about her experience, she said that it:

Makes me focus a little more like we are not just teaching a kid English, reading and writing. We are teaching kids to be a citizen. And that is sort of where I come from. Even if they go to college, there is some level where they have to make it at some point. So what are you doing now; do you want them to be a taxpayer?

The goal of helping her students become future taxpayers is strongly connected with her experience as a co-op teacher.

Principals Benefit From Teaching Experience. The teachers talk about the importance of principals having teaching experience in that it helps them relate to the teachers and what they are doing day to day in the school. The principal talks about teaching experience, but also about their additional experiences that helped them work with different groups of people. The principal talked about how these experiences helped them to sharpen their people skills. The goal of producing future taxpayers is the underlying instructional goal of Sally Smith, the principal of Stoney Pointe Elementary School. Both teachers and the principals agreed upon one thing; significant teaching experience is an important thing for all principals to have.

Teacher Thoughts on the Principal's Leadership Towards Instructional Goals

The responses from teachers in reference to the role of the principal of identifying building wide instructional goals varied based on the experiences of the teachers. Kendra Rogers talked at length about how the pre-determined curriculum is what guides the instruction of the school. She said that much of the principal's focus is on the performance on assessments, particularly standardized tests, saying, "they are focusing on those PSSA tests and their building scores." She talked about how instructional coaches have helped out with new programs with

math and language arts. In reference to instructional coaches, she said, “I think they empower us a lot because they give us motivation and they help us out coming into the classroom.” Nicole Weston was discouraged by the support she had received from her principal, saying that, “I think that for them to identify with goals for special ed. is harder and I don’t think they do it as whole-heartedly as they help classroom teachers because they can’t identify with it as much.” She went on to say that she was “a little disappointed” with the amount of instructional empowerment that she had received from the principal and the director of special education in the past school year. These teachers did not speak of their principal as an instructional resource that was moving them towards the completion of instructional goals.

Administrator Thoughts on Leading towards Meeting Instructional Goals

In response to the question about her role as an instructional leader within her building, Sally Smith said, “tag, I’m it.” She talked in detail about how the instructional goals for the entire district are created at the district retreat each year, and the challenges of developing building goals that line up with the district goals. This is one of her responsibilities as a building principal. Part of this challenge is determining the scope of the goals. She talked about some of the considerations that she has made in the past in relation to creating goals:

What I found over the years was not to be too broad or too narrow, where does the line fit in between? Too broad and nothing really happens, nothing gets done. Too narrow and it’s too focused on the individual and not the good of the order.

She described her role as one of being a resource for her teachers, to help them in the best ways that she can.

Different Ideas About the Role of the Principal as an Instructional Leader. The responses varied on how the principal helps to support the instructional goals. Kendra Rogers,

the veteran teacher talked extensively throughout her entire interview about how the curriculum is what leads the teachers towards instructional goals. She also talked about the expanding role of instructional coaches in the school. Nicole Weston, the novice teacher felt that she was not supported by the principal, because she was a learning support teacher and not a grade-level teacher. Sally Smith, the principal talked a lot about how the creation of and guidance towards meeting instructional goals was primarily her responsibility and how she helps her teachers towards these goals by being a resource.

Summary and Next Steps. Based on the conversations that I had with teachers and administrators within this school, the dilemma that surfaced, according to a special education teacher is that the district was not providing her with adequate professional opportunities. Nicole Weston was the only special education teacher interviewed within this inquiry and she offered some interesting perspective on what instructional leadership looks like to her. Considerations for Principal Sally Smith and Special Education Director Elizabeth Denappoli, on how they could make professional learning opportunities more meaningful for special education teachers should be made. Another theme that surfaced in this case is the role of curriculum in guiding the instructional process in the district, a consideration to be made by instructional leaders within this district is how much of an should curriculum have in guiding instructional leadership objectives?

Grove Park Elementary School

Grove Park Elementary School is the third largest of four elementary schools in Chief Logan school district. I interviewed two teachers and the principal that work within this school. After speaking with teachers and administrators, there seems to be some consensus on how teaching experience impacts instructional leadership within the school. In particular, the teachers

not only value teaching experience, but specifically elementary teaching experience, as they see it to be an important attribute for principals to possess to make them more relatable. The principal of this school talked at length about his experiences in an elementary classroom and how they have helped to guide him in his current role as an instructional leader.

Grove Park Elementary School - Teachers

Renee Kalyn is a Kindergarten teacher with four years of full time teaching experience. Prior to this position, she had different experiences working as a substitute teacher in different placements. She talked about how professional growth opportunities have expanded during her time in the school district. She explained how she had different experiences with principals over the years, and how having classroom experience provides principals with important perspective on the challenges that teachers face.

Jody Thomas is a second grade teacher with ten years of experience. Prior to teaching second grade, she taught kindergarten and first grade. Jody offered some interesting perspective on how instructional leadership has changed over the years in this school district, describing the addition instructional coaches and the improvement of the reading and math curriculums. She talked about how the principal of her school helps to push the teachers to meet their instructional goals by implementing data to help improve teacher test scores. She talked at length about the benefits of working under a principal with extensive elementary teaching experience, often comparing it to her own experiences of teaching multiple grade levels within an elementary school setting.

Grove Park Elementary School - Principal

Willie Clemente is the Principal of Grove Park Elementary School. Willie taught various grade levels within an elementary setting for fourteen and half years prior to entering

administration. Willie has been an administrator for the last ten years and has twenty five years in education overall. Willie also coached girls' softball for fifteen years. Willie never intended on being a principal when he first entered education, he loved teaching and coaching. He was encouraged by his principal to pursue an administrative track, while being given administrative tasks to take on while teaching. Willie continues to draw heavily on his teaching experiences in his current role as a principal.

Teachers Value Teaching Experience

After talking to the teachers, it became apparent that they were better able to relate to Principals that had more teaching experience. Both teachers compared their own experiences with principals who had spent more time in the classroom against those that have not and spoke favorably about the dynamics that existed between themselves and the principals who had taught for a longer time. Rennee Kalyn, a Kindergarten Teacher with four years of full-time teaching experience said that:

I feel being in a classroom can really put a different perspective on administrators to know what it's like and to really see your side of the story. I have been in both situations, I have been with a principal that never really had classroom experience and I have been with one that has and there is definitely a difference in their understanding of you and the needs of your students than the one who has not.

Jody Thomas, a Second Grade teacher with ten years of experience elaborated on her ideas of the importance of principals to have teaching experience, saying, "sometimes I think that principals always spend a short period of time in the classroom and then they become an administrator. They have great ideas, but sometimes I think they are too far removed from the

classroom”. She would go on to say that, “I think having more experience would help alleviate some of those problems”.

Jody specifically described her own interactions with her building principal. She talked about how school leaders with more experience are more relatable and better able to help her if she needs support or has questions. She said that:

My building principal right now, he has taught at least three different grade levels. So sometimes when I go into him to talk about a problem that I have, he is able to say, I remember when that happened to me or, I have also switched grade levels three times in ten years.

She talked about how “people that have longer teaching experience I think would be able to relate more to teachers who remain in the classroom.” It was interesting that both of these teachers’ shared very similar sentiments about the impact that teaching experience has on their own relationships with school principals.

Specific Teaching Experience is Important. In addition to talking about the importance of teaching experience for principals, Jody Thomas spoke specifically about the importance of the kind of experience that principals have in the classroom. In talking about the experiences of principals, Jody said, “they have great ideas but sometimes I think they are far too removed from the classroom. Or maybe they were a high school learning support teacher and then they end up trying to be a principal at the elementary level”. Jody suggested an idea of having a student teaching program for principals, to expose them to the challenges that exist at different grade levels. She said:

If they could experience different levels of either teaching, or kind of like a student teaching for principals at the different levels, so they can kind of see how things need to

be handled and different problems that may arise and also experiencing the elementary school and multiple buildings, not just one.

Jody talked about how not only having teaching experience, but a variety of teaching experiences would help not only principals but teachers as well.

How the Principal Applies Teaching Experience

Willie Clemente, the Principal of Grove Park Elementary School has taught for fourteen and a half years. He has taught for seven years in third grade, six years in fourth grade and a year and half in fifth grade. He talked about how he draws on this teaching experience as an instructional leader, explaining:

I drew upon it constantly, tremendously. If I didn't have that strong teaching background and the fourteen and half years of experience and the experiences to kind of refer back to and to form my philosophy and my position on education, it would have been impossible to become a principal.

Willie also talked about his experience coaching and how it helped to prepare him for his role as an administrator. He talked specifically about how his teaching experiences impacted his leadership practices. As a principal, he drew upon his experience as a teacher when implementing a literacy strategy in his school, explaining, "One of the big strategies we were using years ago was balanced literacy, with guided literacy and literature circles and the constant assessment of students." He went on further to say that:

That has come back around and we are doing that now with Fountas and Pinnell classroom system now as well, so those experiences, all of my teaching experiences really help what I am trying to do here and they help me when I go into classroom and I am looking to see what I feel teachers should be doing.

He also talked about how his teaching experiences drove him to be a collaborative leader and how it helped him to become patient with students and families.

Teachers and Principals Value Similar Experiences. The teachers and principal within this building, more so than other buildings within the study, had the most common ground in the responses to the questions. The teachers were very adamant about how they not only valued the classroom experience that their principal had but the kinds of experiences that he had. They talked about how they saw a connection between teaching experience and instructional leadership. The principal of this building draws upon these experiences consistently as a leader. These experiences were described, in detail within the principal's responses to the questions. This principal talked about his teaching experiences and described how they have helped him to develop as a leader.

Teachers Want Principals to have Experience Prior to the Principalship

Teachers described teaching experience as an important quality for administrators to possess. Rennee Kalyn talked about being better able to relate to principals with teaching experience, saying that:

I feel I better relate to those who have teaching experience because they get it, they understand me and where I am coming from with some of the things that I am asking about or support that I would be needing.

Jody Thomas talked about how her principal has taught and least three grade levels, and how he has the ability to make connections to his time in the classroom by "being able to relate to experiences and relate to behaviors and parents, just a variety of different scenarios." Both of these teachers felt very strongly that principals should have teaching experience prior to becoming principals.

The Experiences of the Principals

Willie Clemente said that he drew upon his teaching experiences “constantly, tremendously” during the process in which he was hired into his first administrative role and that he continues to draw upon these experiences. He said about his current position that “even now, I still have to; I was talking to somebody today and talking about what I did in that same situation 20 years ago or so.” He said that he would like to teach a little bit more now, stating, “I almost think that Principals, if they had time, it would really help them to kind of stay current in some ways, stay sharp.” He also said that coaching helped to prepare him for the principalship, stating:

I think coaching really did, especially when I became a head coach. When I was a head coach, in some ways it was kind of like being a principal because I dealt with all of my assistant coaches and my parents and I felt I wasn’t coaching anymore.

Willie Clemente was able to describe specifically on how his background helped prepare him for his current role and how he functions in that role.

Teachers and Principals Both Value Classroom Experiences. Teachers and principals both viewed classroom experience in a similar fashion. The teachers really valued teaching experience from their principals and the principal talked extensively on how they have drawn, and continue to draw upon those experiences. Willie Clemente seems to have a great passion for teaching, and the teachers that I talked to from his school said that he can relate well to the challenges that they face.

Teacher Thoughts on Principal’s Leadership towards Meeting Instructional Goals

Jody Thomas talked about how the administrative team helps move the teachers towards meeting instructional goals. She said that this is done in part by implementing data days in which “we look at different data from BASK scores and Aimsweb testing, so he has allowed us to look

at our data to see what we can do to improve the scores”. Rennee Kalyn talks about how the principal talks about the importance of instructional goals at meetings and helps the faculty work towards these goals saying:

They really follow those instructional goals with letting us know what they are, it’s not something that they tell us that we need to do, it is something that they should do also and participate in and practice in as well.

Both of these teachers were able to verify and describe the ways in which their principal moves them towards meeting instructional goals.

Administrator Thoughts on Leading towards Meeting Instructional Goals

Willie Clemente described his role in identifying building-wide instructional goals as “paramount”. He explained how he uses data to help inform his decision-making when it comes creating and working towards goals. He explained the importance of linking the district goals to the goals within his building stating:

In some ways, I’m the leader or the catalyst as far as what we want this building to do and the direction we want to go. And as a matter of fact, just today I was thinking of some goals that we put together as an administrative team at our retreat last week. Trying to see how they fit into this building.

He talked about how he initially likes to communicate the instructional objectives in the building, then after doing this, he give his teachers freedom and trusts their professionalism saying:

I kind of have to give them that first direction that I feel like I want us to go, and then from there, then a lot of the times they are going to come up with how we are going to get there then.

Willie's answers are consistent with somebody who takes a collaborative leadership approach. He explained how he was a believer in collaborative leadership, and how part of this leadership philosophy was shaped from his early teaching career, when he worked under authoritarian principals. He described his own leadership vision, saying that "I know that for us to have a good school and to be successful it can't just be me, it has to be all of us." Willie also talked about the importance of collaboration with parents and community members to help the students within his school.

The Teachers Benefit from the Support of their Principal. The teachers saw the principal as the person who supports them in working towards instructional goals. The principal talked extensively about how this role was paramount within their position. The responses of the subjects from this school all seemed to line up with each other consistently. From my interviews, it seems like there is rapport between these teachers and their principal, as he leads them in a collaborative way to meet their goals.

Summary and Next Steps. The discussions within this case seem to expose a dilemma that exists in other schools around the district, which is this principal, seems to be an effective instructional leader because the teachers within his building could relate to his own, personal and specific teaching experience. The central office administrators should consider the specific classroom experiences of principal candidates and how they relate to the buildings that they will potentially lead in a future administrative hiring process.

Pleasant Hills Elementary School

Pleasant Hills Elementary School is the smallest of four elementary schools in Chief Logan school district. I interviewed two teachers and the principal that work within this school. After speaking with the teachers and principal, something that seemed to be agreed upon by

everybody was the importance of teaching experience and how it impacts and guides instructional leadership within the building. The principal, in many ways still looks at himself as a teacher and frequently draws upon his own classroom experiences during his day to day work as an administrator.

Pleasant Hills Elementary School - Teachers

Nicolette Dalton is a first grade teacher with four years of teaching experience in Pennsylvania. Prior to teaching in Pennsylvania, she taught ESL in Maryland for ten years. Because she was the least experienced faculty member at this school, I chose to interview her over the other, more experienced teachers within this building to gain the valuable perspective of a grade-level teacher who had less than five years of experience in this role. Because she taught at several other schools prior to working in this school district, Nicolette was able to compare her professional learning experience within this school district to other districts that she worked at throughout her career.

Bruce Harris is a K-5 Physical Education teacher with thirty years of experience. Bruce also works at a high school within this school district; he splits time at different buildings. Bruce was able to describe how professional development has changed in this district over the course of his career that spanned across three decades. He talked at length about how the administration have provided him with support as a teacher over the years and described the importance of principal's having experience in the classroom.

Pleasant Hills Elementary School - Principal

Dan Willis is the Principal of Pleasant Hills Elementary School. Dan had nine years of teaching experience before entering administration. Dan taught science at the middle school and high school level, prior to getting his first administrative position as a high school assistant

principal. Dan never had any intention of becoming an administrator when he entered teaching; he assumed that he would spend his entire career teaching and coaching. While teaching at a high school, Dan was strongly encouraged by his principal there to take on more leadership roles within the school; she gave him opportunities to assume these new responsibilities. Dan has been an administrator for the last ten years and has nineteen years in education overall. Though he has been out of the classroom for a decade, he still views himself as a teacher and frequently draws upon the classroom experiences from early in his career.

Teachers Value Teaching Experience

These teachers held similar perspectives in regards to the importance of teaching experience and how it relates to instructional leadership. Nicolette Dalton talked about the importance for principals to have teaching experience, so they could better understand what was going on in the classrooms. She went into detail about how they should have experience teaching multiple elementary school grade levels, explaining, “I think it is important for a principal to have experience teaching each of those, not maybe each of those but maybe K-1 experience or maybe having 3-4-5 experience because it varies greatly”. These ideas seem to be commonly held by multiple teachers interviewed within this inquiry, the idea that principals at the elementary level benefit from teaching experience at multiple grade levels prior to entering the principalship.

Veteran Physical Education Teacher Bruce Harris, with thirty years of teaching experience talked about the importance of classroom time for administrators. He explained in his interview that:

They are also going to realize that each and every classroom that every class that you have has their own different environment, total different class, total different amount of

material that a teacher might cover in a certain period of time and for an administrator to experience those classroom settings and be able to relate to a teacher, I feel, is just another tool in their box to make them a more effective administrator.

He talked at length about the “importance of classroom time” for administrators as a way to be able to share experiences with the teachers in the school.

How the Principal Applies Teaching Experience

The principal of Pleasant Hills Elementary School, Dan Willis talked at length about how his teaching experiences helped him develop into an instructional leader. He had taught for eight years, seven within a high school setting and one year within a middle school setting. He taught every subject in science with the exception of Biology. He made strong connections with what he does as a principal and what he did in the classroom, stating:

Teaching kids and being an administrator with kids isn't all that much different. I say all the time, I don't teach them to read, write, do math, any of that kind of stuff, but I teach them to be a good person and a good member of society.

