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EXPLORING THE GROWTH OF PRINCIPALS AS INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERS: AN INTERPRETIVE STUDY ABOUT THE NEW WORK OF SCHOOL LEADERS

by

JEFFREY THOMAS HILLMAN

DISSERTATION

Submitted to the Graduate School

of Wayne State University,

Detroit, Michigan

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

2013

MAJOR: CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

Approved by:

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Advisor Date

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DEDICATION

I've been doing a lot of writing lately.

I write for my father. I write for my son.

I write to honour the model that my father, Gary continues to be for me – a model of grace and dignity and humour. A model of selflessness and kindness and goodness. A model of always do your best and always give your most. I write to tell him these things that I believe so deeply. I write to remind myself to strive to be the father that he is.

I write to model for my son, Tyler. To show that perseverance above all else impacts your destiny – that faith in yourself and faith in your dreams to come true, and faith in your capacity to learn anything, is what makes a difference in this world. I write to show that it's not easy sometimes, and that it's not supposed to be. And that this struggle is good and meaningful and worth celebrating. I write to tell him that I believe in him, forever.

I write for the women in my life

I write to show thanks to my mother, Catherine – to demonstrate that a lifetime of care and support and science fair assistance have made a significant impact on who I am and how I think. I write to tell her that her social justice stance and belief in the equity and ability of all people have shaped who I am as a leader and have made me better at serving others.

I write to tell my wife, Lynne that I love her deeply, and to honour the commitment that we made. I write to complete this damn research project so that I can re-engage with her, fully, in our home and at our children's hockey games. I write to say thank you for her support of me and my core beliefs and values, no matter where they seem to take us.

I write for Lauren, who has never known a time when Daddy didn't write. I write to tell her that there is not a thing in this world that she can't conquer. I write to tell her that when you align your passion and your skills with service for others, that you can make a difference, and this difference makes your life rich and full. I write to tell her that I believe in her, forever.

I write for me. I write to put words and actions to the passion that I feel for the role that schools and schooling plays for everyone. I write because I believe, deeply, that those of us who teach and lead have the capacity to make a fundamental difference in the lives of the students and the families whom we serve.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge the many teachers and administrators who have supported my growth and development as a learner and a leader. From the football or baseball field, to the classroom, and from my earliest days as a student to my current work today - I am better because of you. To Dr. John Corlett and Dr. Ian Crawford who inspired and supported my undergraduate and pre-service learning – thank you. To my professional colleagues and personal friends who have valued my goals and encouraged my doctoral work, I thank you as well.

The nature of ethnographic work requires the researcher to immerse himself in the authentic culture of the sample being studied. I would like to thank the 10 participants who engaged in Phase 1 of this study, and particularly the four participants who engaged in Phase 2 of this research. Your willingness to commit over a prolonged time frame and to deeply and authentically share your personal narratives was essential to my research. Please know how much I value your contribution.

I would specifically like to thank my dissertation committee. To Dr. George Parris and Dr. Greg Zvric, I thank you for your input and flexibility. To Dr. Gerry Oglan, I send my most sincere thanks for your quick responses, timely advice and sincere support at the most important times in this journey.

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CHAPTER 1: THE PROBLEM

Introduction

The construct of Instructional Leadership has taken hold as a mainstay in educational leadership theory, focus and terminology. The nomenclature emanating from a wide spectrum of professional associations, national, state and provincial leadership frameworks, school district priorities, and even individual administrator's personal goals, have collided to create the current metaphor for school administrators – Principal as Instructional Leader. Although there has been a proliferation of publication in the area of school leadership and student learning, there remains little clarification of what this new title means for principals. "Principals, superintendents and teachers are all being admonished to be 'instructional leaders' without much clarity about what that means" (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson & Wahlstron, 2004, p.6). Leithwood et al. further state:

> the term is often more a slogan than a well-defined set of leadership practices. While it certainly conveys the importance of keeping teaching and learning at the forefront of decision making, it is no more meaningful, in and of itself, than admonishing the leader of any organization to keep his or her eye on the organizational 'ball' – in this case, the core objective of making schools work better for kids. (2004, p.6)

Amidst a world-wide student achievement frenzy, the common message being consolidated is that instruction matters, and that Instructional Leadership is the means to this end. As the profession continues to sharpen its focus on this changing role of the principal, an underlying challenge has emerged – that of paradigm. As governing bodies push forward with accountability measures for student achievement

and translate these expectations into the desired practices of school leaders, research designs have increasingly focused on empirical methodologies, intended to measure the impact of specific instructional practices on student achievement. The resulting body of literature has done very little to provide insights into the growth and development of principals as they construct their own understanding of what Instructional Leadership implies and how they make meaning of these complex processes. Capra (1982) clearly articulates that paradigms drive the questions being asked within a discipline. Our need to explore this phenomenon through a different lens, asking a different set of questions, is at its heart, an issue of paradigm. Empirical tallies of instructional and leadership strategies, and central tendency analyses of large scale assessment scores, each lack the capacity to shine a light on the nuances and complexities of these very human, naturalistic phenomenon. The urgent need of administrators is not a list of the 10 best practices – indeed these clearly exist (Blase and Blase, 2004; Hallinger and Heck, 1996, 1998; Hallinger and Murphy, 1985; Hattie 2009; Heck, Larsen and Marcoulides, 1990; Hulley and Dier, 2005; Marzano, Waters and McNulty, 2005; Robinson, Lloyd and Rowe, 2009). The intricacies of constructing personal meaning, supporting individual growth and exploring principals' experiences as they engage in the process of developing Instructional Leadership, receive - by design, very little focus in the empirical model. This study applies an interpretive lens to the construct of Instructional Leadership. Rooted in a naturalistic inquiry framework, qualitative methodologies are used to explore principals' growth and meaning making with respect to Instructional Leadership skills, capacities and practices.