He talked extensively about the importance of encouraging his teachers to take risks in their classrooms, saying that:

I encourage my teachers to take chances, I encourage them to think outside the box, I encourage them to bring experiences and have the students kind of feel that, and I think that comes from what I try to do as a teacher.

He also talked about how working with students as a teacher, regardless if they were teenage students or seven or eight years old has helped him to be cognizant of how a student feels and enable him to use positive behavior supports. Throughout our conversation, this principal made

many different anecdotal connections from his own time in the classroom to his current role as a principal.

Similar Views about Teaching Experience and Instructional Leadership.

There seemed to be a lot of common ground between the principal and the teachers when they discussed how teaching experience relates to instructional leadership. The teachers found principals to be in a better position to give instructional leadership when they had teaching experience. The teachers talked at length about the unique challenges within the classroom and how a principal can benefit from experiencing these challenges prior to entering administration. The principal talked extensively about his own experiences as a teacher, and still views himself as a teacher within his current administrative role. Similar ideas were shared by those interviewed within this school, and their responses even shared many similar details.

Teachers want Principals to have Experience Prior to the Principalship

Reliability seemed to be the necessary quality that administrators need in order to make strong connections with their teachers. In the opinions of the teachers, classroom experience is an important factor for principals to become more relatable. Nicolette Dalton explained that:

I think it's easy to relate to someone that has a wealth of experience because something comes up in the classroom or you need to discuss student knowledge or student engagement or student support, using them as a sounding board because of their experience is beneficial, because they can offer expertise and what they did or what they may know to try from whenever they were in a similar situation as opposed to talking to somebody who hasn't had that experience, and I think that more relatable for people because it's just a natural connection.

These sentiments were shared by Bruce Harris who also talked specifically about being able to relate to administrators, saying that:

I like to feel like I can relate to all of my administrators. They all have different personalities, different characteristics and things that make them unique. I think that significant classroom experience is a good quality and one that helps relationships with administrators.

He would go on to say that:

Obviously, a good amount of experience is another tool that is effective and it's one quality that's important for an administrator to have or at least understand the experiences that comes with a person who has had a lot of experiences in the classroom.

Teaching experience was talked about extensively and highly valued by both of the teachers interviewed from Pleasant Hills Elementary School.

The Experiences of the Principal

The first administrative position held by the principal of Pleasant Hills Elementary School was a vice principal position at the high school that he had taught at. Principal Willis talked about this experience and how it helped him in his first role, saying "I think I had relationships because I was fortunate enough to become an administrator in the school in which I taught." He would go on to say that, "I think it was a positive because I could go to teachers and have conversations with them and they could go to me and they felt more comfortable with me and I felt more comfortable with them." Principal Willis also talked about his private sector job experiences prior to going into education. He worked in the construction industry as a sales representative. In reference to this experience, he explained:

I had to work with a diverse population of people, I had guys that were laborers, who would call and want orders and those sorts of things to calling and working with the CEO's of those companies, so I got to work with a very large population of people and it gave me people skills.

Principal Willis talked extensively about how his teaching experience helped him to both relate with teachers and students in his current role as an administrator, saying that his role as a teacher has just carried over. He said that, "when I work with staff members, because now I get to teach them or work with them on how to improve instruction or try new things, technology being a big one." He still speaks of himself as a teacher, just in a new role.

Teachers and the Principal Both Value Classroom Experience. The answers of the teachers and principal continue to share a lot of common ground about the importance of teaching experience and how it relates to the pathway to the principalship. The teachers spoke extensively about the importance of principals possessing teaching experience and how it would help them do their job and lead effectively. The principal talked extensively about how they applied their past experiences into the principalship and how it currently impacts their practice as an instructional leader.

Teacher Thoughts on the Principal's Leadership towards Meeting Instructional Goals

With thirty years of experience in the school district, Bruce Harris offered some historical perspective on how the roles of principals have changed over the years, in helping teachers accomplish instructional goals. He talked a lot about how instructional coaches have taken on a bigger role but principals will still demonstrate different techniques at in-services. He also said that principals will "encourage teachers to let them know and let their colleagues know when they have a neat concept or lesson that works and they encourage them to share it with

teachers and their peers in the district.” He talked about how his principal encourages him to take risks saying that “they encourage teachers to get out of their comfort zone.” He also talked at length about how leadership exists on many levels, and emphasized the amount of collaboration that occurs across the school district and within the building.

Nicolette Dalton talked about how principals are in the best position to lead because they have “an over-arching view” of what is happening in the school. She described principals as “the over-arching umbrella to making sure all of that happens because I feel they have access to it more than any of us, being secluded and isolated in the classroom on a day to day basis.” She talked about the importance of communication across grade levels within an elementary school, which is often facilitated by the principal.

Administrator Thoughts on Leading towards Meeting Instructional Goals

Principal Willis described his efforts to move towards achieving building-wide instructional goals as “working with teachers to be better teachers”. He described this as “helping break down barriers that they may perceive as restricting their teaching”. He emphasized the importance of treating teachers as professionals and encouraging them to take risks, much like he was encouraged by his principals while being a teacher. He also talked about the importance of making teachers feel secure about what they are doing.

Teachers Benefit from the Support of their Principal. Both teachers talked about how the principal helped to lead them towards instructional goals, on the personal level and on a school level. The principal talked at length about the importance of helping teachers become better teachers and the different things that he does to achieve this end. He made references to his own experience teaching and some of the things that helped him in the classroom. He talked

about how he continues to draw upon these classroom experiences as a teacher and an instructional leader.

Summary and Next Steps. The dilemma that arises after considering all of the data collected within this case is how principals are able to make transitions from a classroom setting that is different from the school that they will be supervising. In this particular case, the principal had taught extensively in secondary schools but, by all indications, was able to make a smooth transition into supervising teachers at the elementary level. I would be curious to explore his transition as a leader further, to better understand how, specifically as he made his professional transition.

Middle School

There is one middle school within the Chief Logan school district that encompasses sixth, seventh and eighth grades. I interviewed two teachers and the principal of this school. After talking with these individuals, some different perspectives emerged on the relationship between teaching experience and instructional leadership. Both teachers talked extensively about the importance of principals having teaching experience, one teacher went on to criticize the district in hiring principals who lack significant classroom experience. The principal talked extensively about the importance of leadership experience and how it is associated with instructional leadership and being a middle school principal.

Middle School – Teachers

Jeff Lebowski is a middle school English teacher with a year of full-time teaching experience. Prior to this full-time teaching position, Jeff had done some substituting for two years. Jeff teaches eighth graders, teaching two sections of regular and two sections of accelerated language arts classes. Jeff offered perspective from the point of view of young,

inexperienced teacher who was experiencing instructional leadership for the first time in his career. He talked extensively about his experiences at in-service days, faculty meetings and interactions with his colleagues and supervisors.

Allison Mitchell is a middle school English teacher with thirty-three years of full-time teaching experience. Allison has a reputation for being a passionate, enthusiastic teacher within the school district. Allison teaches four sections of eighth grade language arts classes, three regular sections and one accelerated class. She spoke very openly and candidly throughout the interview and was able to offer a historical perspective of how instructional leadership has changed within the district, throughout her career that has spanned over three decades. Allison also described the many different contexts of instructional leadership available to teachers within the school district. Allison talked about the importance of principals having significant time in the classroom and expressed that too often within this school district; principals are hired with minimal experience within the classroom.

Middle School Principal

Autumn Miller is the principal of the middle school. When she entered education, she never intended on pursuing a career as a school administrator. She said that she always wanted to be an elementary classroom teacher, preferably third grade, and she wanted to coach basketball along with spending her entire career in the classroom. Autumn taught for four years, she had several different substitute jobs for the first two years and then worked for a private company, Pyramid Healthcare as a program director for two years. At pyramid healthcare, she taught math and social studies in an alternative setting for students from different school districts. It was through this experience that she worked closely with administrators from different school districts. She was strongly encouraged by several of these administrators to pursue a career as a

school administrator. She became very close with these individuals and they served as mentors for her and helped her to make the next step in her career. Autumn talked extensively about drawing upon her experiences within leadership roles that have prepared her for her current role as an instructional leader and a middle school principal.

Teachers value teaching experience

Both of the teachers described the importance of principals having classroom experience, helping them to be strong instructional leaders. Jeff Lebowski described the ways in which leadership roles require the understanding of associate roles. He also talked about how spending time in the classroom can help understand and connect with kids better. He would explain:

It would be significantly more difficult for them to connect with those kids and of course with the staff if they have never been in the staff's position, understanding the needs and frustrations of a teacher are going to be much harder if you have never been one. I think that any leadership role requires an understanding of all of the associate roles.

He talked about how the focus of leadership seems to be hearing the teachers and having opportunities to learn. He was grateful that his principal allowed him the opportunities to take risks in his teaching and be creative.

Veteran teacher Allison Mitchell said that something that has always bothered her within the school district in regards to leaders possessing significant teaching experience is that “almost every principal or assistant principal that I have had, even the superintendent have had limited experience or they were not even a core teacher.” She would go on to describe the teaching experiences of several principals that she has worked with over the years. She explained why this was so important, because “they don't get it because they are evaluating us on our ability to teach and they don't even know.” Allison has grown as a teacher from being observed by

administrators and receiving feedback over the years. Allison also talked about how professional learning opportunities have improved over the course of her thirty-three year career. She talked about how “we get most instructional leadership through our coaches” and would go on to describe how that the principal’s role has changed and that often they delegate instructional leadership to the coaches.

How Principals Apply their Teaching Experience

Autumn Miller talked about some of the different teaching experiences she had over the course of four years. She had a long-term substitute job teaching high school Spanish. She taught math and social studies in an alternative setting, through a private company. While working at this private company, she worked closely with administrators from other school districts and really enjoyed the leadership role. One of the big things that she has taken away from her time in the classroom was learning to be flexible, she explained:

I am not going to be a good leader, you know because in education, you have to be fluid and you have to be flexible, and the same thing whether you are in the classroom, or an office or wherever you are in, you can’t expect that you are going to stick to your game plan, you have to listen to those around you and adjust your plan from there.

Autumn explained how going into administration so early in her career has worked against her. She explained that she thinks that more experienced teachers look at her and say, “What does she know; she hasn’t been in the classroom that long, how is she going to come in here and tell me how to run things in my classroom.” She said that she had to work really hard to earn the respect of teachers in the building. She also explained how working in an alternative setting really helped her gain a better understanding of some of the challenges that kids face when they are out

of school. She has worked hard as a principal to help teachers understand many problems that kid's face out of school can spill over into the classroom.

Autumn talked extensively about many of her other experiences outside of education that helped to prepare her for a leadership role. She talked about working various retail jobs, how she managed a pool at a country club and how she was the captain and president of her college rugby team. She said that "It all really just comes down to leadership, because in all of those, whether you're a teacher, a principal, a program director or a superintendent, you're still a leader." She explained the importance of transferring leadership skills from one position to another.

Teachers and Principals Value Different Kinds of Experiences. Both of the teachers talked a lot about how important it is for principals to have experience teaching to better understand the challenges that teachers face and assist them to grow as professionals. Allison Mitchell went as far as to express her own concern about the administrators that had been hired over the years and their lack of time teaching prior to becoming a principal. The teachers explained some of the different ways in which they are supported by principals and how the role of the principal has changed in regard to instructional leadership, and how instructional leadership can often come from different places. The principal talked about how their own experiences in the classroom were limited, because they entered administration at a young age, and how this short time in the classroom has in some ways hurt their credibility with experienced teachers. Autumn Miller talked about how she draws upon her experiences in the classroom, particularly in an alternative setting. She mentioned repeatedly about the importance of leadership experiences leading up to getting an administrative position within a school district.

Teachers want Principals to have Significant Classroom Experience Prior to the Principalship

The teachers talked at length about how they felt teaching experience was a necessary trait for a principal to have. They talked about how they could better relate to individuals with teaching experience. Jeff Lebowski talked about how time in the classroom “will help them on all fronts”, and expanded on how it can help a principal relate with both students and teachers. He said that teaching experiences are important for a principal because they “help them to understand what it means exactly to be someone at that level allowing both the kids and the teachers to have somebody who truly understands them.” He said that “school leaders who have been teachers know what my day to day is like to some degree.” He said that “they can offer suggestions again that somebody who has not been in this position might not be able to do.” Being able to relate to what is happening in the classroom, for the teachers and students was something that Jeff Lebowski found to be very important for an instructional leader to understand.

It is the opinion of Allison Mitchell that all principals and district-level administrators should have a significant level of teaching experience. She would describe a tension-filled interaction with a prior administrator who had only taught in the classroom for “a couple of years”. The interaction occurred over Allison’s annual teacher evaluation. Allison and this administrator disagreed over what Allison’s evaluation scores should be. Allison did not feel that her supervisor understood what happens in the classroom on a day to day basis and was offended by the feedback that she received from this individual. Allison expressed further concerns over the hiring practices of administrators over the years, she was disturbed by the trend of individuals being hired into leadership roles with she described as “limited experience” and would go on further to say that in many cases these individuals had not been “a core teacher, they have been

music teachers and they have been learning support teachers”. She talked about her former principal from many years ago, who had been a science teacher. She said about this individual that “he did know what it was like”.

The Experiences of Principals

Autumn Miller talked extensively about “transferring the skills of a leader, whether I am talking to kids, students, teachers, parents, whatever, you are still doing the leadership that is there.” From her teaching experience, the thing she talked about most was flexibility and how it was important to be flexible as a teacher and a principal. She described in detail, many of the other experiences that she had that helped her gain leadership skills. She talked about working at a country club in Pittsburgh and “managing all of the staff there and organizing all of that.” She described her experiences in athletics and how that helped her to grow, talking about her time playing college rugby. She would explain that:

Even more importantly, outside of work experiences for me, I was in athletics. I played Rugby in college, where I was the captain and president of the team in college, kind of helped lead everybody through that, we didn’t have a coach so it depended on the players to kind of take the lead.

She talked about how teaching in an alternative setting would help her to better relate with students, saying about this experiences that, “I still kind of have at the root of me and shaped a lot of what I have done is think about kids”.

Teachers and Principals Value Different Experiences. The teachers and principals valued different kinds of experiences. The teachers talked at length about the importance of classroom experience. Allison Mitchell, a veteran English teacher with over thirty years of experience talked about a heated disagreement that she had with a supervisor, which she blamed

on that supervisor's lack of time in the classroom. The teachers talked extensively about the importance of a principal being able to relate to teachers and students by sharing mutual classroom experiences with them by possessing significant experience as a teacher. Autumn Miller talked about how she gained valuable experience from her limited time in the classroom that has helped her relate with teachers and students. She also talked in detail about other job experiences and life experiences that have prepared her for her current role as a leader. She talked about the importance of being able to transfer these leadership skills from prior experiences into her current role.

Teacher Views on Receiving Support towards Meeting Instructional Goals

Jeff Lebowski talked a lot about what he thinks a principal should do to help guide teachers towards meeting instructional goals, but failed to really talk about what they have done towards meeting these objectives. He explained that:

For a principal, they really need to understand what their teachers need how to provide that but also how to give constructive criticism to teachers that if those teachers are going to improve, not being afraid to say hey, this didn't work out, how can we make this better?

He explained how it is important for a principal to be able to communicate with people, without making them feel "attacked".

In her analysis of the principal's role in helping support teachers to meeting instructional goals, Allison Mitchell said that "it depends on the principal." She would go on to describe how principals often delegate instructional leadership responsibilities to the instructional coaches within the school. She would go on to talk about instructional leadership towards meeting goals, saying that it has been years since any kind of school wide instructional objective has been

pursued. She had a hard time remembering the specifics of the building initiative but said that it was a really good initiative “that made our focus that year for improving reading.”

Administrator Thoughts on Leading towards Meeting Instructional Goals

Autumn Miller talked about the importance of collaboration as a way to create goals for the building. She would go on to explain this process:

What I am seeing more and more of over the years is that those goals should be set based upon the needs of the staff and the students and that comes from conversations with them talking with the students about where we need to grow, talking with the staff about where we feel our weaknesses are and continue grow and then set building goals from there.

She explained that it was not her job as the principal to say, “you will do X, Y, and Z and these are going to be the goals of the building.” She favored a collaborative approach over a unilateral approach.

Different Opinions on the Role of a Principal as an Instructional Leader. The teachers had different ideas about the role of the principal in moving teachers towards instructional goals. Jeff Lebowski talked a lot about what a principal should do as an instructional leader, but did not talk about how the principal had helped him move towards meeting an instructional goal. Allison Mitchell said that a principal’s involvement in assisting teachers towards meeting these goals varied based on who the principal was. She said that much of these instructional responsibilities had been delegated. Autumn Miller, the middle school principal talked about the importance of making goal setting a collaborative process within a school.

Summary and Next Steps. An important dilemma has emerged for the primary researcher, about the process of goal setting. The principal, Autumn Miller talked about the

importance to collaborating with stakeholders to better understand the needs of the building. She was the only principal that explained the approach of goal setting in this way. A consideration moving forward for central office administrators should center on the setting of instructional goals at the building level, and how this process is conducted in building throughout the school district.