Inspiration for this Study

Current educational leadership research focuses increasingly on the impact of educational leaders and leadership on student achievement outcomes. Interest in examining the impact that educational leaders may have on student performance has coincided with the increasing international focus on educational accountability, and the evolving view of the principal as a legitimate agent of change with respect to instructional, curriculum and policy implementation. In an effort to support improved student achievement outcomes for all, jurisdictions, including the one examined in this study, have placed increasing emphasis on the principal's role and responsibilities with respect to the implementation of instructional strategies by all staff, and the associated and anticipated improved outcomes for all students. This profession-wide resonance of principal as instructional leader takes on many forms. State, provincial, district and profession-based governing bodies have incorporated specific organizational framework models for Instructional Leadership and have embedded these processes into formal and informal performance appraisal measures for school leaders (Ontario Leadership Framework for Principals and Vice Principals). District administrator meetings and professional development activities have moved away from operational issues with an increasing focus on matters of student achievement, and in many instances, district-wide strategic planning and policy development has converged on the goals of increasing student performance and reducing student achievement gaps. From this perspective, there is profession-wide consensus – to be an effective principal, is to be an effective instructional leader. The challenge to leaders is to understand what this means.

Need for this Study

A fundamental shift in responsibility for school leaders has not been paralleled by a clear, explicit description of what the new model looks like and sounds like, nor has sufficient support been provided to nurture administrators as learners throughout the process. The problem for administrators lies in how to grow in this area, how to develop and refine these skills and capacities, and how to authentically construct their own meaning about what Instructional Leadership constitutes. Marzano, Waters and McNulty (2005) identify that Instructional Leadership is perhaps the most popular theme in educational leadership over the past 20 years, but that the construct is not well defined. "Leadership is one of those things we know is vitally important, yet it is very hard to describe in any way that actually helps people know how to do it in particular circumstances" (Levin, 2008, p. 171). As external pressure for accountability mounts, combined with the internal pressure of conscientious professionals trying to do the best that they can for the staff and student whom they serve, a potentially catastrophic collision of system expectations and administrator learning needs is playing out across jurisdictions. Contributing to this disciplinary crisis is a significant bias in the leadership theory literature with respect to Instructional Leadership. As systems attempt to base their decisions on current and relevant research, and ground their educational practice in the associated theory, several recent publications have dominated the field. Publications describing the direct and indirect effects of leadership on student outcomes have influenced the profession, including Bell, Bolan, and Cubillo, 2003; Hattie, 2009; Leithwood, Day, Sammons, Harris and Hopkins, 2006; Leithwood, Louis, Anderson and Wahlstrom,

2004; Marzano, Waters, and McNulty, 2005; Robinson, Lloyd and Rowe, 2008; and Witziers, Boskers, and Kruger, 2003. Primarily rooted in empirical methodologies, these studies report to list and identify the key elements of Instructional Leadership. The positivist perspective limits these designs to listing quantities, categories and frequencies of behaviors. Repeatedly publishing that effective instructional leaders, 'maintain a strong focus on curriculum,' or 'are reported to minimize distractions to teaching staff,' provides insufficient support to principals as they navigate through the complexities of their roles. At the critical moment when professional support is most required, the empirical solutions presented in the research fall short. The questions being asked are not capable of providing the solutions principals require. Our crisis is one of paradigm. The empirical push for absolute knowledge, large sample size and wide generalizability, has produced a collection of findings with considerable consistency, at the cost of clarity, specificity, relevance and value. The lists of what effective instructional leaders do continues to grow, but also fails to answer the fundamental questions that principals ask with respect to Instructional Leadership: what does it look like and sound like when I do it; how do I become more skilled in the process; what are my experiences as I engage in this learning; and, how do I get support as I construct my own understanding of these complex phenomena? Capra describes the nature of this disconnect. "It derives from the fact that we are trying to apply the concepts of an out-dated world view – the mechanistic world view of Cartesian-Newtonian science – to a reality that can no longer be understood in terms of those concepts" (1982, p. 15). Capra further adds, "To describe this world appropriately we need an ecological perspective which the Cartesian world view does

not offer. What we need then, is a new 'paradigm' – a new vision of reality; a fundamental change in our thoughts, perceptions, and values" (1982, p.15). Kuhn notes that, "The decision to reject one paradigm is always simultaneously the decision to accept another, and the judgment leading to that decision involves the comparison of paradigms with nature *and* with each other" (1996, p.77). Accepting a new paradigm is not just a theoretical stance, because:

> paradigms differ in more than substance, for they are directed not only at nature but also back on the science that produced them. They are the source of the methods, problem-field, and standards of solution accepted by any mature scientific community at a given time. As a result, the reception of a new paradigm often necessitates a redefinition of the corresponding science. Some old problems may be relegated to another science or declared entirely 'unscientific'. Others that were previously non-existent or trivial, with a new paradigm, become the very archetypes of significant scientific achievement. (1996, p. 103)

This study adopts the interpretive paradigm as a basis for knowledge claims (social constructivism), methodologies (ethnography), data or raw text collection (focus groups, participant interviews, written reflections), and the role of the researcher (an instrument of inquiry). By applying this interpretive lens to the issue of principal growth in Instructional Leadership, this study strives to develop insights into the meanings that participants ascribe to their personal experiences in constructing their own understanding of Instructional Leadership.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to explore the growth and development of principals as they construct their own meaning of Instructional Leadership. Participants have engaged in a formal School Support Visit process designed and supported at the district level. This school support model guides principals as they engage in a process with staff, of identifying essential student learning needs, creating a professional learning plan for staff, and engaging in 'the work' of supporting the growth of all. This study employs qualitative methodologies (focus groups, semi-structured interviews, participant and written researcher reflections) to apply an interpretive lens and a Naturalistic Inquiry model to probe deeply into the meanings that principal participants have made of their experiences and the unique understandings and values that principals ascribe to their own personal development of Instructional Leadership skills and capacities. In this study, the following key questions are explored:

1. What are the intended goals/outcomes and meanings that principals ascribe to Instructional Leadership?
2. What are the experiences which have supported the growth and development of principals as instructional leaders?
3. What are the conditions necessary to support the growth and development of principals as instructional leaders?
4. How does the School Support Visit process support principal growth?
5. What role does paradigm play in supporting the growth of principals as Instructional Leaders?