High School

The high school is the largest school within the Chief Logan school district. I interviewed the principal, two assistant principals and two teachers from the high school. These different stakeholders seemed to share similar ideas on the importance of teaching experiences and how it helps instructional leaders relate to what is happening in the classroom. The views of the teachers and administrators would contrast each other in regards to their views on the role of a principal as an instructional leader in guiding teachers towards meeting instructional goals. The teachers described this support coming from different people, one teacher went so far as to express that he questioned if the school had any kind of instructional direction. The principals talked at length about how they have created and supported the instructional goals within the building and how they have helped teachers meet these goals.

High School – Teachers

Curvin Smith is a science teacher in his fifth year teaching. Curvin teaches Biology, A.P. Biology and Environment and Ecology to students in grades nine through twelve. Curvin talked a lot about how he has grown as a teacher, but attributed most of his growth to his own personal efforts, such as his own college graduate studies. He described some of the different places within the school that leadership comes from and explained how it has impacted him. He questioned the instructional vision of the school and expressed concern that the school lacks a

definitive instructional path but at the same time, was thankful that he experiences personal freedom within his own classroom.

Barb Richards is an English teacher who has twenty-seven years of experience in the classroom. Barb teaches eleventh grade academic and accelerated English classes, as well as Public Speaking and A.P. Literature. Barb offered historical perspective on how instructional leadership has changed within the high school during her time there. She explained how teachers have taken on a much bigger role in the dispensing of instructional leadership. She talked about how the increased level of teacher involvement has been an improvement on the way that instructional leadership happens within the school.

High School – Administrators

Terry Balvenie has been an assistant principal at the high school for five years. Prior to becoming an assistant principal, Terry taught industrial arts at the middle school and high school for twelve years. Terry has seventeen years of experience in public education. Terry knew within his first two years of teaching that he wanted to pursue a career in education. Terry was not encouraged by colleagues to pursue an administrative job, but wanted to patiently wait for the right position to open up at a time that he could commit to taking on additional professional responsibilities. Terry talked about the important experiences he gained in the classroom and how it applies these experiences in his current role.

Evelyn Lee is an assistant principal in her fifth year. Before entering administration, Evelyn spent seven years at the elementary level teaching kindergarten, first and third grades. Evelyn has spent twelve years working within the realm of public education. She said that she knew, after spending a little bit of time in the classroom that she wanted to move on to something “bigger than just the classroom”. She was encouraged by one of her college

professors and her principal to pursue a career in administration. She talked about the challenges of working in a high school setting, with a background in elementary education. Evelyn would describe the process of how school leadership creates instructional goals across the district and building levels.

Joseph Fleckenstein is a principal in his second year. Before entering administration, Joseph taught middle school English for eight years, his first administrative position was as a high school assistant principal. He has worked in public education for fifteen years. Joseph did not see himself going into administration early in his teaching career, but thought it was a place he could end up. He talked about how within education, it is a natural place to move to if you want to advance as a professional and he put pressure on himself to pursue an administrative career when his family grew. Joseph was strongly encouraged to pursue an administrative position by the principals of the school at which he taught at, and was given leadership opportunities within the school. Joseph talked about how he has used his time in the classroom to help him develop as an instructional leader.

Teachers Value Teaching Experience

As a younger teacher, Curvin Smith finds teaching experience to be an important attribute for a school leader to possess. In discussing the relationship between teaching experience and instructional leadership, Curvin Smith related it to war, saying:

You have good soldiers and you have their captains and a good captain wasn't brought in from a desk job to lead these guys. A good captain was brought up as a soldier first and they know what it feels like to be in war and they know what it feels like to be in battle, just the whole progression of battle. You bring somebody in that's not in war, that's not a

soldier and tell them to be a captain and lead soldiers, they are not going to have any clue what's going on in the trenches.

As a high school teacher, Curvin Smith did not seek advice from principals in regards to instruction, because he questions their knowledge base. Curvin instead looks towards veteran teachers for this advice. He looked at teachers as liaisons of proven techniques that work in the classroom with high school students.

Being a veteran teacher, Barb Richards also relates well with principals who possess significant teaching experience. She expanded on this idea, suggesting that, “even if you have been a principal for a while, like maybe teach a class or two, after a while, I think you get removed. They are not the same kids.” She explained that extensive teaching experience helps principals make good decisions. She talked about some experiences she had as a graduate student and how it was obvious that many other students in her graduate program had not been in the classroom, because they didn't understand the realities of what goes on in the classroom. She compared these individuals with principals and even guidance counselors, saying that, “They need to know what it is like in the classroom because; I mean their jobs have changed so much. Their goals are testing, testing more than giving kid's ideas for what to do for their futures.” She talked at length about some important instructional decisions that she felt were mishandled, in large part because the administrators making these decisions were out of touch with what happens in the classroom.

How Principals Apply Their Teaching Experience

Terry Balvenie talked a lot about his classroom experiences as a shop teacher for twelve years, relating it to his role as an instructional leader. He explained that everything in education seems to be moving towards the teacher being a facilitator instead of directly teaching students.

This pathway is similar to what Terry did in the classroom, creating an environment for inquiry based learning and problem solving. He would go on to explain this, saying:

I actually appreciate going into a classroom where you can see controlled chaos and kids are working in groups and kids are participating with one another and the teacher has stepped back and has taken that role as a facilitator and they are actively monitoring and they are actively engaged or engaging with the students.

Terry also talked about the benefits of teaching within the building prior to becoming an administrator; specifically that he had the benefit of positive pre-existing relationships the teachers in the building and many of the students.

Evelyn Lee talked about the difficulty of relating her teaching experience in her current role, because all of her experience is at the elementary level. One of the experiences that have really helped her in her current role is communication with parents. It is something that she did frequently as an elementary teacher and that she is doing in her current role as a high school assistant principal. Something that she really enjoys is working with teachers to assist them in planning lessons. She would go on to explain:

I love that piece, you know, teaching, planning. And I love when I am still able to be a part of that. Sometimes teachers don't love that from administration, it's kind of a stay away type thing, I do my thing, I'm the teacher, but breaking that barrier is a good feeling and I love being part of that.

Evelyn talked a lot about her role in the building being centered on student discipline, but seemed very enthusiastic when talking about collaborating with teachers.

Joseph Fleckenstein described a variety of different ways that his teaching experiences help him in his current role as principal. He compared working with students with different

ability levels as a teacher to working with his staff that possess different talents. He talked about the importance of drawing upon the things that he has done in the past that have worked for him, and understanding the demands of a teacher to better help teachers. He reflects on his own time as a student in high school and tries to give practical advice; he said it's important to understand the students' perspectives. He suggested that "we should really take a day and go through classes and see what it's like, see the reality check of this is what they are experiencing on a daily basis." He emphasized the importance of not only being able to connect with teachers but also the students in the building.

Classroom Experiences Shape Instructional Leadership Practices. The teachers from the high school both talked extensively on the importance of teaching experiences and how these experiences help administrators to understand what is happening in the classroom. The administrators talked about their own teaching experiences in different ways. One of the assistant principals talked about how his style of teaching, from his time as an industrial arts teacher is something that he sees often and encourages as a supervisor. Another assistant principal, with elementary teaching experience talked about how she benefitted from her experiences communicating with parents and families as an elementary teacher and how she does this often in her current role. The high school principal talked about the importance of drawing upon things that worked for him during his own time in the classroom but also trying to relate with the students and what they go through on a day to day basis.

Teachers want Principals to have Significant Teaching Experience Prior to the Principalship

Teachers placed a high value on the teaching experiences of instructional leaders. Curvin Smith explained how he was able to relate better with school leaders who had significant time in the classroom. In describing the importance of teaching experience, Curvin said that, "it takes

years of experience to learn all of the dynamics of the classroom.” He reflected upon his own experience of five years and talked about how, “I am still learning things as a fifth year teacher that I think will help me with the rest of my teaching career and I hope that in five years I am still learning.” He talked about how he does not go to administration when he has instructional questions, but rather turns to veteran teachers for support.

Barb Richards, a veteran teacher talked a lot about how the classroom has changed drastically over the course of her career. She said that too much time out of the classroom would cause somebody to become “removed”. She explained that, “they are not the same kids. They are not the same kind of people that they were even when I first started.” She talked about how principals deal more with parents than they do with kids, and that spending more time in the classroom would help them make good decisions that would benefit the kind of instruction taking place in the school.

The Experiences of Principals

Terry Balvenie talked about “the final push” that motivated him to go into administration was when he was going to have to have to change curriculums. He remembered how “I would have had to have been away for a few weeks retraining and starting a new curriculum” and this is what motivated him to pursue an administrative job that opened up. Terry was able to relate his teaching techniques as a shop teacher, techniques that fostered “inquiry based learning” to the kinds of teaching techniques that he feels are really gaining popularity at the present time. Becoming familiarized with these techniques helped him to pursue his current position as an assistant principal and continue to help him in his supervisory role. He also talked about how his role in his family business of “being a boss” has helped him in his current role as an administrator.

Evelyn Lee would describe her elementary teaching experience as being, “all I had to go on, because it was my first interview.” She described it as the only thing she could draw upon during her first administrative interview process, describing it as “95% of it was classroom level and 5% of it was take a chance on me, and believe in me and I can transfer these things from the classroom to administration.” She described other valuable experiences such as working as a YMCA camp counselor and then becoming the camp director of the camp. Also, she talked about her experiences working in an office for ambulance services and how that helped to give her managerial, task-driven experiences that have translated into her current role.

Joseph Fleckenstein talked about the similarities between how you interact with students in the classroom and how you interact with teachers as the principal. He explained that “there are a lot of things, obviously, you are dealing with different groups of people but there are a lot of similarities with how you have to plan, how you have to structure, how you have to organize things.” He talked about the importance of providing instructional coaching to your staff. He also talked about some of the larger school wide challenges of trying to help teachers make connections across content areas. He described how he draws upon his own experiences during conversations with teachers after observations, saying that he tries to “draw on things that I have done or have seen other people do to kind of spark those ideas.” The principal also talked about his work experiences prior to education, at places like a local grocery store or the physical plant at a nearby university and how these experiences have helped him to better relate to different groups of people.

Teachers and Principals Both Value Classroom Experience. The teachers talked at length about how they valued the teaching experiences in their principals and school leaders. The teachers talked about how individuals with extensive teaching experiences were more relatable,

particularly in understanding the ever-changing dynamics of the classroom. The principals talked about their teaching experiences and how they drew upon these experiences in their pursuit of administrative positions but also how they continue to draw upon these experiences in their present roles. The principal talked extensively on how these experiences have helped him on an interpersonal level, when working with teachers but also on the larger level of focusing the entire school towards instructional objectives.

Teacher Thoughts on Administrative Leadership towards Meeting Instructional Goals

Curvin Smith has a difficult time explaining what instructional leadership looks like within the school, explaining that “he can’t really pinpoint it”. He attributed most of his growth as a teacher as coming from his own personal efforts, doing things like reflection on his craft and taking graduate classes at a university. He would go on to say that “maybe like 20%-30% has been from the instructional leadership that I felt the district has implemented.” He explained how the instructional leadership has gone from administration giving instruction to the faculty and staff and anybody doing it. Because of these changes, leadership opportunities have been expanded to the faculty and staff. Upon reflecting on the ways that administration helps to support teachers in moving towards meeting instructional goals, Curvin Smith would talk about how the school lacks an instructional vision, saying that “there’s no vision of the school anymore, like the principals, there’s just no vision.” He said that the great thing about this is that he feels that he has freedom in his own classroom, saying that, “you have your vision, you have your goals and you go for them and that’s o.k. and there is some leniency there so there is a give and take on that side.” He said that he felt there were several different visions of what the school could be, but she said that they are not unified.

Barb Richards described some of the things that helped her to grow as an educator from attending different teacher in-services, some of them dating back to the prior administration. She talked about some of the sessions that were held on supporting the faculty in their efforts in teaching special education students and transgendered students. She offered some insights on some of the ways that instructional leadership has changed over the years, going from being led by administration to now being led by the faculty. She described the changes in this process and how it pertained to leadership towards meeting instructional goals as:

When I first got here, it was all up to the principals or up to the curriculum developers, or so they are called. That's something else that I want to talk to you about. I don't know if it has anything to do with this, but anyhow, it used to be just them. Now, they are really hands-off. Now, I don't really even see them.

Barb talked about how now; much of this work is being done by committees. She expressed that she wanted to see administrators play a larger role in developing curriculum.

The ways that Administrators Provide Leadership towards Meeting Instructional Goals

Terry Balvenie talked about the process in which instructional goals are created within the school district and the individual buildings. He talked about how the district goals are crafted by the administrative team at the annual summer retreat that takes place in July. Once these district goals are created, he explained that:

We bring them back and have building goals that are built upon that so I would say that my integral part would be to be an active participant in that and look at data or look at things where we have, maybe in the past needed to improve upon.

He talked about the importance of connecting professional learning opportunities to these goals.

Evelyn Lee described a very similar process, discussing how the district goals are first created at the summer retreat, and then the building goals are tailored to fit within the over-arching district goals. She described the principal's role within the process, explaining that, "the principal is the one who works most closely with departments and establishing goals and that sort of thing for staff and students." She described her role in the creation of goals as secondary, saying that, "I may dabble in the conversation of; how do you get there? So more big-picture, it's the principal that says; this is what we want to do." She said that the superintendent oversees these goals, to ensure that they connect with the district goals.

Joseph Fleckenstein described his leadership efforts towards meeting instructional goals as "my top priority." He talked about the biggest instructional focuses of the school, saying that:

Now, it's looking at co-teaching and what are the connections that we can make and I want to push forward with sort of a global learning initiative and how are we connecting issues at home and around the world in students' lives.

He would go on to emphasize the importance of his leadership towards instructional goals saying that, "everything we do as far as professional development days and those Tuesdays, it's all focused on getting better in the classroom, so yeah, that's our number one purpose." Joseph Fleckenstein talked about the importance of keeping instructional goals at pace with the rapidly changing world, so that the students could get the skills they need to succeed.

Different Opinions on the Role of the Administration as Instructional Leaders. The teachers talked extensively on how support and leadership on working towards instructional goals comes from different places, particularly the teachers themselves. Curvin Smith went as far to say that he doesn't know what the instructional goals of the school are anymore, that it lacks

an instructional vision. The principals talked extensively on how they support and create goals. The principal talked about this as his number one priority.

Summary and Next Steps. The dilemma that arose from the data within this case centers on the communication about the instructional goals and how they are supported in the building. This stems from the fact that on this topic, the most inconsistency in responses existed between the administration and the faculty. In the future, building leaders should consider how instructional goals and the initiatives being pursued to meet them are being communicated to the faculty.

Chief Logan School District

In addition to speaking with teachers and principals at all of the different schools within the Chief Logan School District, the primary researcher also spoke with several central office administrators at the district to gain insight about how instructional leadership happens at the district level. In addition to these discussions, the primary researcher collected additional data from district wide communications, circulated documents and observing district-wide in-service sessions over the span of one year. After analyzing the district-wide data, there seems to be some different perspectives on the roles of principals as instructional leaders within the district and how instructional leadership happens. The documents gathered over the course of one year strongly coincided with many of the observations, which strongly suggested a theme of shared, collaborative leadership throughout the school district in regards to how instructional leadership happens through professional learning activities.

Chief Logan School District – Central Office Administrators

Elizabeth Denappoli is the Director of Special Education at the Chief Logan School District. Elizabeth has been a Special Education Administrator for twenty-four years and has

thirty years of experience in education overall. Elizabeth did not originally plan on being a Special Education Director, but instead had aspired to pursue a career in Higher Education as a college professor. When working in a school district out of college, she was encouraged to pursue a career in administration after she displayed a talent for conflict resolution during meetings. Before going into administration, she taught the core subjects of Language Arts, Math, Science and Social Studies. Upon reflecting upon this teaching experience, Elizabeth explained that she was not a particularly good teacher and learned the most about good teaching as a supervisor, and seeing it happen in the classrooms that she observed. She does not directly supervise teachers in her current role, but she work on providing teachers with outside resources to help students deal with specific disabilities. She also provides trainings for the teachers of the school districts that relate to special education.

Lee Smith is the assistant superintendent of the Chief Logan School District. Lee has worked in administration for nineteen years and has thirty-one years of experience in education overall. She had taught fourth, fifth and sixth grade for twelve years until her principal pushed her into an administrative role, she never had intended on going into administration. Her experience as a teacher really helped her to supervise teachers as a principal. Her current role is to supervise the principals throughout the school district and provide them with the support they need to run their buildings.

Michelle Dwarph is the superintendent of Chief Logan School District. Michelle has worked in administration for eleven years and has twenty years of experience in education overall. She had taught high school English for nine years, and had never intended to leave the classroom throughout her career. This would change after she was strongly encouraged by supervisors and colleagues along the way who gave her numerous opportunities. Her experience

as a teacher has helped her to relate to teachers in different ways and she encourages her staff to have a proper work-life balance. Currently, she works with the school board and the administrative team to develop umbrella goals and provide supervision for these goals on a global level. She also works towards eliminating obstacles that could pose an impediment to instruction.

Professional Learning Observations

From March 2018 to March 2019, twenty-seven professional learning sessions were observed by the primary researcher, with the intent of understanding the nature of instructional leadership within the school district being studied. These sessions were offered to all teachers within the entire school district. The primary researcher selected sessions that were the most pertinent to improving instruction, as it relates to student achievement, defined in the literature review as effective professional development activities, which focus on enhancing student achievement (Hattie, 2005). A set of field notes were created by the primary researcher that corresponded with each session observed. This included detailed notes from the observation along with memo notes from the primary researcher. This served as an initial round of open coding. Additional codes were created that corresponded with the research questions, literature review and conceptual framework that guided this inquiry.