Overview of Methodology

In examining the role of the principal, the current research has been focused on identifying the practices and behaviours that constitute Instructional Leadership; who has them; how much each component (time spent or resources allocated) is enacted relative to others; and what impact these behaviours and practices appear to have on a variety of student achievement outcomes. Case studies and correlational analyses have explored the characteristics of Instructional Leadership and identified which behaviours and practices seem to differentiate effective schools and effective leaders from less effective schools and less effective leaders. This 'effective schools research' or best practice model has tended to be limited to an examination of large, urban districts with a contextual emphasis on reading and mathematics performance on standardized measures of assessment. Results often identify domains of leadership practice, characteristics of effective leaders, and leadership styles that more commonly appear in higher performing schools and districts. The current empirical focus from the field has attempted to quantify these measures and explore causal relationships between school leader practices and behaviours, and student outcomes. Increasingly, meta-analyses, correlational analyses and a variety of additional quantitative statistical measures are being utilized by the research field and the profession in an attempt to provide empirical weight to their argument. Despite the wealth of publications in this area, there continues to be a void in the literature with respect to the learning process of principals as they construct their own understanding of what it means to be an instructional leader. This current disconnect between qualitative problems and quantitative methodological designs is reflective of

the broader paradigm struggle within the domain of leadership theory and educational research in general. The empirical model, with its reliance on quantitative, statistical measures, has shaped the leadership field in a predictable manner. Poorly equipped to explore the complexities and nuances of the personal learning of leaders, or the unique perceptions of different learners to the same experiences, the empirical paradigm has asked those questions which it can answer. The result is a literature base that describes and counts behaviours and produces lists of common trends and tendencies (e.g. develops school goals, communicates high expectations, evaluates curricular programs). Little of this information sheds light on the process of acquiring, refining and reflecting upon Instructional Leadership, nor uncovers the individual leaders' journeys through the process of making meaning of this new set of leadership principles. Examining the living, natural world of human growth, learning, interaction and professional practice demands a new series of questions, a new lens for interpretation, and a new methodology for inquiry – a new paradigm. Thomas Kuhn (1996) identified that, by way of the "theories they embody, paradigms prove to be constitutive of the research activity. They are also however, constitutive of science in other respects … In learning a paradigm, the scientist acquires theory, methods and standards together, usually in an inextricable mixture (p. 109)." Capra (1982) foreshadowed this conflict with the statement 30 years ago, "How good an approximation is the Newtonian model as a basis for various sciences, and where are the limits of the Cartesian world view in those fields?" (p. 101). With respect to leadership theory, the role of the principal in supporting student achievement, and the study of principal growth in Instructional Leadership, this researcher recommends that

the answers are not to be found within the empirical model. Here, the Cartesian world view has met its limits. Margaret Wheatley (2006) addresses this paradigm challenge and asserts that:

> We cannot hope to make sense using our old maps. It won't help to dust them off or reprint them in bold colors. The more we rely on them, the more disoriented we become. They cause us to focus on the wrong things and blind us to what's significant. Using them, we will journey only deeper into chaos. (p. xi)

Exploring the learning process of principals, rooted in the core Constructivist belief that meaning is constructed by the learner, demands a compatible research paradigm. This study takes the interpretive stance of Naturalistic Inquiry and the corresponding qualitative methodologies that allow for the detailed and nuanced complexities of the phenomenon of Instructional Leadership to be uncovered and explored in this particular research context. A combination of unstructured interviews, semi-structured interviews, focus groups, open-ended surveys and participant and researcher reflection techniques are employed in an effort to gather a comprehensive, personal and rich collection of raw text. The term, raw text, is intended to represent all conversations, concepts, written responses, and shared ideas and experiences of the participants and researchers. Piantanida and Garmen (2009) propose this definition as a more appropriate alternative to the term data in the interpretive stance. It recognizes that these representations, "are always and inevitably interpretations offered by a particular person with a particular perspective and a particular position. Consequently, these representations are more usefully thought of as *text* than *data*" (p.86). An ethnographic model is employed in this study, to support socially constructed knowledge claims. "Meanings are constructed

by human beings as they engage with the world they are interpreting" (Creswell, 2003, p. 9). Furthermore, "These meanings are varied and multiple, leading the researcher to look for the complexity of views rather than narrowing meanings into a few categories or ideas" (2003, p.8).

The participants for Phase 1 of this study were ten elementary school principals who meet the following criteria:

- Participants have gone through the School Support Visit process between 2009 and 2011 at the school where they are the principal (as of May 2012).
- Participants have served as a member of the System Support Team, and therefore visited other schools in the system and have participated in conducting a School Support Visit.
- Participants are not principals under the direct supervision (Superintendent of Schools) of this researcher.
- Participants agree to take part in all aspects of this inquiry.

The participants for Phase 2 of this study were four randomly selected principals from the Phase 1 cohort.

Table 1 outlines the seven phases for generating raw text in this emergent design.