Central Office Administrators value teaching experience

When talking to the central office administrators, it became clear that teaching experience had impacted their own practice and development. All of these individuals talked about how their own teaching experiences have shaped them in different ways, and that they continue to draw from it. All of them taught core subject areas, but in different settings. The Director of Special Education, Elizabeth Denappoli, was very critical of her own time in the classroom,

where she taught core subjects in a special education setting. This realization came to light for her when she was supervising other colleagues. Elizabeth described her time in the classroom:

I learned that I was probably a very poor teacher at that time. I was young, I graduated when I was twenty-one and went into teaching without having a lot of the skills, in retrospect that I think I needed, especially now that we have more student-centered learning. A lot of my instruction was worksheet driven.

She would go on to talk about how she has learned from her own experiences on how to give feedback to people in a way that they will receive it, she continues to try to improve in this area. Elizabeth talked about how she relates to teachers in her current role, by giving them feedback, stating that, “I have tried very hard to give feedback to teachers in a way that isn’t damaging to them.” Although Elizabeth talked about her role as an instructional leader as being “global”, she still draws upon these experiences in her current role that centers largely on helping teachers by training them and procuring necessary resources for their development.

Lee Smith, the assistant superintendent plays a role as an instructional leader that centers largely on supervising and supporting the building principals throughout the school district. Lee taught fourth, fifth and sixth grades for twelve years. She talked about how her teaching experiences have impacted her practice as an instructional leader, saying that, “It’s just drawing on those experiences, even if they have been a long time ago and the world has changed and the kids have changed, it’s still drawing on those experiences.” She talked about gaining a comfort level with students and teachers because of her experience; she described how her experiences had an impact on her:

I feel very comfortable talking with elementary teachers because I was an elementary teacher. I have had to learn more about the kids than the teachers at the middle school and

high school because they are all kids but the developmental age is different at the middle school and the high school.

Lee talked about how her teaching experience also helps her focus on the needs of individual students. Early in Lee's career, the special education students in her school were not receiving appropriate services. This experience has inspired her to do what was best for each kid, which remains much of her focus as an instructional leader.

Michelle Dwarph, the superintendent of Chief Logan school district. She described her role as an instructional leader as being that of a collaborator with different stakeholders on a global level. She described her current role in detail:

What I do is, what I help create is, with our administrative team and our school board those umbrella goals that are more system wide, because everything has an effect on student growth and achievement, from the structures you put in place to building collective teacher efficacy, which you do through voice and professional learning. I don't consider myself in having a direct impact on student growth and learning and by that I mean not instructing in the classroom, I am no longer evaluating data on that micro-level. I am more evaluating it on a global level.

Michelle talked extensively about the importance of building teacher efficacy and helping support the teachers in the district, so that they maintain an appropriate work-life balance. She tries to relate to the challenges and frustrations that teachers face in her current role as a superintendent. She spent some time reflecting on her own experiences saying that, "I try to remember the volume of work. I try to remember how it felt when another mandate came down". She would go on to talk about some of these policies saying that, "I don't believe that policy

pushes change as much as policy stands in the way of change”. Michelle talked about the importance of collaborating with principals to help teachers grow.

Teaching Experience Shapes Instructional Leadership. The central office administrators spoke extensively on how their own teaching experiences impacted their experiences as instructional leaders. All of these central administrators taught at least one of the core subject areas (History, English, Science and Math). They all spoke extensively on how they draw upon their own teaching experiences as instructional leaders currently, in many ways when they supervise and support teachers in the district. Whether it is by providing feedback, supporting principals or collaborating with different stakeholders, these central office administrators all discussed how they continue to draw upon their own time in the classroom to guide them currently, as instructional leaders in the school district.

The Value of Teaching Experience Possessed by an Aspiring Principal

When asked about what kind of experiences are valued by prospective school principals; the central office administrators had valued different qualities in their candidates. The director of special education valued a candidate with a strong instructional background, somebody who could be an instructional leader on day one. The assistant superintendent valued a candidate who “loved kids”. The superintendent valued a candidate with diverse experiences outside of education, somebody who had extensive community involvement.

Elizabeth Denappoli, the director of special education, talked about the importance of hiring instructional leaders into administrative roles. She talked about the importance of teaching experience in helping someone be an effective instructional leader at the building level. She said that, “We have a lot of principals now that are coming into the profession with five years of experience, sometimes less, because there is not a candidate pool there.” She had particular

questions for an aspiring school principal which would include, “What are we doing to promote instruction”? What are we doing that could bring change?” She feels strongly that:

The building principal is an instructional leader, first and foremost. Yes, they do discipline, yes they have to manage the building, but at the end of the day, what it boils down to are what are the instructional needs of the building.

She would go on to say that she is not interested in a response of “I love kids” because she feels that answer is a given, that everybody in education cares about kids. She puts a high premium on the skills that a candidate would possess as an instructional leader, so that they would be able to help teachers and guide a building towards meeting goals.

Lee Smith, the assistant superintendent also put an emphasis on teaching experience for any candidate to have when seeking a position as a school principal. She would explain that, “I think they need to have experiences that they can draw from. So if they are going into a principal’s position, they need to have been a teacher.” She would also explain that “my end all, be all, in hiring people is that they have to have a love of kids.” The two biggest qualities that she emphasized in her responses were teaching experience to draw from and a love of the kids.

Michelle Dwarph, the superintendent, valued different experiences in prospective school administrators than her other central office colleagues. She would go on to say that, “honestly, I like to see that they have done something else besides teaching.” She said that diverse experiences, particularly community experiences help a candidate have a “broader perspective of people and make it easier to create relationships.” She talked about how learning happens at the global level and that school leaders need to be globally competent, explaining that, “I really want to see somebody that has a perspective broader than K-12, college, classroom. I don’t think that

cuts it anymore. I just really don't." Michelle talked extensively about the importance of acquiring people skills to prepare an administrator for their role as a school leader.

Different Qualities Valued by Central Office Administrators for Future Principals.

The different responses to interview questions offer a perspective of what these central office administrators look for when hiring principals. Interestingly, the central office administrators valued different experiences from principal candidates. The director of special education valued instructional experience and leadership experience. The assistant superintendent specifically valued teaching experience, but also put a high value on a love of kids. The superintendent valued experiences outside of education and community involvement; she placed a high value on school leaders being globally competent because she believes that learning is taking place, increasingly on a global level.

The Role of the Principal in Setting Instructional Goals

When asked about the roles of the principals throughout the district in setting building-wide instructional goals, the central office administrators offered differing ideas. Elizabeth Denappoli, the director of special education talked about the importance of the principal evaluating data to target instructional needs. Lee Smith, the assistant superintendent talked about the principal guiding the building towards meeting the district goals. Michelle Dwarph described the role of the principal as a collaborator with the teachers on setting and working towards instructional goals. All of these central office administrators believed that the principal had a valuable role, but they had different interpretations of what that role looked like.

Elizabeth Denappoli, the director of special education views a building principal as "an instructional leader, first and foremost." She talked about the importance of using data to drive

decision-making and doing things to promote instruction. She talked about how a principal must be able to bring about change explaining that:

Change is hard so you have to have that balance to look at everything globally and if you are not an expert in the area then bringing people in who are experts, for example, at the high school we have literacy coaches so if you happen to be an instructional leader that is a science person and you don't have that background, that's o.k., but you need to find somebody that does that will teach you what to look for.

She explained the importance of instructional leaders supporting teachers, in order for goals to be met. She talked about obtaining resources to meet these goals, distinguishing that, "It's not always about the money, sometimes it's about the expertise." She also went on to describe the importance of building both rapport and trust with your staff, in order to be a change agent.

The Assistant Superintendent, Lee Smith supervises all of the principals within the Chief Logan School District. When she described the role of the principals throughout the district of creating building-wide instructional goals, her response was succinct. She said, "They are pretty much; they have to be in line with the district goals." Lee explained that they have to come up with additional goals, unique to their building, but they must fit within the broader district goals.

Michelle Dwarph talked described the principal's role as a collaborator, working with teachers on identifying and working towards building-wide instructional goals. She described how her views have changed on this topic, explaining that, "For a long time there was the theory that principals are the instructional leaders and I bought into that. And I don't think that they are not instructional leaders but I do think that teachers are equally instructional leaders". She expressed a concern for the principals in the district to spend more time in the classroom, saying that:

It really upsets me when our principals do not get into the classroom, and I know we need to do that better, I know we still need to do that better. I think it gets down to that piece I think many principals get caught up in that cycle of there is so much paperwork to do, it takes away from their time spent inside the classrooms, but I also really, truly believe that if you spend that time out in the classrooms, some of that paperwork is going to decrease.

Michelle talked about the importance of a principal's presence in the classroom because it lets the teachers know they are supported while enables important conversations to take place about growth and learning. She talked about the time that she spent as a principal and how she made an effort to visit classrooms on a daily basis.

Different Ideas about the Role of the Principal as an Instructional Leader. The three different central office administrators interviewed in this inquiry had three different explanations what the principal's role was in identifying building wide instructional goals from the supervisors of these principals. The Director of Special Education talked about how the Principals must use data and then utilize resources such as instructional coaches to attend to the instructional needs of the building. The Assistant Superintendent talked about how the principals need to stay in line with the district goals that are created by the superintendent. The superintendent talked about how the principals need to spend more time in the classroom and approach as instructional leadership as a collaborative effort, with their teachers as equals in providing instructional leadership throughout the buildings.

Observing Instructional Goal Setting

Principals and Central office administrators created nine of the twenty-seven sessions that I attended, or one third of the instructional leadership that I received directly as a teacher and researcher. Of the nine sessions that administrators created, the principals creating six and central

office administrators created three. All twenty seven sessions attended by the primary researcher were approved by a district level professional learning committee that is chaired by the middle school principal. This committee is composed of teachers from all of the school throughout the district. The sessions that are designed to move the school towards the goals are designed separately from the goals, with different stakeholder having input on the goals and sessions, as the teachers are not a part of the district goal setting that takes place at the summer retreat. The building goals are created separately from the district goals and the designed professional learning sessions, offered to provide professional learning opportunities.

Documentation related to Instructional Goal Setting

All of the twenty-five documents collected by the primary researcher in this study can be linked with identifying building wide instructional goals, because they all relate to professional learning. Professional learning opportunities available throughout the duration of this study were typically district-wide in-services in which sessions were recommended organized and scheduled by the Professional Learning Committee which included teachers from all over the district and chaired by the middle school principal. This committee meets three times a year, including once in the summer to plan in-services. The majority of the documents collected in the study were emails from the middle school principal to the entire district outlining the schedule of the in-service day along with the sessions available on that day. This is the case for thirteen of the twenty-five documents. In the case of four of the twenty-five documents, the principal or vice principal shared an agenda for a building-wide in-service. These were essentially faculty meetings that would last for either half the day or the entire day. In the case of five of the twenty-five documents collected, these were simply documents that were presented by individuals other than administrators at district-wide in-services, in which their session was approved by the

district professional learning committee, chaired by the middle school principal. One of the twenty-five documents was created by a building principal who led a session during one of the district-wide in-services as a resource to support the session. Two of the twenty-five documents were created by central office administrators who led sessions during another district-wide in-service, which served as resources to support their session. The documents indicated the context of professional learning, where and how it happens within this school district; it happens much more frequently at the district level than it does at the building level.

Next Steps. The dilemma that has arisen from conversations with central office administrators revolve around the different opinions on the role of the principal's involvement with identifying building-wide instructional goals. With all of the opinions being different, what is the professional expectation of these administrators when they create and work towards these goals? An additional dilemma related to the same topic centers around how building goals are connected to the sessions offered at the professional learning days? Are these sessions linked with the district goals? How are teachers getting the support needed to work towards the building goals? These are all important questions for central office administrators to consider as they develop future instructional leadership activities for the teachers in the district.

Chapter 5

Cross Case Analysis

Based on the data gathered across cases, three common themes emerged within and between some of these different cases: (1) the importance for principals to have teaching experience, (2) the motivation of teachers to become principals so that they can be more impactful and (3) the importance of sponsorship of aspiring school principals in order to transition to education. These themes emerged based on the kind of case that was being analyzed, either an elementary level or secondary level school, while other themes seemed to be common across all of the cases.

The theme that was the most universally prevalent across all of the schools analyzed in this study was that in the opinion of teachers, it is important for principals to have significant teaching experience prior to going into administration, preferably teaching students within the context of the school that they are charged with supervising. Four out of the six of principals interviewed throughout this study had a common motivation to pursue a job as a school principal; the motivation is that they wanted to make a bigger impact in the educational process at their schools. Another prominent theme that emerged from the discussion I had with school principals was the importance of sponsorship in helping them transition from the classroom and administration. Among school-level and district-level administrators, additional common themes seemed to be more elusive with different ideas and philosophies and beliefs being prescribed to in different leadership settings.

I identified common themes through analyzing the data that I collected within this inquiry. I looked at themes that were common within the elementary school cases and the secondary school cases along with some of the similarities that emerged across these primary and secondary school settings. I also took into consideration some of the common themes that

emerged across my analysis of central office along with the data that I collected from observations and document analysis in relation to the different school settings within my study.

Themes across Elementary Schools

Instructional Leadership

An interesting development when analyzing the data was that the teachers within the elementary schools did not have a common idea about what instructional leadership looked like. There was not a consensus among these schools about what instructional leadership is, or who and where it is coming from. The district's instructional leadership model is built on having "Professional Learning Days" in which district faculty and staff are able to sign up for Professional Learning Sessions that cover topics that the individual finds necessary for their own professional growth. Only two of the eight elementary teachers referenced these professional learning activities when they described the instructional leadership being provided by the school district. Only two of the eight teachers talked about instructional leadership coming from instructional coaches and administration, three of eight teachers talked about teachers being heavily involved in disseminating instructional leadership. Three of the eight teachers talked about how principals move teachers towards meeting instructional goals.

Across the dataset, elementary teachers consistently reflected on how instructional leadership has changed within the school district in recent years. All of the teachers expressed this view. The most prevalent theme related to these changes is the increased choice that is available to the teachers with five teachers holding this view. Two of the elementary teachers described how instructional leadership has changed because instructional coaches have taken on an expanded role. The teachers did not overwhelmingly recognize the professional learning sessions offered by the school district on designated days as "instructional leadership"; however,

they did recognize these sessions and the choices that they are presented with as a change in the instructional leadership being offered.

Teaching Experience

All of the elementary teachers talked about the importance of principals possessing significant teaching experience to better lead schools. These teachers also shared the belief that principals were more “relatable” when they spent significant time in the classroom prior to entering the ranks of administration. These themes would also be consistent across the secondary schools.

All five of the elementary principals talked about how they were encouraged to pursue careers in administration, three of them were given opportunities to complete administrative tasks while still teaching. Three of the principals described instructional leadership as their primary responsibility; three of principals talked about how their own teaching experience helped them to better understand teachers and students in the schools they supervise. Four of the principals taught for less than ten years. Though most of the principals spoke in depth about the importance of their role as instructional leaders, they described their own methods of instructional leadership in different ways.

Themes across Secondary Schools

Instructional Leadership

Two of the four secondary teachers interviewed within this inquiry talked about instructional leadership coming from professional learning sessions and trade time. Trade times sessions were created by teachers and administrators, the sessions were approved by the chair of the professional learning committee. Hours that a teacher or staff member accumulated from taking trade time sessions could be used to replace attendance at a mandatory professional

learning day. The primary researcher did not observe trade-time sessions for data collection within this inquiry. Two of the secondary teachers described teachers as being involved in instructional leadership through collaboration. Two of the teachers talked about the biggest change of instructional leadership being that teachers are more involved with it. Their involvement included the creation and facilitation of various professional learning sessions that were offered during professional learning days. Two of the teachers described secondary principals as having a minimal role in instructional leadership that they delegate this responsibility to others, for example having teachers or instructional coaches leading meetings and sessions that involve instructional leadership strategies.

Teaching Experience

All of the teachers at the secondary level interviewed within this inquiry talked about the importance of principals to have significant teaching experience, and that the principals that possess this experience are all more “relatable”. These sentiments were shared with the elementary level teachers who were interviewed within this study.

Only one of the four secondary principals interviewed within this inquiry taught for at least ten years, only one of these four principals had experience teaching a core subject (English, Math, Social Studies and Science) at the secondary level. Two of these principals drew upon their own teaching experiences when they were first hired into their administrative role. Only one of these building leaders viewed instructional leadership as their primary responsibility. Two of the principals talked about how they draw upon teaching experience to be an instructional leader, two of the principals talked about how their own teaching experience helped them understand the jobs of teachers. Three of the principals talked about how their time in the classroom helped them to better understand students. Upon their transition into administration,

three of the principals described how they were encouraged by supervisors to pursue careers in administration; two of these principals were given administrative tasks to do while still in the classroom.