Table 1: General Data (Raw Text) Collection Procedure

	Research Participants	Data Collection Activity
Phase 1	Focus Group (10 participants)	Focus Group: Group activities
	Focus Group (10 participants)	Focus Group: Individual Survey
Phase 2	Small Group (4 participants)	Small Group interview
	Individual Participants	Individual interviews Written reflections
	Small Group (4 participants)	Small Group interview
	Individual Participants	Individual interviews
	Individual Participants	Individual interviews

In addition to collating all written reflections by participants and the researcher, digital audio recordings were made of all small group and individual participant interviews. All audio recordings of these interviews were transcribed to permit rich, comprehensive analysis.

Definition of Terms

For the purposes of this study, the following terms are defined by the researcher:

Accountability Measures: The terms educational accountability or professional accountability refer to the specific measures of performance or behaviour expected of, or required by principals. This broad term includes both internal (interpersonal) pressures to 'do well by' one's students and staff, as well as external pressures including formal and informal principal performance appraisal measures, and district, state or province expectations for student achievement. The term accountability

generally references the expectations others have of principals to ensure the success of staff and students over a variety of criteria.

Emergent Design: This term is rooted in the methodological assumptions of Naturalistic Inquiry. Emergent design refers to the open-ended structure of this research, acknowledging that the researcher will develop greater clarity and focus on the key problems and constructs as the research process unfolds. The iterative nature of the proposed interview and focus group procedure will uncover new and 'emerging' patterns and relevance as the participants and researcher engage in the research process. The emergent design implies an openness to this evolving information and a methodological flexibility for the researcher to actively pursue these findings.

Instructional Leadership: Instructional Leadership is referenced by this researcher as a term that describes the constellation of actions engaged in by principals for the intended purpose of supporting growth and refinement in teachers' instructional effectiveness, and/or teacher and student learning. The term is not intended to be used as a description of leadership style or approach, but rather is used to describe the actions of principals for an explicit purpose.

Participant Meaning-Making: This concept is applied in a Constructivist framework to capture the totality of what the participating principals are able to come to know, understand and do, with respect to the concept of Instructional Leadership. It implies that each participant is constructing a unique and personal understanding of this

concept, based on their individual experiences, skills and contexts, and that this personal construction is fluid and relative.

School Effectiveness Lead: The SEF Lead is an administrative position in the district of study. Originally hired as Supervising Principal, and later positioned as a superintendent within the board structure, the School Effectiveness Lead is responsible for a variety of support and professional learning responsibilities within the system. As well, the SEF Lead is responsible for designing and conducting the districts' School Support Visit process, including organizing and leading the System Support Team of principals as they conducted observations and provided feedback to host schools.

School Support Visit Process: The School Support Visit process is a formal structure engaged in by schools within the district of this study. The process involves a variety of supports including teacher release, structured and unstructured discussions and school visits with a district coordinator, as well as a formal classroom visitation model. The intent of the School Support Visit process is to assist principals in developing effective and accurate school growth plans which effectively meet the needs of the adult and student learners in each school.

School Support Team: This team consists of district principals who function to visit selected schools as a component of the School Support Visit process. Following several months of school-directed work, the School Support Team conducts classroom observations to support the school's growth plan. These teams receive

support in providing non-evaluative, non-judgmental, and non-identifying feedback to schools on a variety of indicators that they have identified as important.

Student Outcomes: This term is used holistically by this researcher to reference the broad concept of student performance measures – students' ability to demonstrate skill, growth and development in the tasks that they engage in. Although this term does not exclude the empirical notion of student achievement on standardized testing, it importantly encompasses all measures on which a school may focus its efforts, including students' capacity to articulate their understanding, or student growth in the reflective process, for example.

Visible Learning Model: The identified district has structured a professional learning model for principal and school-based teams since 2009. Although this model has evolved over time, its primary focus is supporting principals and teacher teams with the process of constructing, engaging in, and monitoring school-based inquiries. Over the course of a school year, this school team would attend between three and five full day learning/planning sessions supported by the district's Program Department and others. During these sessions, school teams are supported in identifying student learning needs, planning for pedagogical change, monitoring the evidence of impact of this work, and learning from, and refining these plans.

Conclusion

The intent of this study is to apply an interpretive lens to the construct of principal as instructional leader. Qualitative methodologies are utilized to explore the beliefs and understandings of principal participants as they engage in the leadership

work of their schools and reflect upon the conditions and experiences that impact their growth and development as instructional leaders. It explores the meaning-making process of school leaders as they progress on their individual journeys to grow as instructional leaders. This study is designed to identify insights into the nature of the supportive conditions and experiences that serve to nurture principals, not only as leaders, but as learners in the process. This study is also designed to develop deeper insights into the complexities and nuances of the Instructional Leadership role, and the learning culture that school leaders identify as essential for their growth. The identified district's formal School Support Visit process will also be explored as a mechanism to support principal learning.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

This chapter will explore the construct of paradigm, describe the two competing models, and discuss the implications of these frameworks on educational leadership. An historical perspective on the development of the empirical paradigm and its significant impact on institutional, academic and organizational structures and thinking will be contrasted with the emergence of the interpretive paradigm. Limitations of the reductionist, empirical model will be provided and Relativity and Quantum theories from post-classical physics will be used to provide an argument for the interpretive (ecological) paradigm as a more appropriate lens for inquiry.

Principal growth and development in Instructional Leadership will be framed by an exploration of the concept of learning as an individual, meaning-making process. This will be examined through a view of the changing role of the school principal over time.

Paradigms

In Thomas Kuhn's 1962 seminal work, The Structure of Scientific Revolutions, the author appropriates the term 'paradigm' to describe and explore the pattern of major shifts in scientific thinking over the past half millennium (Kuhn, 1996). Kuhn describes paradigm, in his usage, as a construct that permits a mature scientific discipline, through consensus, to commit to, "the same rules and standards of practice" (1996, p. 11). Kuhn describes that paradigms emerge from the discipline in which they reside as they prove to be increasingly more useful in addressing the

central research questions of the field. “Paradigms gain their status because they are more successful than their competitors in solving a few problems that the group of practitioners has come to recognize as acute” (1996, p. 23). In the Kuhnian sense, paradigms represent relatively focused, discipline-specific beliefs, assumptions and research practices consented upon by the practitioners of a given field. Physical optics provides an example, whereby the Newtonian paradigm (described by Isaac Newton in the 1704 publication, ‘Opticks’) described light as corpuscles. This paradigm, and the nature of experimentation it was based upon, was replaced by the paradigm of the wave theory of light in the last half of the nineteenth century, before again being replaced by the quantum mechanical paradigm of light as photons as developed by Einstein, Plank and others. These transformations from one paradigm to another, are what Kuhn refers to as scientific revolutions. These revolutions are initiated by an emerging sense, “again often restricted to a narrow subdivision of the scientific community, that an existing paradigm has ceased to function adequately in the exploration of an aspect of nature to which the paradigm itself had previously led the way” (Kuhn, 1996, p. 92).

Capra (1982) provides a broader definition of paradigm that impacts not only scientific disciplines, but also more far-reaching intellectual, social and organizational structures. It is this more comprehensive application of the construct of paradigm that serves as the framework for exploration in this inquiry. Capra describes a paradigm as a world view, a vision of reality that includes thoughts, perceptions and values - a lens through which one views life. Schubert (1986) adds that, “A paradigm is a conceptual framework with a loosely connected set of ideas, values, and rules that

governs the conduct of inquiry, the ways in which data are interpreted, and the way the world may be viewed" (p. 170). Lincoln and Guba (1985) state that paradigms consist of these systematic sets of beliefs, along with their accompanying methodologies, and that they represent, "a distillation of what we think about the world (but cannot prove)" (p. 15). Further, that, "our actions in the world, including our actions as inquirers, cannot occur without reference to those paradigms" (1985, p. 15).

The First Scientific Revolution

The empirical paradigm can trace its origins to the Age of the Scientific Revolution in the sixteenth century. The two hundred years from 1500 AD to 1700 AD represented a, "dramatic shift in the way people pictured the world and in their whole way of thinking. The new mentality and the new perception of the cosmos gave our Western civilization the features that are characteristic of the modern era" (Capra, 1982, p. 53). Following the reign of Medieval science up to the early 1500s, Nicolaus Copernicus began to restructure the nature of scientific thought wih the introduction of the heliocentric view of the universe which was first shared in 1510 in a manuscript titled, Commentariolus, and formally published in 1543. Copernicus' model of the universe overturned the geocentric view described in the Bible that had been accepted for a millennium. Unseating Earth as the center of the universe, and with it the religious implications for a world that God had crafted around man, did not immediately elicit concern from the Church, although it soon would for the followers of this new world view. The Copernican hypothesis was substantiated by the empirical laws of planetary motion introduced by Johannes Kepler beginning in 1609. Galileo

Galilei provided additional support to the heliocentric view. Using his newly refined telescope and his success and reputation as a scientist of note, “Galileo was able to establish the Copernican hypothesis as a valid scientific theory” (Capra, 1982, p. 54). Galileo’s contribution to the Scientific Revolution was only beginning with his discoveries in astronomy. His impact on modern scientific thought is rooted in the development of a new model for scientific thinking and practice.

> The discovery and use of scientific reasoning by Galileo was one of the most important achievements in the history of human thought, and marks the real beginning of physics. This discovery taught us that intuitive conclusions based on immediate observation are not always to be trusted, for they sometimes lead to the wrong clews [*sic*]. (Einstein & Infeld, 2008, p. 7)

Deeper exploration of this reasoning was applied by Galileo in the work that he would later publish as, Two New Sciences in 1638. The development of Galileo’s law of inertia and his study of the motion of objects began the rise of the mechanical view that would be expanded upon throughout the Scientific Revolution, marking a fundamental (Kuhnian paradigm) shift in scientific thought. “The transition from Aristotle’s line of thought to that of Galileo formed a most important cornerstone in the foundation of science” (Einstein & Infeld, 2008, p. 26). It is for this reason that John Gribbin asserts the title of ‘first scientist’ is most appropriately given to, “Galileo Galilei, who not only applied what is essentially the modern scientific method to his work, but fully understood what he was doing and laid the ground rules clearly for others to follow” (2002, p. 33). Einstein himself referred to Galileo as, “… the father of modern physics – indeed of modern science” (Einstein, 1954, p. 271). The language of Galileo’s new science was mathematics, and its focus was on the

quantification of the observed world. In his desire to describe the natural world mathematically, Galileo determined that those properties of nature that did not lend themselves to such measurement should lie outside the domain of science. Galileo, "postulated that they should restrict themselves to studying the essential properties of material bodies – shapes, numbers and movement – which could be measured and quantified" (Capra, 1982, p. 55). This Galilean insistence upon quantification would become a fundamental principle of the emerging mechanical (empirical) view. "The two aspects of Galileo's pioneering work – the empirical approach and his use of a mathematical description of nature – became the dominant features of science in the seventeenth century and have remained important criteria of scientific theories up to the present day" (Capra, 1982, p. 55).

Galileo's emerging methodology was supported by the work of a contemporary, Francis Bacon, who was exploring the development of an empirical method for science. "Bacon was the first to formulate a clear theory of inductive procedure – to make experiments and to draw general conclusions from them, to be tested in further experiments – and he became extremely influential by vigorously advocating the new method" (Capra, 1982, p. 55). Gribbin (2002) states, "If the Baconian system can be summed up in a sentence, it is that science must be built on the foundations provided by facts" (p. 136). With the cornerstones of a new scientific paradigm taking shape – Galileo's empirical approach, his focus on quantifiable properties of matter, and his use of mathematics as the language of description; and Bacon's emerging scientific method, focused on the inductive collection of observed facts for further testing, the

stage was set for the transformational changes that would come from the work of Descartes and Newton.