Common Themes across Elementary and Secondary Schools

Instructional Leadership

While the design of the study reflected seven distinct cases for each school and the district's central office, findings from the analysis underscore the unifying role instructional leadership plays at the district level. Specifically, instead of seven distinct cases at the individual school level, in this study, the district is one case with several embedded units of analysis at the school level rather than the teacher level as initially described in the methods.

There did not seem to be a commonly held view of what instructional leadership looked like within elementary and secondary schools across the school district. Only four of the twelve teachers interviewed describe the professional learning sessions as providing instructional leadership to the faculty. Five of the teachers across elementary and secondary schools described instructional leadership as being something that teachers were involved with. The fragmented description of instructional leadership also existed within the elementary and secondary schools, not just across all of the schools.

Teaching Experience

What was the commonly held view by all of the teachers across all of the schools was the importance for school leaders to have a wealth of experience in the classroom, prior to entering administrative leadership roles. All twelve teachers echoed the same sentiments on this topic and would also go on to describe how this experience would help to make these leaders more relatable. In one specific case, Grove Park Elementary School, the teachers would go on to talk

about how their principal's extensive elementary school teaching experience has helped their principal become not only relatable, by a valuable instructional leader and a resource that teachers can go to for guidance and advice.

Seven of the nine principals interviewed spent less than ten years in the classroom, eight of these principals were strongly encouraged by supervisors to pursue careers in administration while in the classroom and five of them were given administrative responsibilities while still teaching. Only four of the principals, less than half, described instructional leadership as a primary responsibility. Five of these principals acknowledged that the time they spent in the classroom has helped them to relate better with the teachers they supervise, six of them would explain that their own teaching experience has helped them to better relate to the students in their buildings.

Across Case Codes

When looking at the data gathered from the six different cases within this inquiry, ideas seemed to be all over the place. The schools were put into three different groupings with three schools grouped together, two schools grouped together and one school by itself, based on the themes that emerged when analyzing the responses from teachers and administrators.

I grouped three of the schools together, in which the theme of a lack of specific teaching experience of the principals in that level school or with content. These teachers felt the principals do not provide effective instructional leadership and felt disconnected from their principals. These schools were Washington Elementary, Stoney Pointe Elementary and the High School.

The teachers of two of the elementary schools, Washington Elementary and Stoney Pointe Elementary and the High School talked about instructional leadership coming from places other than the principals. They talked about instructional leadership coming from the coaches at Washington Elementary School. They talked about it coming from a pre-determined curriculum

and not helping special education teachers at Stoney Pointe Elementary School. The high school teachers talked about this information coming from other people, not the principals. The principals at these schools did not have experience teaching in these settings. The principal of one of the elementary schools was a high school Special Education teacher. The principal at the High School taught English at the middle school level. His assistant principals taught high school woodshop and elementary school. The principal of the other elementary school taught as a co-op teacher. By her own admission, she said that she did not teach long enough.

In the case of the middle school, the teachers talked about how teaching experience was an important trait for principals to have. One of these teachers talked about how principals lack this quality across the entire district. The answers to the question about instructional goals were very generalized by all individuals interviewed within this case. They did talk about how the principal provided leadership to school wide programs. The Principal talked about setting the goals with the stakeholders based on their own needs. The principal, by their own admission talked about how their own lack of teaching experience has worked against them. This principal taught for four years in an alternative school

Two of the elementary schools Grove Park and Pleasant Hills, seemed to have similarities with responses, with one more pronounced than the other. At Grove Park, the teachers value experience and feel the principal provides them with instructional leadership. This principal has the most teaching experience of all of the principals, having taught for fourteen and a half years and all in an elementary setting. The teachers and principals were able to speak specifically about how the building can draw upon the experiences of this principal. The responses were similar at Pleasant Hills, where the teachers were able to speak more specifically about how their principal provides instructional leadership, with the principal talking about this leadership. Interestingly,

this teacher taught science for eight years at the high school level but still really saw himself as a teacher, much like the Grove Park principal who saw himself as still teaching now, even as an administrator.

Instructional Leadership Across Data Sets

The theme of instructional leadership coming from multiple sources, and primarily from people other than building principals is further reinforced through the analysis of observations and documents from the primary researcher within this study.

Based on my observations, over the course of a year, instructional leadership is divided throughout the district with the teachers taking on the biggest share of the leadership. I attended twenty seven different Professional Learning sessions over the course of the school year. Teachers presented at thirteen of these sessions. Building administrators presented at six of these sessions. Outside presenters led four of these sessions. Central office administrators led three of the sessions. Guidance counselors led three of the sessions and instructional coaches would lead two of the sessions. Four of the sessions were collaborated between different groups of presenters.

When looking specifically at the role that administrators play in directly facilitating instructional leadership, principals and central office administrators created nine of the twenty-seven sessions that I attended, exactly a third of them. Principals created six such sessions and central office administrators created three of them. All twenty seven sessions were approved by a district level professional learning committee that is chaired by the middle school principal.

Most of the documents that were created that can be directly linked to instructional leadership were not created by building principals. Also, many of the documents related to PLC's indicated that they are not directly linked to instructional leadership, as instructional

leadership is defined in this study. The documents reveal the flow of in-service days and faculty meetings and show the ways in which time was allotted and serve as a complement to the observations, as they directly correspond with what was observed. The documents also reveal the extent to which instructional leadership is done by district-level committee.

Attraction to the Principalship

The most common responses to this question, which was created based on the conceptual framework within the study, is that individuals sought leadership positions to make a bigger impact. Additionally, they sought these positions after being strongly encouraged in some cases, pushed into these positions. A couple of these respondents were driven to do it because they wanted to be in a leadership position in the school with which they worked. There were some other motivations as well, one of which being money by one of the respondents.

Sponsorship

The most common responses to the question that related to sponsorship, which was created based on the conceptual framework within the study, is that individuals who were in these leadership positions were sponsored by their supervisors. This took on different forms, from encouragement to actually being given opportunities to lead while serving as teachers. Ten out of the twelve individuals shared this common response. Sponsorship is one of the most visible themes that emerge through the interviews. It is woven through the literature and conceptual framework and it is one of the most apparent tendencies existing across the board within this inquiry as precursor for a teacher transitioning into an administrative role.

The Impact of Teaching Experience on Central Office Administrators

The central office administrators spoke extensively on how their own teaching experiences impacted their experiences as instructional leaders. One of the research questions in the study is focused on how it impacts principal's instructional experiences, because of this, I

thought it was important to draw a parallel on how it impacts the supervisors of these principals, because they were included in the study. All of these central administrators taught at least one of the core subject areas (History, English, Science and Math). They all spoke extensively on how they draw upon their own teaching experiences as instructional leaders currently, in many ways when they supervise their teachers. They also talked about how they used their own teaching experiences to help them collaborate with colleagues and how the experience would help guide them as far as what they needed to look for in the classroom while observing and giving feedback. They also talked about how their experiences helped them to better identify with students and how to help students that have special needs. They all discussed about how they used their teaching experiences, but they valued it in different ways among perspective administrative candidates.

How Teaching Experience is Valued in the Hiring of Principals

Teaching experience was valued inconsistently among the district level administrators interviewed in the study. The director of special education valued leadership experience, any kind of it. The assistant superintendent valued teaching experience. The superintendent valued outside experience in the private sector or community. Based on the conceptual framework, these were the only people included in the study that could speak directly to selecting school principals, because they were the only ones that had done it. This is the only data within the study that speaks to this part of the conceptual framework.

The role of the Principal as an Instructional Leader

I got three different responses to the question pertaining to what the principal's role was in identifying building wide instructional goals from the supervisors of these principals. The director of special education talked about how the principals must use data and then utilize

resources such as instructional coaches to attend to the instructional needs of the building. The assistant superintendent talked about how the principals need to stay in line with the district goals that are created by the superintendent. The superintendent talked about how the principals need to spend more time in the classroom and approach instructional leadership as a collaborative effort, with their teachers as equals in providing instructional leadership throughout the buildings. There was no consensus on this role based on the discussions that I had with the highest leaders interviewed in the district.

The Importance of Boundary Spanners

The teacher's perspective is one of the ways in which I analyzed who and how the instructional leadership is disseminated throughout the district to the individual buildings. The most common response to where and how the instructional leadership is coming from is from the PLC sessions that teachers sign up for. A couple of the teachers specifically mentioned the role of the coaches. Two of the teachers talk about the administrators and coaches working together to provide instructional leadership. This information is further supported by the observations and documents of the primary researcher. The instructional leadership is coming from different places, all around and even outside of the district.

Conclusion

Teaching experience was valued across the different cases within my inquiry, by almost everybody that I spoke with. For the most part, school leaders seemed to leave the classroom to pursue a school leadership position because they wanted to have a bigger impact on students. Almost all of the administrators I talked with had the sponsorship of other school leaders as they transitioned into a leadership role. In the next chapter, I discuss my findings further along with

new insights that I gained through this inquiry, the significance of my findings and the implications that they have on practitioners and policymakers.

Chapter 6 Discussion

With the exception of a few studies (Ballou & Podgursky, 1995; Hoyle & Randall, 1967; Jenkins, 1972; Tran & Bon, 2016; Weldy, 1979) there has not been a lot of work that has explored the different ways in which an educational leader's teaching experience impacts them as an instructional leader. My study begins to fill this gap by addressing the following research questions: (1) What is the relationship between principals' prior teaching experiences and their development and practice as an instructional leader? (2) How does an aspiring principal's teaching experience impact their pathway into the principalship? (3) In primary and secondary schools in varied settings, what role does the principal have in identifying building-wide instructional goals? Beyond understanding the qualities of leaders who are successful in schools, I sought to better understand the particular classroom and professional experiences that helped to foster these qualities within individuals. Gaining a deeper understanding of the relationship between these experiences and impactful leadership, my hope is to shed light on the ways that a person is a good fit for the demands of the job of instructional leadership and how schools can select leaders who are best equipped to help students achieve by helping the teachers within their schools grow.

In this chapter I begin interpreting the findings from this study. In response to my own research questions, I found through my analysis that teachers value leaders that they share similar experiences with, that school leaders draw upon their teaching experiences in a variety of different ways that are beneficial in their role as instructional leaders and that aspiring principals benefit from having the sponsorship of a school leader. Findings from this study align with the extant scholarship particularly in the areas that teaching experience is essential for future school leaders and that sponsorship from school leaders plays a large role on the pathway to the

principalship. My findings extend beyond these alignments with the scholarship in some interesting ways. Further, I return to my conceptual framework and examine how it's components of attraction, selection and attrition (Schneider, 1987) along with the additional concepts of sponsored mobility (Myung, et al, 2011), boundary spanners (Coldren & Spillane, 2007), instructional leadership (Hattie, 2005) and shared leadership (Marks & Printy, 2003) help me interpret the findings from the study. Following the discussion, I consider the implications of the findings from the study for scholarly research, practitioners for schools and districts, and education and policy-makers, particularly at the state level.

The Impact of Teaching Experience on Instructional Leaders

In the response to the first research question that examined the relationship between a principal's prior teaching experiences and their development and practice as an instructional leader, there was consensus reached among the teachers: teaching experience is very important for a principal to possess in order to be an effective, relatable instructional leader. All of the teachers, both in the elementary and secondary settings spoke extensively about the importance of instructional leaders having their own classroom experiences to draw from. These experiences were believed to help make these leaders more relatable. Many of these teachers throughout the inquiry expressed concerns that the leaders in their buildings did not possess adequate experience or the right kind of experience that made them relatable to the teachers that they supervise within their buildings. Two veteran elementary school teachers explained the importance of a principal to have experience at multiple grade levels within the buildings that were under their supervision and pointed out cases in which that did not exist.

The principals and central office administrators talked about how they drew upon their teaching experiences to help them as instructional leaders in different ways. They talked about

how their experiences in the classroom helped them understand what teachers go through, while also helping them as administrators in how they communicate with parents. Four of the six principals taught less than ten years and many of them had never taught within the setting that they supervised. The central office administrators had spent time teaching one of the core subject areas (Social Studies, English, Math and Science). They explained how they drew upon their own teaching experiences as instructional leaders to help them collaborate and give feedback to the teachers that they supervise.

The Importance of Prior Teaching Experience

In this analysis, I found that teachers value the teaching experience of their building leaders. This finding aligns to prior scholarship (Hoyle & Randall, 1967; Jenkins, 1972; Weldy, 1979) that explained the importance of teaching experience for school principals in how it helped them perform at their job. Another consistency between the data I collected and the extant scholarship was the idea that classroom experience helps a principal to be successful in their role as a building leader in the view of teachers (Ballou & Podgursky, 1995; Tran & Bon, 2016). Teachers and principals both talked about that within their interviews, specifically about the importance of being able to relate to each other. Another component that was apparent in my discussions and the research base was how time in the classroom helped administrators perform as instructional leaders. Administrators talked at length about how their time in the classroom helped them to recognize what good teaching was, regardless of the subject material being covered, which was also consistent with some of the literature I examined (Weldy, 1979). Thus, findings from my data analysis align with findings from earlier scholarship (Ballou & Podgursky, 1995; Hoyle & Randall, 1967; Jenkins, 1972; Tran & Bon, 2016; Weldy, 1979)

teachers and administrators value teaching experience as essential attribute for an instructional leader.

The Importance of Prior Teaching Experiences: New Insights

Though teaching experience is certainly referenced within the scholarship (Ballou & Podgursky, 1995; Hoyle & Randall, 1967; Jenkins, 1972; Tran & Bon, 2016; Weldy, 1979) as an important attribute for principals to have, the specifics of this experience was not emphasized in the literature. For example, Ballou and Podgursky (1995) explained how teaching longer could help a principal become more effective but did not investigate what kind of classroom experience could make a principal more effective. Tran and Bon (2016) explained how a quality principal will demonstrate credibility if they have experience as a teacher. The most common theme within the teacher's interviews was the importance of school leaders to possess significant teaching experience. Every teacher within every setting echoed the same response here. Further, many went so far as to talk about the importance of principals having significant teaching experience within the settings they supervise. For example, Jody Thomas, a veteran teacher from Grove Park Elementary explained how it is important that an elementary principal have experience teaching at elementary schools prior to going into administration, preferably at several grade levels. She explained that her principal had taught at three different grade levels and explained that "he is then able to make a connection to his time in the classroom and whenever he would switch". She said that these experiences of switching to teach elementary students at different grade levels made him more relatable as a leader. Two of the principals even reflected that their own lack of teaching experience had impeded their performance as an instructional leader. Middle School Principal Autumn Miller talked about her limited classroom had hurt her credibility saying "So I think that has actually worked against me and I had to work

really hard to gain the respect of the teachers in the building”. The veteran teachers that I talked with expressed feelings towards administrators similar to what Autumn Miller described in her experience which reinforced the theme that was prevalent in this study, the importance of school leaders to possess significant experience within the walls of the classroom.

Summary. In this study, participants consistently expressed that administrators need to spend significant time in the classroom in order to better lead the teachers who are trying to maximize classroom achievement. Many of the teachers went further saying that it was important for principals to have experience teaching students at certain grade levels and age groups. Kendra Rogers, a veteran teacher from Stoney Pointe Elementary School explained that principals, “need to know what goes into the day and what the kids are doing and what it’s like to be in the classroom at that age group”. These sentiments were echoed by all of the teachers interviewed within the inquiry and the principals made many references to their teaching experiences. Allison Mitchell, a veteran middle school teacher who has since retired from teaching, emphasized the importance of teaching experience in her interview, along with her frustration of school leaders not having significant teaching experience in her view:

That has really bothered me in our school district. Almost every principal or assistant principal that I have had, even the superintendent have had LIMITED classroom experience or, they have not been a “core teacher”, they have been music teachers and they have been learning support teachers.

As an English teacher, she found it important for a school principal to have had experience teaching one of the core subjects. These sentiments were consistent with many of the teachers that I interviewed. All of the administrators described the different ways in which they draw

upon their own teaching experiences. Willie Clemente, the principal of Grove Park Elementary reflected upon the role that his own teaching experience has had on him, saying:

I think that the teaching years that I had were just crucial. And even now, I still have to; I was talking to somebody today and talking about what I did in that same situation 20 years ago or so.

Though the teachers and administrators all agreed that experience in the classroom is an important part of being an instructional leader, they seemed to disagree on what instructional leadership looked like. The teachers talked about instructional leadership coming from many different sources, including instructional coaches. Steve Allman, a veteran teacher from Washington Elementary expressed concern about this stating that “this is my principal’s end of her first year coming up and we never have talked instruction”. This was a commonly held view of many of the teachers, regardless of their experience level or the building in which they worked. Though there was a shared view of the importance of teaching experience by teachers and administrators, they had different views about how the experience translates into effective instructional leadership.

Teaching Experience and the Pathway to the Principalship

In the response to the second research question that examined the relationship between a principal’s prior teaching experience and their pathway to the principalship, there was again a consensus among the teachers that significant teaching experience should be a necessary precursor for anybody aspiring to be a principal. Amongst school leaders, various trends emerged upon examining their own pathways to leadership positions. These include their motivation to enter administration, sponsorship and how teaching experience was valued by central office administrators. The most common motivating factor was that most of these school

leaders wanted to make a bigger impact on students and they looked at being a school leader as a way of doing that. Further, they all spoke of drawing upon their classroom experience on their pathway to school leadership. Another common trend that emerged was that nearly all of these individuals were sponsored by other school leaders to become school leaders. They were encouraged to pursue leadership positions and many were given additional administrative tasks to complete while they were still in the classroom. The manner in which teaching experience was valued differently by central office administrators when considering the hiring of building-level administrative candidates was another interesting trend that emerged within this inquiry.