Development of the Newtonian-Cartesian Model

Renè Descartes, the father of Modern Philosophy, played an essential role in promoting the emerging new philosophy of the Scientific Revolution.

> Descartes's influence was profound, most importantly because of the way in which … he swept away from his thinking any vestige of mystic forces and insisted that both the world we live in and the material creatures that inhabit the world (including ourselves) can be understood in terms of basic physical entities obeying laws which we can determine by experiment and observation. (Gribbin, 2002, p. 114-115)

His focus on a scientific methodology of absolutes, on a science of certainty based on first principles, and on a science built upon the language of mathematics to describe the essential structure of nature, became fundamentals of the Cartesian view. Building upon the work of Galileo, Descartes further emphasized the importance of quantitative, observable facts and the removal of human interpretation from observation. This separation of mind and matter was another turning point in the evolution of the empirical model. "The belief in the certainty of scientific knowledge lies at the very basis of Cartesian philosophy and of the world view derived from it" (Capra, 1982, p. 57). Deeper and deeper separation of mind and matter, of reducing structures to smaller and smaller parts for the purpose of observation, supported Descartes's evolving belief in the machine metaphor. "To Descartes, the material universe was a machine and nothing but a machine … Nature worked according to mechanical laws, and everything in the material world could be explained in terms of

the arrangement and movement of its parts" (1982, p. 60). This growing concept – reductionism, would continue to develop as a foundational piece of the new, mechanical (empirical) world view. "Descartes gave scientific thought its general framework – the view of nature as a perfect machine, governed by exact mathematical laws" (1982, p. 60). Capra further notes that, "This mechanical picture of nature became the dominant paradigm of science following Descartes. It guided all scientific observation and the formulation of all theories of natural phenomenon until twentieth century physics brought about radical change" (1982, p. 60).

"The conceptual framework created by Galileo and Descartes – the world as a perfect machine governed by exact mathematical laws – was completed triumphantly by Isaac Newton, whose grand synthesis, Newtonian mechanics, was the crowning achievement of seventeenth century science" (Capra, 1996, p. 20). Marshall and Zohar (1997) suggest that:

> the publication of Isaac Newton's Principia in 1687 marked the true advent of a revolution in thought about the physical world. Newton's three laws of motion synthesized the first gropings toward a scientific view and laid the foundations of the new classical mechanics that was to dominate scientific thought for two centuries. (p. xiv)

Gribbin (2002) concurs, stating, "Newton opened the eyes of scientists to the fact that the fundamentals of the Universe might be simple and understandable, in spite of its surface complexity" (p. 187). Gribbin further states that, "The publication of the Principia marked the moment when science came of age as a mature intellectual discipline, putting aside most of the follies of its youth and settling down into grown-up investigation of the world" (2002, p. 187). Newton's capacity to

synthesize the science that came before him, to translate complex phenomena into simple mathematical terms, and to create and apply the discipline of differential calculus to the mechanics of moving objects, was described by Albert Einstein, “as perhaps the greatest advance in thought that a single individual was ever privileged to make” (in Capra, 1982, p. 63).

The Mechanistic World View Expands

Marshall and Zohar believe:

> Because of the sheer power and beauty of Newton’s simple schema and the radically different perspective on truth and experience offered by the new scientific method, Newtonian science had an almost instant impact on the wider culture, well beyond the world of physics. Its ethos, methodology, values and the vast new technology to which it gave rise exercised a hold on the Western imagination. (1997, p. xx)

The discipline of physics saw tremendous success in applying the Newtonian model, and other scientific fields adopted the methodologies and truth claims of this new science. The seeds of the empirical paradigm emerged, grounded in the new scientific thinking of Galileo, the rigorous methodology of Bacon, the mind-matter separation of Descartes, and the application of simple, universal laws of Newton. The concepts of reductionism and determinism were introduced, positivistic claims were adopted (based on ontological, epistemological, axiological and causation assumptions), and mathematics had been defined as the language of choice. “From the second half of the seventeenth to the end of the nineteenth century, the mechanistic, Newtonian model of the universe dominated all scientific thought” (Capra, 2000, p. 22). The laws of mathematics and the scientific method were

applied in increasingly broader fields, and the reductionist strategy of dividing complex organisms and phenomena into isolated pieces for examination provided a wealth of new knowledge across disciplines. The Newtonian view, spread from its initial influence in physics, “to obviously related areas such as astronomy and geology; but it also (slowly) spread into biological sciences, where the patterns and relationships of living things were established as an essential precursor … to discovering the laws on which the living world operates” (Gribbin, 2002, p. 193). Eighteenth and nineteenth century scientists adopted the belief that, “If the world really is a machine, the best way to find out how it works is to turn to Newtonian mechanics” (Capra, 1982, p. 68). The developing science and its underlying philosophy matured with the constant and progressive development of significant discoveries, including the constructs of heat and temperature; the replacement of heat as a substance, with the understanding of heat as a form of energy; the development of the kinetic theory of matter; the emergence of the wave theory of light; and Linneaus’s binomial classification system for biological science. The resulting method of doing and thinking about science – quantitative, experiment-based, narrowly focused, absolute truth-seeking, and deterministic - became the world view of Western societies. It had germinated as an agreed-upon methodology, a standard set of practices and beliefs, a lens through which all thought was to be viewed – a paradigm. Capra (1982) defines this constellation of beliefs and values as the Empirical Paradigm. These beliefs are translated generally by Lincoln and Guba (1985) as the Positivist paradigm. Both terms represent the fundamental world view that was started with the Scientific Revolution of the 1600s, and governed all

academia and science until the turn of the twentieth century. The impact of the empirical model was felt well outside of the scientific realm, driving the Industrial Revolution's strategy of 'take-make-break', as well as the design and thinking of organizational and institutional structures.