Sponsored Mobility

Nine of the twelve administrators I interviewed talked about working closely with administrators prior to becoming administrators, while they were still teaching. Through our conversations, they described their experiences which were very consistent with the extant scholarship on the topic. Completing administrative tasks within a school system exposes an aspiring principal to leadership experience and can help that individual get hired (Teran & Licata, 1986). Ten of the twelve administrators interviewed within this inquiry described how they were encouraged to pursue administrative positions. This finding aligns with extant research: teachers that ascend to leadership positions tend to be sponsored by administrators and they generally teach in the districts that hire them into administrative roles (DeAngelis & O'Connor, 2012). Some principals seek to build leadership capacity within the ranks of their school by employing a distributive leadership strategy (Huggins et al., 2017). Encouragement and sponsorship along the pathway to the principalship was the most consistent theme amongst the administrators in this study.

Themes Consistent with the Conceptual Framework

Attraction. Throughout this analysis, I used the ASA framework (Schneider, 1987) to better make sense of the data that I collected. To better understand the attraction element within this framework, I asked administrators why they were initially attracted to, or pursued administrative positions. They had some similar responses. The most common responses to this question is that individuals sought leadership positions to make a bigger impact, they sought these positions after being strongly encouraged by supervisors and in some cases, pushed into these positions. A couple of these respondents wanted to be in a leadership position in the school with which they worked. There were some other motivations as well, one of which being money by one of the respondents. The attraction component of the conceptual framework was common ground for most of these individuals; in that they wanted to have a bigger impact on students after working as teachers.

Selection. In alignment with the conceptual framework, I sought to better understand the trends surrounding the selection process of administrators. The ASA framework (Schneider, 1987) helped me in creating my questions and making sense of the data that I collected. I asked principals questions about their backgrounds prior to being hired and central office administrator's questions about what they looked for in potential candidates. Their responses brought to light some shared perspectives on teaching experience and sponsorship, along with different perspectives on classroom experience.

Teaching Experience. In this analysis, I defined "veteran teachers" as teachers with at least ten years of full time teaching experience. Given my definition of "veteran teacher" for this study, most of the administrators did not meet the criteria or identify themselves as veterans. Only three of the twelve administrators within the study had at least ten years of teaching

experience prior to going into administration. One principal had less than five years of experience, and this was in an alternative setting. The eight other administrators had between five to ten years of experience. Many of the teachers talked about how they were better able to relate to administrators who had been seasoned teachers prior to entering administration, but few of these administrators spent significant time in the classroom. The ability of being able to relate to an instructional leader could possibly explain why the teachers and administrators had different views on instructional leadership and the principal's role as an instructional leader. Principals looked at their primary role as being an instructional leader, but many of the teachers explained how instructional leadership came from different individuals such as fellow teachers or instructional coaches and not from administrators.

Sponsorship. Nearly all of the principals in this study described some level of administrative sponsorship in the transition from teacher to formal school leader. This sponsorship took on different forms, from encouragement to actually being given opportunities to lead while serving as teachers. Ten out of the twelve individuals shared this common response. Sponsorship is one of the most visible themes that emerged through the interviews. It is apparent through the literature (DeAngelis & O'Connor, 2012; Huggins et al., 2017; Marshall, 1985; Myung et al., 2011) and conceptual framework and it is one of the strongest themes that emerged within this inquiry.

The Value of Classroom Experience. In order to gain further understanding of the selection process of principals, I asked administrators about the kinds of experience they looked for in principal candidates. Teaching experience was valued inconsistently among the district level administrators interviewed in the study. For example, the director of special education valued leadership experience; the assistant superintendent valued teaching experience. The

superintendent valued experiences outside of education. Within my conceptual framework, these were the only people included in the study that could speak directly to selecting administrators, because they were the only ones that had done it. The comments are valuable because they reveal how these leaders are looking for different things such as leadership experience and experiences outside of education, with teaching experience only being valued by one of the central office administrators within this study.

Summary. All of these administrators had spent time in the classroom prior to entering administration and almost all of them were motivated to enter administration because they sought to make a bigger impact on the lives of students. Washington Elementary School Principal Sarah Owens elaborated on the idea of helping more students as an educator within our interview, saying, “It was just that ability to create that culture where all kids, even the underdogs had that chance”. With her background as a special education teacher, she talked about always having a soft-spot in her heart for the “underdog”; the desire to help more students succeed was nearly universally shared by all of the administrators I talked to within this inquiry.

Sponsored Mobility. The most common factor that was also evident in the literature in prompting these individuals to pursue their administrative positions was sponsorship from other administrators. Autumn Miller, the Middle School principal talked extensively about her relationships with two of the administrators in the district that she worked in and how they helped her transition into an administrative role:

I became very close with both of them and both of them continued to encourage me to push me into leadership to continue with my education and just brought me in, would talk me through all kinds of things and just through conversations and mentoring with both of them, I would really credit both of them to kind of the jump that I had.

This was a very common trend across nearly all of the administrators I spoke with. Dan Willis, the Principal of Stoney Pointe Elementary school shared a similar scenario with me during our discussion:

I was fortunate, in the sense that I had a principal, the principal at the High School at the time that I was teaching there, we seemed to get along very well, she encouraged me to participate and explore more leadership things in the building, she gave me opportunities at that time and when the time came, I was fortunate enough to become an administrator.

Sponsored mobility was an important part of the pathway from the classroom to the school office within these cases and though the circumstances were different for the individuals I spoke with, the stories were nearly all the same.

Central Office Administrators Value Different Experiences. Within my conceptual framework, I took a look at how classroom experience is valued in principal candidates by the central office administrators. What really surprised me was how different their responses were in regards to what they valued in potential candidates. The district Superintendent, Michelle Dwarph talked about what she valued in administrative candidates saying:

Honestly, I like to see that they have done something else besides teaching. I think whether it has been as a profession or it has been ancillary to teaching, I like to see people who have been involved in the community. I like to see experience of people outside of the classroom whether it's on a farm or in business or pumping gas, but just to have had the opportunity to engage in situations that are a little bit different than what you find in the classroom.

She explained how the experiences “outside the classroom” gave a job candidate a broader perspective of people, helping them to better relate to different individuals as a leader. Of the

three central office administrators that I spoke with, there was little common ground on a preferred pathway into leadership. What did seem to surface was that they all valued things in candidates that were common with their own pathway into administration. This is consistent with the idea of affinity bias, which is the tendency to gravitate toward and develop relationships with people who are more like ourselves and share similar interests and backgrounds (Nalty, 2016). Affinity bias has been impacted by an individual's race (Collins, 2007) but within the context of the cases that I investigated, it seemed to have a stronger link to an individual's professional pathway and experiences.

I am using the term affinity bias from the legal field (Nalty, 2016), the concept within the education field relates to one's identity as a focus on the contextually specific ways in which individuals recognize others (Gee, 2000). People who share similar experiences through common practices often identify with each other through sharing these experiences (Gee, 2000). For an individual pursuing an administrative position, their work history and responsibilities create an identity within that organization that can facilitate their career mobility because the process is socially constructed (Riehl & Byrd, 1997). Additionally, an individual's identity which is forged through these experiences, prepares them for their position within a school (Avraamidou, 2014). Many of the people that I talked with in the inquiry gave responses that were contextually specific to their own professional identity or even their previous identity as teachers.

Further, affinity can have an impact on effective professional development which is directly related to instructional leadership (Noonan, 2019). Designers of professional development should be considerate of teachers' backgrounds and existing knowledge and beliefs (Hochberg & Desimone, 2010). I had discussions with teachers in the study that reinforced this

idea that was linked closely with my research questions. The teachers I talked to were most satisfied with the experiences that directly related their own professional context.

Upon reflection of all the data collected through interviews, it seemed that affinity bias could have played a big role in how people viewed the topics we discussed. The veteran teachers seemed to have a stronger feeling about the importance of teaching experience, while it was valued by all teachers, the veteran teachers elaborated on the importance of teaching experience more extensively. Also, teachers who taught core subject areas (Social Studies, English, Math and Science) seemed to bring this particular experience up when describing the kind of experience, they valued in an instructional leader. The same can be said about how teachers at particular building levels valued experience from leaders within those building levels. The elementary teachers in particular really seemed to value school leaders to have elementary experience. Hiring influenced by affinity bias can have negative consequences such as discrimination and economic loss (Szafarz, 2007). This could happen when hiring decisions are not based on the skill levels of all candidates vying for a working position, (Szafarz, 2007) even though people prefer to work with people who share as many similar characteristics as themselves (Szafarz, 2007). To further understand the presence of affinity bias within these cases and the impact that it may have on instructional leadership would require additional research.

The Role of the Principal as an Instructional Leader

In response to the third research question, involving the role of a principal as an instructional leader, specifically their involvement in crafting and working towards instructional goals; teachers viewed instructional leadership as coming from many different people and resources, and the instructional goals were created collaboratively by an administrative team. Principals viewed instructional leadership as being a primary responsibility within their job but

also acknowledged how instructional leadership within this school district has become a collaboration that includes different stakeholders assuming leadership roles. The principals talked about how their own time in the classroom helped them relate to teachers better and gave them valuable experiences to draw from as instructional leaders. The central office administrators, who supervise these principals, had different ideas of the principal's role and responsibilities as an instructional leader.

Themes Consistent with the Literature; A Shared Model of Instructional Leadership

The teacher's view of leadership was consistent with much of the scholarship that describes instructional leadership as a shared model, in which involves teachers and administrators (Hallinger, 2003; Leithwood, 2003; Huggins et al., 2017; Marks, 2003; Marks & Printy, 2003; Spillane et al., 2004; Stoll et al., 2006). These ideas were also very consistent with Superintendent Dwarph's sentiments, in which she described instructional leadership as a collaborative effort with teachers working as their equals. The other central office administrators talked about the role of the principal as following the goals set forward by the superintendent and managing the available resources they have to meet these goals. Principals talked about how their teaching experience helped them succeed as instructional leaders by helping them relate to their faculty which was an idea consistent with some of the scholarship (Ballou & Podgursky, 1995; Tran & Bon, 2016). The principals spoke of collaboration as an important part of goal setting, but did not include teachers as part of this collaboration. They described how instructional goals are created on a yearly basis by a team of administrators at a summer retreat.

Themes Consistent with the Conceptual Framework: Collaboration

The theme of collaboration was common and recurring across all of my data set and was consistent within the conceptual framework model that helped guide me through my inquiry. In

building a conceptual framework, I added the concepts of shared leadership (Hallinger, 2003; Marks & Printy, 2003) and boundary spanners (Coldren & Spillane, 2007) to the already existing ASA framework. I did this because I understood from the scholarship that collaborative leadership would likely surface within my study, and I wanted a context to better understand it within my cases. As I have previously described, instructional leadership is a collaborative effort that involves different stakeholders within the educational setting (Hallinger, 2003; Leithwood, 2003; Marks, 2003; Marks & Printy, 2003; Spillane et al., 2004; Stoll et al., 2006) and includes boundary spanners, that sustain the important links between teachers and administrators (Coldren & Spillane, 2007; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1988). Boundary spanners took on several different forms within my study, as instructional leadership was facilitated by many different teachers along with individuals brought in from outside of the school district in addition to building level and central office administrators. This trend was both discussed and observed within my inquiry. An aspect of the conceptual framework that did not surface within my data set was attrition. I did not ask questions related to attrition within any of these schools and the topic did not come up independently.

Summary. Instructional leadership has taken on a shared model across the cases within my study, and principals play a large part within that model, but they no longer facilitate the bulk of instructional leadership sessions. Veteran middle school teacher Allison Mitchell explained her perspective of this, “I’m going to say that we get most instructional leadership through our coaches.” It comes from coaches as well as other teachers, principals, central office administrators and facilitators brought in from outside the school district. Principals play a critical role as not only being a collaborator but being a boundary spanner, between the goal and the leadership practices, even though they may not be the ones directly providing the leadership.

My discussion with Grove Park Elementary teacher Willie Clemente in many ways embodied these beliefs. Willie explained his own vision of what an instructional leader is:

Be that leader who believes more in that collaborative leadership approach; kind of sharing that leadership with others, and knowing that I am not the expert at everything here - and I know that for us to have a good school and to be successful, it can't just be me, it has to be all of us.

Though many of the ideas within my data collection varied on what instructional leadership is, who leads it and how it is effective, the common uniting theme across all of the cases is that it is shared. When I look beyond my study at these schools, I come to the conclusion that collaborative goal setting may be the next step for these schools, so that there is a better understanding of the goals that everyone is working towards.

Scholarly Significance

A study of the relationship between teaching experience and instructional leadership, defined here as a shared, networked process (Bartell, 1989; Coldren & Spillane, 2007; Marks & Printy, 2003) is important for several reasons. Researchers have studied instructional leadership extensively; however, a better understanding of how teaching experience relates to instructional leadership can serve as a guide for future studies. Through the design of this study, researchers can examine the existence of instructional leadership in a contextual setting that utilizes a professional learning community approach for professional development and use it to guide future work. Because of the diverse set of respondents in the study, researchers can better understand different perceptions about instructional leadership held by various stakeholders in the education system.

Understanding the relationship between different levels of teaching experience and instructional leadership could guide policy-makers in creating experience criteria for school leadership certification standards at the government level. Expanded knowledge of this relationship could also prompt policy-makers at the university level to change prerequisite requirements for entry into a principal certification program. Additionally, new found knowledge of these variables could lead to changes in the course offerings that compose the program. Finally, understanding the relationship between teaching experience and instructional leadership is important to the practitioners in the education field. Hiring committees could understand the perceptions that faculty have on how teaching experience relates to instructional leadership, and how different teachers value the level of teaching experience of their supervisors. Building administrators could gain insight as to how their experiences are perceived and valued by the faculty that they lead. Perceptions about effective instructional leadership could be revealed, based upon the ideas of different stakeholders within a school system.

Implications

This study reinforces much of the existing scholarship surrounding the importance for educational leaders to have teaching experience (Ballou & Podgursky, 1995; Hoyle & Randall, 1967; Jenkins, 1972; Tran & Bon, 2016; Weldy, 1979) while raising important questions about the specific kinds of teaching experience that educators possess. The teachers I talked to desired their supervisors to possess experiences similar to their own, that they could relate to. Similarly, the administrators that I talked placed a value on the qualities and experiences that they themselves possessed in their colleagues and teachers. Through my own analysis, I recognized this phenomenon to be affinity bias, which is the tendency to be drawn and have relationships with people similar to ourselves (Nalty, 2016). There is little scholarship on the role of affinity

bias in public education settings, but this should be further explored as affinity bias can be impacted by an individual's race (Collins, 2007) and can have a negative consequence on the hiring decisions at a workplace (Szafarz, 2007). Another very prominent theme that was reinforced through the data collected from my inquiry was the importance of sponsorship and how it is a crucial part of the pathway to school leadership (DeAngelis & O'Connor, 2012; Huggins et al., 2017; Marshall, 1985; Myung et al., 2011). Sponsorship was a very prevalent trait in the path for nearly all of the school leaders I talked to in my inquiry. A worthy approach to future scholarship would be to continue to investigate the role that affinity bias plays in the sponsorship of prospective school leaders.

This work is part of the larger conversation on how to select and develop school leaders who are effective instructional leaders that can help to facilitate student achievement within the schools that they lead. The implications within this study can support scholars through reinforcing much of the existing scholarship about the importance of teaching experience for school leaders (Ballou & Podgursky, 1995; Hoyle & Randall, 1967; Jenkins, 1972; Tran & Bon, 2016; Weldy, 1979) while raising important questions for future studies about the specific details of this experience and how it should be considered when making decisions on hiring school leaders. Practitioners can look at the responses of those questioned within this inquiry to better understand what teachers with different experience levels look for in their instructional leaders and how school systems select these individuals. Policy makers can use this data to make considerations on the experience requirements that should exist for those aspiring for leadership positions within schools, along with what training programs should require from individuals seeking certification to become a school principal.

What I learned from completing this study is that leadership is very difficult because it is hard to relate to all of the individuals that you supervise. The people I talked with put the highest value on individuals with similar experiences as their own. If you shared particular classroom experiences with a certain group of teachers, this meant that you probably could not relate as well with teachers who had a different set of experiences. As a leader, you must try to relate with these individuals as well, perhaps on a different level. While this could prove to be challenging, it seems to me that this personal level of relatability can go a long way in building a solid rapport with the individuals that you supervise.

Implications for Scholars

Time in the classroom was talked about throughout the scholarship (Ballou & Podgursky, 1995; Hoyle & Randall, 1967; Jenkins, 1972; Tran & Bon, 2016; Weldy, 1979) as a necessary bridge that all school leaders would need to cross in order to prepare for their job as an administrator. After talking to teachers and administrators throughout this inquiry, I suggest that future scholarship centers on investigating the grade levels and subjects that a principal taught in relation to the kind of school that they supervise. The people I interviewed explained the value of their time in the classroom, but the teachers specifically talked about the importance of teaching experience as the means in which a school leader can relate to what teachers are doing in their own classrooms. Some of the elementary teachers talked about how their principals struggled to understand the instruction that takes place in an elementary school classroom because they possessed no elementary school experience. A teacher at the middle school explained how typically, administrators hired into this district did not spend a lot of time in the classroom and did not have experience teaching a core subject like English, Math, Social Studies or Science. One of the teachers, who talked about how relatable her principal was, described how he had

spent many years in the elementary classroom teaching different grade levels; this teacher was an elementary teacher who shared similar experiences. This study reveals data about the specific experiences that teachers' value of their supervisors as a way to relate to them at a higher level.

Affinity Bias in Education

Another important theme emerged from the data within this inquiry, the theme of affinity bias, which is tendency to develop relationships with people who are similar to ourselves (Collins, 2007; Nalty, 2016). Affinity bias seemed to be the strongest with the veteran teachers and the central office administrators. Veteran teachers talked highly of leaders who spent significant time in the classroom, particularly teaching within similar settings of that teacher, such as grade levels and subjects. Many of the teachers seemed disconnected with principals that did not share similar experiences, while the strongest rapport existed between teachers and principals that had similar experiences in the classroom. When I spoke with central office administrators about the experiences that they valued from administrative candidates, they described many of the same experiences that they had prior to being administrators; they were looking to hire people similar to themselves. Future studies should investigate the prevalence and impact of affinity bias in education. We know that hiring influenced by affinity bias can have negative consequences such as discrimination (Collins, 2007; Szafarz, 2007) but what impact, positive or negative, does it have on the working relationship between teachers and administrators? This is a question for subsequent studies to ponder.

Because affinity bias sometimes acts as an unconscious bias that has a negative impact on different employee groups and organizational communication (McCormick, 2015). It can have a big impact on hiring, promotion, compensation and organizational culture (McCormick, 2015). Often times, minorities are blocked from various White networks because there is a tendency to

recognize intellect and capacity more easily in a person's own sex and race (Collins, 2007). Because affinity bias surfaced in a prominent way within my study, more research should be done to investigate affinity bias in education and how it is connected to sponsorship, race and gender in how these factors relate to the hiring process of schools. The schools that I investigated all had overwhelmingly White faculties, staff, administration and students, so race was not a factor in my particular study. I did not investigate the role of gender, but it certainly could have been a factor in the hiring practices of school leaders within my own inquiry. With affinity bias being a prominent reality embedded within the culture of the schools that I examined, race and gender could certainly emerge as a factor within the hiring practices of the schools that I researched.

What this means in the larger scope of education is that with pathways to the principalship not being race or gender neutral, school organizations must be more cognizant of their personnel decisions (Davis et al., 2017). I realized affinity bias within the schools that I researched, these schools lacked racial diversity in their student body, faculty and staff so the bias seemed to exist within the individuals professional background and experiences. With affinity bias being linked to race (Collins, 2007) it could certainly play a factor in hiring decisions within other schools and should be better understood so that hiring practices within school systems can be fair and equitable.

Implications for Practitioners

This research has important implications for practitioners when considering what experiences are important for instructional leaders, how these experiences impact the pathway to the principalship and how instructional goals are set and communicated. I do not suggest that school building leaders and district building leaders take a particular course in leadership and

hiring practices but I do feel that shining some light on what I discovered in this inquiry could help to inform future decision making, or at the very least, help school leaders gain an understanding of the organizational dynamics that may exist within their buildings or school districts.

Teaching Experience is Necessary and Beneficial

Individuals aspiring to become school principals should spend some time in the classroom prior to pursuing these opportunities. Not only should they spend significant time teaching, but it would be increasingly beneficial if they taught multiple grade levels within the school setting that they intend to supervise. Based on my conversations, it seems the more time they spend teaching, the better prepared they will be to lead teachers. The principals that were most relatable to their teachers were principals who spent significant time in the classroom in a setting similar to what they were supervising. Central office administrators hiring principals should weigh these factors, when they consider who they are bringing into a leadership position and the teachers that they will be leading. Certain candidates may already possess rapport with a group of teachers, simply based on their own teaching background.

Teachers need Sponsorship

For any teacher who is aspiring to become an administrator, findings from this study indicate the importance of building rapport with a current school administrator. Within this relationship, an administrator could provide a teacher aspiring for a career in leadership with encouragement and opportunities that will prepare them to transition from their classroom to an administrative position. This was a theme that was common with virtually every administrator that I spoke with, that, as a teacher, they were encouraged and given opportunities by school administrators to pursue school leadership as a career path.

Goals Need to be Clear, Encompassing and Emphasized

Many of the teachers seemed to be unclear on their building and district's instructional goals. A teacher at the high school was not able to explain what the instructional vision of the school was. A teacher at Washington Elementary seemed to vent about how instruction had not been addressed within building meetings the entire school year. A special education teacher at Stoney Pointe Elementary complained that the district was not providing her with adequate professional development opportunities within the realm of special education. Even the central office administrators had different opinions on what the principal's role was, when identifying building-wide instructional goals. The Middle School principal made an interesting point on her ideas about goal setting, and how it should be a collaborative effort. This is a potential solution to these issues. At the very least, there should be a shared understanding about the creation instructional goals and the role of individual stakeholders within this process. Goals should be clearly stated and reinforced throughout the school year, so their purpose is always understood. They should also be created in a way that encompasses all educators and providing them with a means to grow professionally while helping their students achieve at a higher level.

Implications for Policymakers

This research has important implications for leadership preparation and policy. Highlighting some of the strong tendencies in this data could help different states impose a rigor to their certification requirements for school leaders that could lead to more effective instructional leadership across different schools. Findings from this study suggest that instructional leaders benefitted from extensive time in the classroom as a teacher, having experiences within school settings similar to what they were supervising. Principal's benefitting from prior classroom experience is an already prevalent idea within the scholarship (Ballou & Podgursky, 1995; Hoyle

& Randall, 1967; Jenkins, 1972; Tran & Bon, 2016; Weldy, 1979). States like Pennsylvania require that you must teach at least five years prior to entering the principalship. Maybe this should be expanded? Also, it would be worth considering a requirement of experience teaching in a particular school in order to be an administrator in that school, for example, an elementary principal should be an elementary teacher before entering administration. The same considerations should be considered for secondary principals. These requirements could help educational leaders become better prepared for the instructional demands that their job would require which could ultimately help their teachers and students perform better within their schools.

In the end, my research shows specifically how teaching experience prepares a principal to work as an instructional leader within the school that they lead. This experience is needed by principals to help them navigate the challenges that they face. Given the diversity of educational settings just within the same school district, diverse teaching experiences are needed to best support the faculty and students within these settings. These findings suggest that we can help aspiring principals prepare themselves for the challenges that they will face, along with helping school leaders and policy makers in the vetting process of the selection and certification of future school leaders.

Interpretations and Conclusion

With such importance being placed on student achievement in schools (Cuban, 1988), I find it important to understand how school leadership can have an impact on student achievement. The purpose of this inquiry is to gain an understanding on how the experiences of school leaders can impact instructional leadership practices, because these practices can have an impact on student achievement. The following research questions guide the analysis of this study: (1) What is the relationship between principals' prior teaching experiences and their

development and practice as an instructional leader? (2) How does an aspiring principal's teaching experience impact their pathway into the principalship? (3) In primary and secondary schools in varied settings, what role does the principal have in identifying building-wide instructional goals? Much has been written about how many school leaders were formally teachers (Jenkins, 1972; Marczyński & Gates, 2013; Myung et al., 2011; Stevenson, 2000; Teran & Licata, 1986). I seek to understand how specific teaching experience plays a role in shaping the instructional practices of school leaders. Findings from my qualitative case study analysis suggest that school leaders need to have significant classroom experiences, preferably within the setting that they lead. My inquiry builds on the idea that classroom experience is important and recommends that teachers spend significant time in the classroom, in varied settings to better prepare themselves for leadership roles within different educational settings.

The lens in which I use to analyze my data stems from the ASA Framework (Schneider, 1987) and it centers on the attraction, selection and attrition of individuals within a working environment, in the context of this study, a school district. I have added to this framework additional concepts like sponsored mobility (Myung, et al, 2011), boundary spanners (Coldren & Spillane, 2007), instructional leadership (Hattie, 2005) and shared leadership (Marks & Printy, 2003) to create a framework that helped to both guide and account for all of the different components of my research questions.

In this qualitative case study I interviewed twenty-four teachers and school administrators, observed twenty-seven separate professional learning sessions during Act 48 In-service days and analyzed the documents and communications related to those professional learning sessions over the course of a year. My analytical procedure included two phases of coding for all of the data. The first phase consisted of open coding and the second phase I drew

upon my interview questions, the literature review and my conceptual framework to guide my deductive coding. I also gathered data from observing professional development presentations, sponsored by the school district and collecting documents pertaining to those professional learning sessions, all over the course of a year. I coded this data in a similar fashion, using open and deductive coding to gain a better understanding of how the findings relate to my research questions.

In response to my research questions three findings emerged from this study. First, the findings of the study show that teachers place a very high premium on the teaching experience of their school administrative leaders. In some cases, teachers explained the importance of their principals to have specific experience teaching within a school setting that they supervise. Having these experiences make the school leaders more relatable to the teachers. A second finding from this study, which is consistent with the previous scholarship is that teachers who aspire to the principalship benefit from sponsorship (Marshall, 1985; Myung et al., 2011). This was certainly the case with the school leaders that I talked with, though the ways in which this sponsorship occurred varied from person to person. A third finding is that school leaders must clearly articulate and consistently emphasize the instructional goals for the school, because many teachers were unaware of what they were.

This study reinforces an established idea within the scholarship that principals benefit from prior classroom experience (Ballou & Podgursky, 1995; Hoyle & Randall, 1967; Jenkins, 1972; Tran & Bon, 2016; Weldy, 1979). Pennsylvania policy makers could certainly consider this when they outline the licensure requirements for public school principals across the commonwealth. The premium placed upon experience should also be considered strongly by aspiring principals and the school leaders who are part of the hiring committees that select school

leaders. Extensive time in the classroom could help prepare a candidate for the demands of being the instructional leader of a school. Something that comes up in my data that should be studied further is affinity bias. Affinity bias is the idea that we tend to develop relationships with people similar to ourselves (Collins, 2007; Nalty, 2016). This trend was apparent among many of the teachers, particularly the veteran teachers and the central office administrators.

Because, as my findings show, teachers find value in working for principals and other school leaders who have a meaningful amount of prior teaching experience to draw on in their role as instructional leaders, I would recommend that the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania increase the teaching requirement to gain principal licensure from five to seven years, with a principal having taught at least one year in a school setting similar to the one that they will be supervising. I would encourage other states to examine their own requirements pertaining to the licensure of school principals and draft similar measures. Implementing this would only stand to benefit the principals, teachers and most importantly, the students within the schools that they supervise. I would encourage teachers to aspire to the principalship to spend time teaching at different grade levels in a school setting similar to where they would like to lead. I would encourage hiring committees to place a high value on the extent of teaching experience of the candidates that they evaluate.

Additional studies should center on professional development for specials teachers, such as special education, music or physical education teachers. These teachers seemed to be disconnected from many of the offerings provided to them by the school district and I have to think that this challenge exists for school leaders at districts all around the country. Something else that I would like to explore more is the role of affinity bias in the hiring practice of teachers and school administrators within public schools. This was a new concept that emerged in my

data and I would like to see it explored further, to better understand how it impacts both hiring individuals into the school and the climate and culture of the school.

After reviewing the scholarship, I understood the importance of a principal being a strong instructional leader. When I spoke to teachers across a school district, I gained a clarified understanding of what they want and need from their school leaders; a leader who has been in the same trenches with teachers, who understands the unique challenges of the classroom. Teaching experience should be a factor that is strongly considered for individuals aspiring for leadership positions within a school, for individuals who select school leaders and for governments who license individuals to lead schools.

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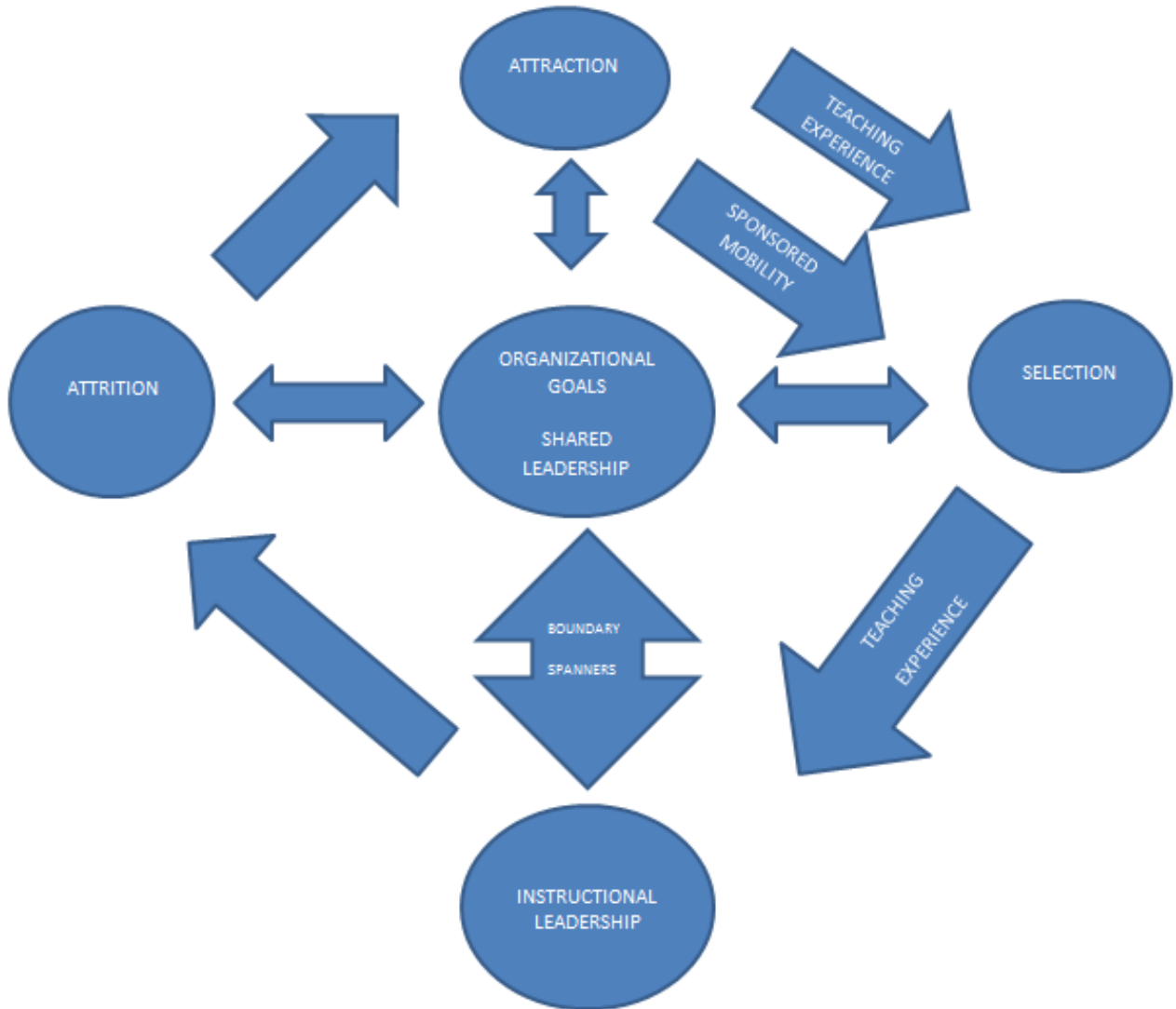
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Appendix A – Conceptual Framework Graphic

Conceptual Framework Graphic



Appendix B – Central Office Administrator Interview Protocol

Central Office Administrator Interview Protocol

1. What motivated you to pursue a career in administration?
2. Could you describe your role in the district?
3. How long have you been an administrator?
4. When you began your career in education, did you know that you ultimately wanted to be an administrator?
5. How, if at all, were you encouraged by colleagues to pursue an administrative position?
6. How long did you teach?
7. What subjects did you teach?
8. How, if at all, did you draw upon your teaching experience during the process in which you were hired into an administrative role?
9. What other job experiences do you have that have prepared you for your role as an administrator?
10. What is your role in the district in regards to identifying building-wide instructional goals?
11. What is the role of principals in the district in regards to identifying building-wide instructional goals?
12. How does your teaching experience impact your practice as an instructional leader in the district?
13. How has your teaching experience helped you relate to teachers in the district?
14. How has your teaching experience helped you relate to students in the district?
15. What career experiences do you look for and value in administrative candidates seeking employment in this school district?
16. Thank you for meeting with me, do you have any questions for me?
17. Are there any questions that you feel I should have asked you?
18. Is there anything you would like to address that I did not ask?

Appendix C – Building Administrator Interview Protocol

Building Administrator Interview Protocol

1. What motivated you to pursue a career in administration?
2. Could you describe your role in this district?
3. How long have you been an administrator?
4. When you began your career in education, did you know that you ultimately wanted to be an administrator?
5. How, if at all were you encouraged by colleagues to pursue an administrative position?
6. How long did you teach?
7. What subjects did you teach?
8. How, if at all, did you draw upon your teaching experience during the process in which you were hired into an administrative role?
9. What other job experiences do you have that have prepared you for your role as an administrator?
10. What is your role in the building in regards to identifying building-wide instructional goals?
11. How does your teaching experience impact your practice as an instructional leader in the building?
12. How has your teaching experience helped you relate to teachers in the building?
13. How has your teaching experience helped you relate to student in the building?
14. Thank you for meeting with me, do you have any questions for me?
15. Are there any questions that you feel I should have asked you?
16. Is there anything you would like to address that I did not ask?