> The universe that Sir Isaac Newton described was a seductive place. As the great clock ticked, we grew smart and designed the age of machines. As the pendulum swung with perfect periodicity, it prodded us on to new discoveries. As the earth circled the sun (just like clock work), we grew assured of the role of determinism and prediction. We absorbed expectations of regularity into our very beings. And we organized work and knowledge based on our beliefs about his predictable universe. (Wheatley, 1996, p. 28)

These empirical beliefs can be clearly seen in the economic, academic and governmental policies that not only dominated the twentieth century, but still dominate now. "Principles identified more than two hundred years ago, during an earlier scientific renaissance, have had wide influence on how managers think today" (Pascale, Millemann & Gioja, 2000, p. 1). This influence has been both general (philosophical) in nature, and specific in its impact. Pascale, Millemann and Gioja assert that, "Derivative ideas from Newton's laws of motion and his early work on gas thermodynamics were literally lifted, equation by equation, and applied to the emerging field of economics" (2000, p. 1).

John Stuart Mill's, A System of Logic, published in 1843, is recognized as the starting point of Positivism as a methodological paradigm. Mill's assumptions were summarized in Lincoln and Guba`s text, Naturalistic Inquiry:

1) The social and natural sciences have identical aims, namely the discovery of general laws that serve for explanation and prediction.

2) The social and natural sciences are methodologically identical.
3) The social sciences are merely more complex than the natural sciences.
4) Concepts can be defined by direct reference to empirical categories – "objects in the concrete".
5) There is uniformity of nature in time and space.
6) Laws of nature can be naturally (inductively) derived from data.
7) Large samples suppress idiosyncrasies (partial causes) and reveal general causes (the ultimate laws of nature). (1985, p. 20)

A Paradigm in Question

The Newtonian world view created a clock work imagery for design, development and growth in all sectors of society.

> The mechanistic images gave rise to a mechanical world view – an overarching picture of how the physical world and human nature and affairs are structured, a set of categories in terms of which people could understand themselves and their experience. This world view dominated thought from the seventeenth century until well into the twentieth. It made possible the technological progress of the industrial revolution, and it was compatible with the flowering Western individualism and free-enterprise economics. It led to the miracle of modern medicine and to a kind of critical and empirical thinking that freed many people from ignorance and superstition. But the extension of mechanistic, atomistic, and reductionist thinking to all areas of human life and experience has also had consequences that we are now beginning to question. (Marshall & Zohar, 1997, p. xxii)

Anomalies to the mechanistic view began to emerge in physics in the latter half of the nineteenth century. In many respects, these unexpected results did not lead to a questioning of the underlying theories or paradigm. Kuhn identifies that this has been the case historically, that when scientists are confronted with even prolonged and significant anomalies to their theories, "they do not renounce the paradigm that has led them into crisis … once it has achieved the status of paradigm, a scientific theory is declared invalid only if an alternate candidate is available to take its place"

(p. 77). Given the revolutionary success of the Newtonian-Cartesian model over its pre-positivist approach, an alternative belief system did not exist. As Henry August Rowland and Michael Faraday's experiments developed the concept of 'field' with respect to electromagnetism in the 1820s, and James Clerk Maxwell's equations summarized the quantitative, mathematical principles and structure of this new construct in physics, a clear contradiction to the existing Newtonian view, "that all forces must act on the line connecting the particles and can depend only upon distance," emerged (Einstein & Infeld, 2008, p. 128). Einstein and Infeld believed that, "The theoretical discovery of an electromagnetic wave spreading with the speed of light is one of the greatest achievements in the history of science" (2008, p. 149). The emergence of the notion of field represents a significant challenge to the mechanical view, and a critical component of the crisis in paradigm that was about to unfold for physicists.

> The old mechanical view attempted to reduce all events in nature to forces acting between material particles. Upon this mechanical view was based the first naïve theory of the electric fluids ... The recognition of the new concepts grew steadily … it was realized that something of great importance had happened in physics. A new reality was created, a new concept for which there was no place in the mechanical description. (Einstein & Infeld, 2008, p. 151)

As Kuhn suggests, the acceptance of the new concept of electromagnetic field, which supplanted the nineteenth century construct – ether, was not immediate, nor universal. It was assumed that the emerging construct of field would eventually be defined within the mechanical framework. "By the time it was realized that that this program could not be carried out, the achievements of the field theory had already

become too striking and important for it to be exchanged for a mechanical dogma" (Einstein & Infeld, 2008, p. 152-153).

Discoveries in the biological sciences would concomitantly begin to question some of the fundamental principles of the mechanical world view. The principle concept of evolution had been explored since the time of Newton, including writings by Francis Bacon. Comprehensive explanations and descriptions had been created by Erasmus Darwin and Jean-Baptiste Lamarck. Although each failed to accurately describe the scientific mechanism through which change occurred – natural selection, and each have been proven to have fundamental flaws, notably the notion of the inheritance of traits acquired by adults throughout their life, significant and relatively accurate models had been developed. In the second half of the nineteenth century, contemporary to the work of Maxwell in electromagnetism, Charles Darwin and Alfred Russel Wallace were engaged in a race to publish a theory of evolution, rooted in the understanding of natural selection as a valid scientific explanation for the evolution of species. In November of 1859, Darwin published, On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection. Darwin's concepts of chance variation (random mutation) and natural selection remain key principles of modern evolutionary theory. Confirmation from Gregor Mendel's publication of the laws of inheritance (the law of segregation, and the law of independent assortment) in 1865, as well a greater acceptance from the geological field about the age of Earth and the slow, incremental process of change, cemented Darwin's thesis as the triumph of nineteenth century science. Mendel's discoveries solved a critical question in Darwinian thought – the mechanism of transmitting traits across generations. Although included as an essential element