Appendix D – Teacher Interview Protocol

Teacher Interview Protocol

1. What is your role in the district?
2. How many years have you been a teacher?
3. What classes do you teach?
4. How have you grown as a teacher as a result of receiving instructional leadership in this district?
5. What does instructional leadership look like in this district?
6. Has instructional leadership, as you describe it, changed during your time in this district?
7. How are you involved with instructional leadership in your district/building?
8. How do instructional leaders in this district empower teachers?
9. How do the principals play a large role in identifying instructional goals and guiding the instructional vision of the school?
10. Do you think it is important for principals to have a significant level of classroom experience teaching students? Please explain your rationale.
11. Are you able to better relate with school leaders who have significant teaching experience? Why could this be?

Appendix E – Observation Analysis/Summary Form

Observation Analysis/Summary Form

Observation Summary Form

Name of Person Conducting the Observation	
Title of Project	
Observation #	
Event/Setting Observed	
Date and Time of Observation	
Location of Observation	

Purpose of observation:

Significance or importance of observation:

Brief summary of observation:

Where might this observation lead?:

Observation Field Notes:

Appendix F – Document Analysis Form
Document Analysis Form

Document/Artifact Summary Form

Name of Person Conducting the Analysis	
Date Received or Picked Up:	
Date of Document (if applicable):	
Title of Project:	
Document #:	

Name or description of document:

Event or contact, if any, with which the document is associated:

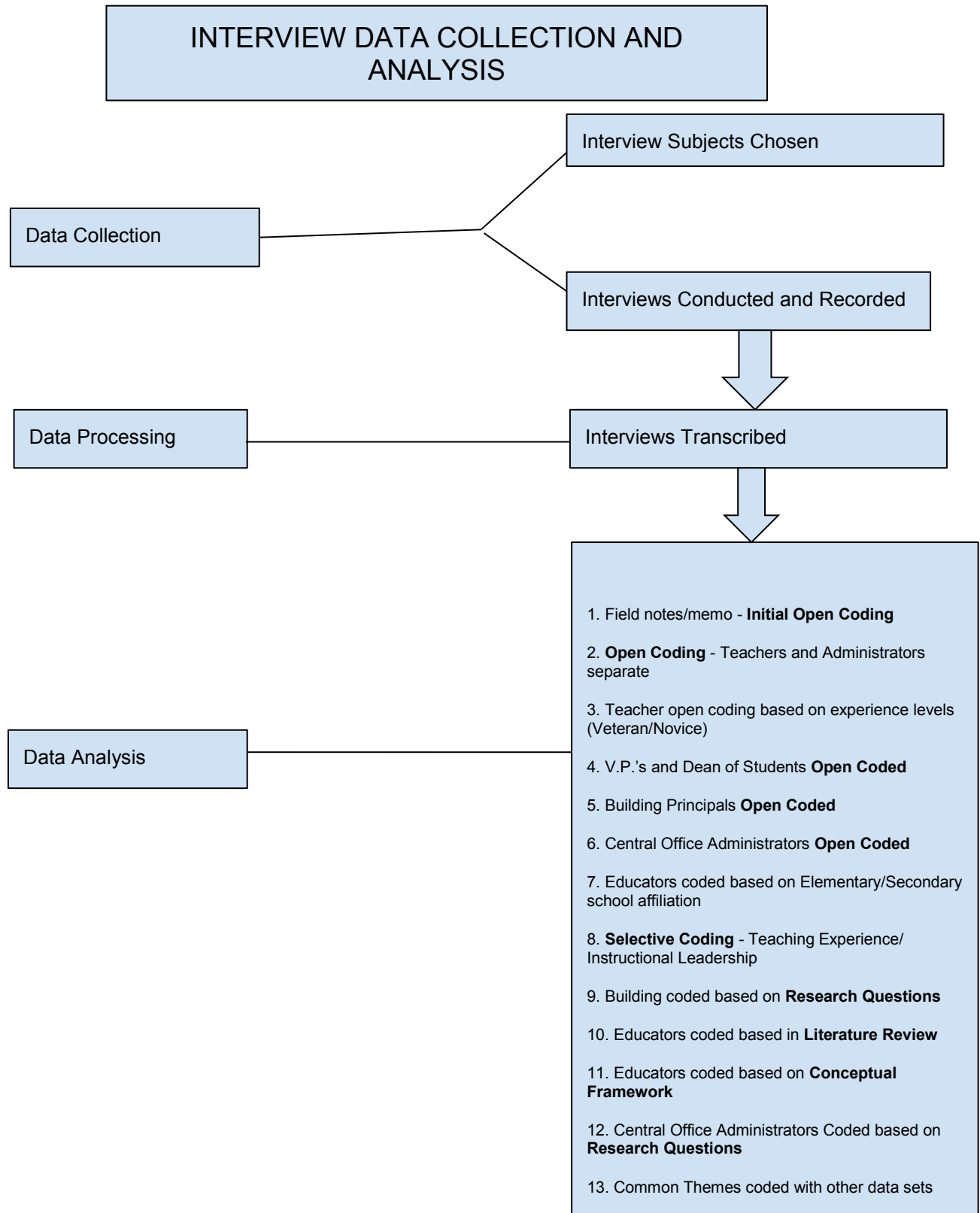
Brief summary of contents:

Significance or importance of document:

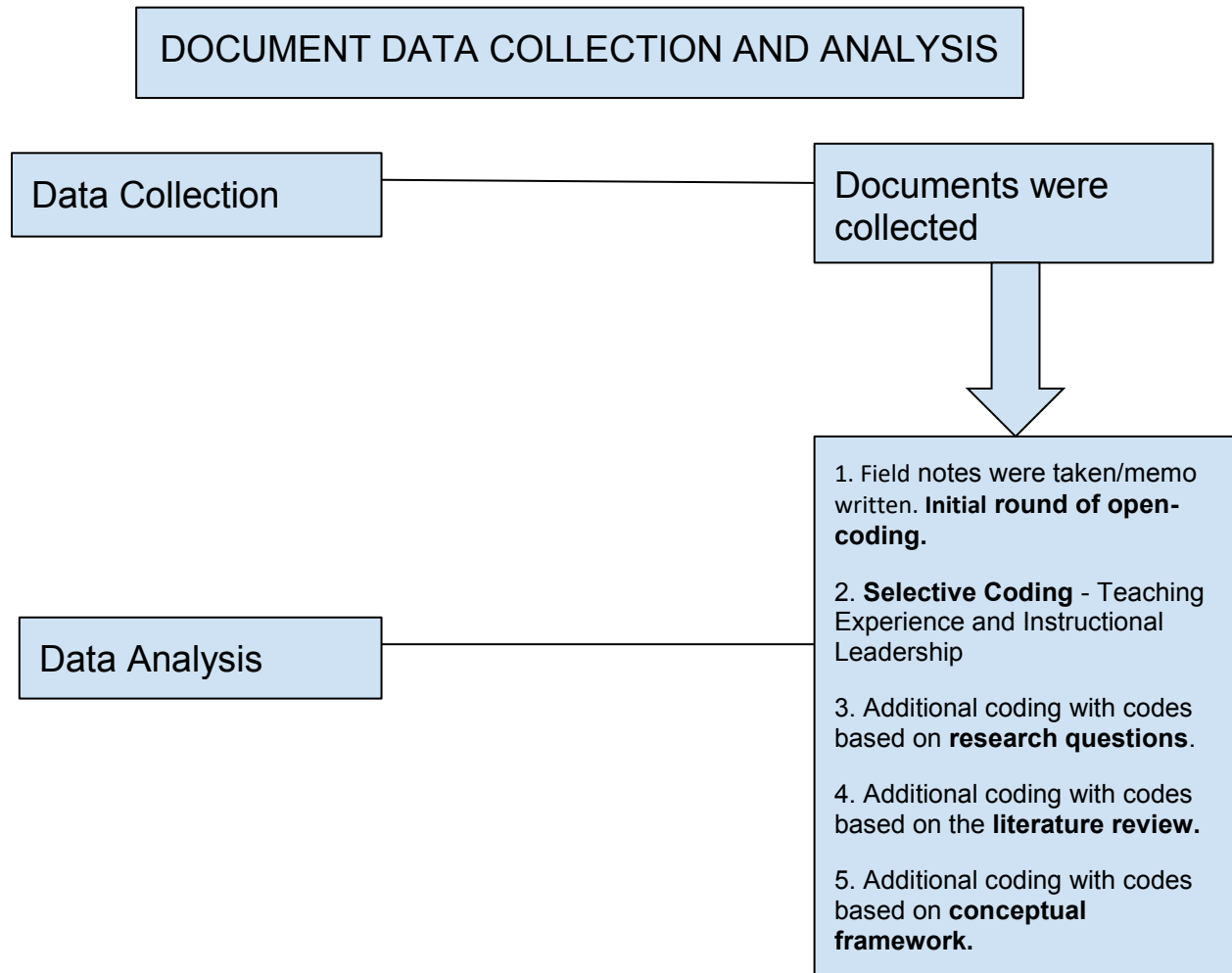
Where this document might lead:

Next Steps:

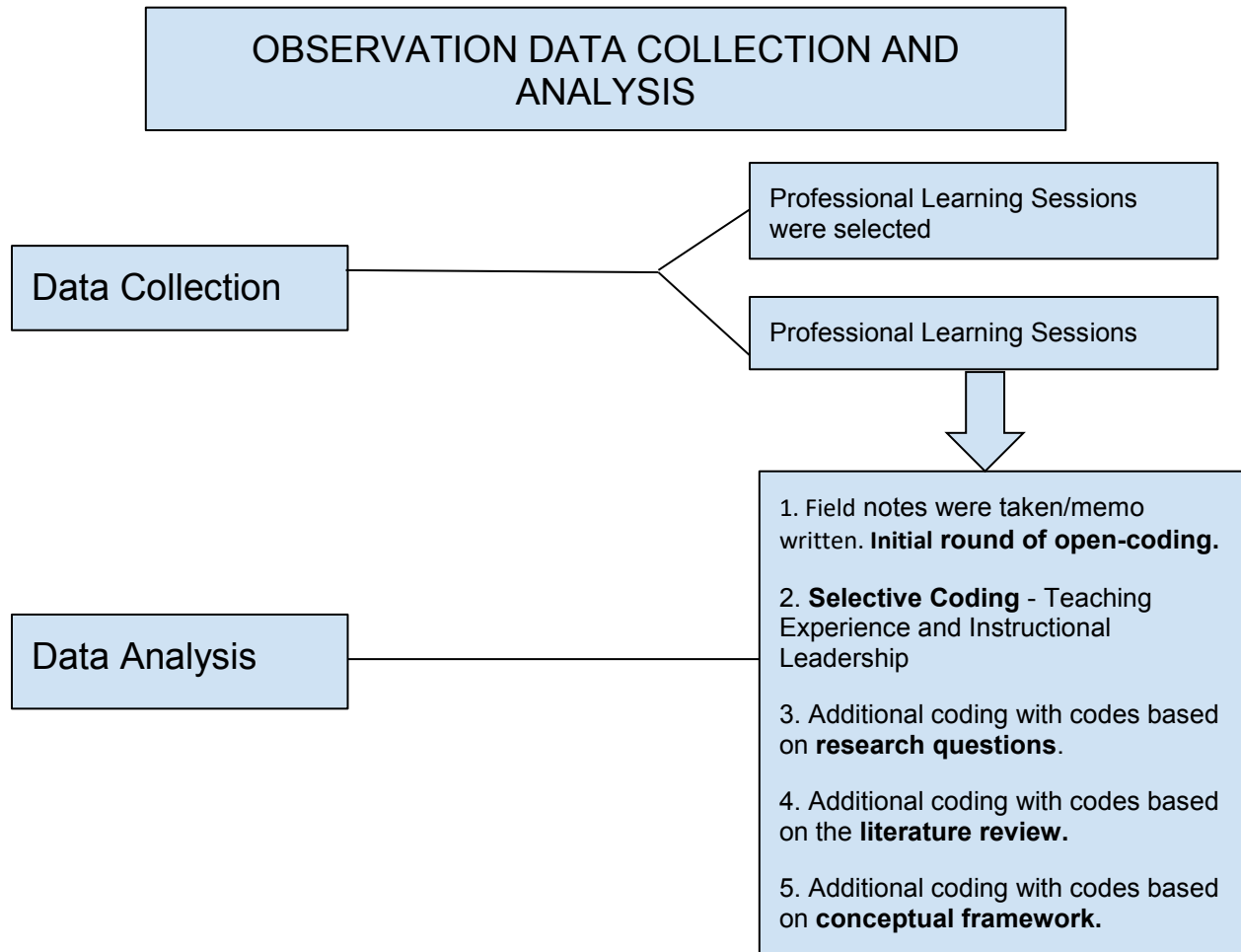
Appendix G – Interview Data Collection and Analysis



Appendix H – Document Data Collection and Analysis



Appendix I – Observation Data Collection and Analysis



Appendix J – Example of Codes
Example of Codes

Codes

Open Codes	Selective Codes	Inductive/Deductive Codes
Administrative Leadership	Teaching Experience	Instructional Leadership
Instructional Coaches	Instructional Leadership	Shared Leadership

MM: What does instructional leadership look like in this district? (From Conceptual Framework)

SA: Well, instructional leadership used to be guided by an acronym called D.A.P., developmentally appropriate practices and it was the acknowledgement that science has shown us that kids are ready to learn certain things at certain incremental times of their lives. Leadership decisions, instructional decisions were made by what we thought at the time were best practices for the kids. When I was earlier in my career, the people that were the principals in the district, we knew that they had walked in our shoes. They had classroom experience, they had done their time, and they understood the district from the ground up. It's important, not just how to run a building but how to motivate your people to employ best practices. Current instructional leadership, I believe no longer looks like that. We have well-meaning individuals in administrative leadership positions but I can name too many that have either spent fewer than ten years in a classroom and one who was never a classroom teacher. This one who was never a classroom teacher was a principal of an elementary school, my elementary school for a number of years. The building was run efficiently. The budgets were done, the class lists were made, central supply was full, the floors were clean, the pencils were sharp, but there was no instructional leadership. The leadership that used to come from principals who we knew possessed those same skills as we do have more or less been replaced by what we call instructional coaches. Peers, knowledgeable peers, well-intended peers, but none the less peers who might have more training than I in a certain area or might just have an interest and they have received these coaching positions. To me, that is a marginally acceptable substitute for a well-trained principal or assistant principal, but for whatever reason, that's just not where our district is right now and that's a shame, because if you haven't done it, I don't want to be told how I should do it by someone who has never done it any more than how they would want to be told how to run their building administratively by someone who has never been an administrator.

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Objective My objective is to earn an D.Ed from Penn State in Educational Leadership

Employment History **Bellefonte Area High School**, Bellefonte, PA *September 2003-Present*
Social Studies Teacher

- Taught and created a variety of courses in the Social Studies curriculum for grades 9-12 that include: US History, Honors US History, World Cultures, The Second World War, Organized Crime in America, Contemporary Global Issues, Civil War and Reconstruction, History of the United States Labor Movement, Elections that Changed America and Advanced Placement United States History
- Faculty Advisor of different student clubs including the Mock Trial Club. Serving as an assistant for the Key Club and Model U.N. Club.
- I have organized and chaperoned student field trip groups to Gettysburg, Lock Haven University, Reading, Harrisburg and Washington D.C..
- Gifted Education Teacher, designing Individual Education Plans for gifted students in grades 9 through 12 and working with these students on meeting their educational goals. Coordinated meetings with parents and facilitated differentiated instruction with regular education teachers.
- Night School Teacher, teaching all subjects to students in grades 9 through 12.
- Summer School Teacher, writing and teaching the Social Studies curriculum to students in grades 9 through 12.
- Law Day Coordinator for the Senior Class, organized the schedule and delegated responsibilities to various teachers for this event.

EDUCATION **Lock Haven University**, Lock Haven, PA *August 1999-May 2003*
Major: Bachelor of Science, Secondary Education- Social Science
Minor: Special Education
Degree Awarded: May of 2003
GPA: 3.46

Lock Haven University, Lock Haven, PA *July of 2004-August 2007*
Masters of Education – Principles of Teaching and Learning
GPA: 3.86
Degree Awarded: August of 2007

Penn State University, University Park, PA *May of 2012 – Present*
Non-Degree Graduate Student
GPA: 3.99 – 79 Credits earned

PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

- Bachelors of Science in Secondary Education, Social Studies from Lock Haven University
 - Masters of Education in Principles of Teaching and Learning from Lock Haven University
 - Level II Teaching Certificate from the State of Pennsylvania
 - Satisfactory Employee Evaluations from the PA Department of Education from 2003 – 2012
-

PROGRAM MILESTONES

- Doctoral Comprehensive Exam – Completed 09/08/2017
- Final Oral Dissertation Defense – 07/21/2020