of his theory, there was no contemporary understanding of the laws of inheritance, making Darwin's revolutionary concept even more impressive. "The results of the various, unknown, or but dimly understood laws of variation are infinitely complex and diversified" (Darwin, 1872, p. 39). Darwin continues, "No one can say why the same peculiarity in different species, is sometimes inherited and sometimes not so; why the child often reverts in certain characters to its grandfather or grandmother or more remote ancestors" (1872, p. 39). As Darwin's treatise took hold, "The discovery of evolution in biology forced scientists to abandon the Cartesian conception of the world as a machine that had emerged fully constructed from the hands of its Creator" (Capra, 1982, p. 72). Rather, the emerging science presented the case for a universe that, "had to be pictured as an evolving and ever changing system in which complex structures developed from simpler forms" (1982, p. 72). Chance variation, operating as a central component of the theory of biological evolution, challenged the deterministic inclination of the existing paradigm. So too, did Darwin's belief that evolution as a process (including the evolution of man, as described more boldly in his 1871 publication, The Descent of Man) occurred without a set goal or purpose.

The Second Scientific Revolution

Challenges to the Newtonian paradigm, which first emerged subtly in the latter part of the nineteenth century, collided in an unavoidable, irreconcilable crisis at the turn of the twentieth century.

> At the end of the nineteenth century Newtonian mechanics had lost its role as the fundamental theory of natural phenomena. Maxwell's electrodynamics and Darwin's theory of evolution involved concepts that clearly went beyond the Newtonian model and indicated that the

> universe was far more complex than Descartes and Newton had imagined … Two developments in physics, culminating in relativity theory and quantum theory, shattered all of the principle concepts of the Cartesian world view and Newtonian Mechanics. (Capra, 1982, p. 74)

Famously working as a patent officer in Bern, Switzerland, Albert Einstein set in motion the second scientific revolution. Following the publication of two critical articles in 1905, "Einstein initiated two revolutionary trends in scientific thought. One was his special theory of relativity; the other was a new way of looking at electromagnetic radiation which was to become characteristic of quantum theory, the theory of atomic phenomena" (Capra, 1982, p. 75). Assessing the impact of this work, Capra concludes, "Einstein's scientific papers are intellectual monuments that mark the beginning of twentieth-century thought" (1982, p. 75). Gribbin (2002) asserts, "After 1905, physics would never be the same again" (p. 441). Einstein's theories of relativity – special, and general (published in 1915) introduced profound changes in the concepts of time and space. As Einstein built on Maxwell's concepts of the constant speed of light (*c*) and the new electromagnetic field theory, it became apparent that the mechanical concepts of space and time did not accurately apply in these contexts. "The relativity theory arose from necessity, from serious contradictions in the old theory from which there seemed no escape" (Einstein and Infeld, 2008, p. 192). The new relativity did not prove all classical mechanical applications were faulty, only that the classical laws applied within specific limitations. "The old mechanics is valid for small velocities and forms the limiting case of the new one" (2008, p. 193). Relativity theory also simplifies the two classical physics constructs of energy and matter. "According to the theory of relativity, there is no

essential distinction between mass and energy. Energy has mass and mass represents energy" (2008, p. 197). The development of the general and special relativity concepts, including the development of the space-time dimension, the energy-matter equivalency principle ($e=mc^2$), and the understanding of elementary particles that ushered in nuclear physics and quantum mechanics, all served to undermine the foundations of the Newtonian-Cartesian model. The old rules no longer applied. "Relativity theory represented a paradigm shift – it required scientists to adopt a radically new set of assumptions to understand their data" (Marshall & Zohar, 1997, p. xxviii).

Capra asserts that the other major development in physics during the twentieth century, "was a consequence of the experimental investigation of atoms. At the turn of the century physicists discovered several phenomena connected with the structure of atoms, such as X-rays and radioactivity, which were inexplicable in terms of classical physics" (1982, p. 76). As the field of physics matured and grew, and as the business of science grew, including the proliferation of support in time, money and technology in the academic sphere, increasingly more creative methodologies and tools were employed to investigate the atomic and subatomic world. Rutherford's model of the atom, Max Planck's exploration of thermodynamics and Einstein's introduction of light quanta, laid the groundwork for this period of experimentation.

> This exploration of the atomic and subatomic world brought scientists in contact with a strange and unexpected reality that shattered the foundations of their world view and forced them to think in entirely new ways. Nothing like that had ever happened before in science … physicists faced, for the first time, a serious challenge to their ability to understand the universe. (Capra, 1982, p. 76)

The existing model of matter, Newton's billiard ball metaphor, failed to reveal itself. "The experimental investigation of atoms … yielded sensational and totally unexpected results. Far from being the hard, solid particles of time-honored theory, atoms turned out to consist of vast regions of space in which extremely small particles – the electrons – moved around the nucleus" (Capra, 1982, p. 78). The nature of light also came under question. Once agreed upon understandings, no longer shared consensus. Experimental evidence of light as a wave was challenged by experimental evidence of light as a particle. Einstein questioned, "what is matter, what is an electron? Is it a particle or a wave? The electron behaves like a particle when moving in an external electric or magnetic field. It behaves like a wave when diffracted by a crystal." (Einstein & Infeld, 2008, p. 279). Einstein discovered that, "With the elementary quanta of matter we came across the same difficulty that we met with in the light quanta (2008, p. 280). The paradoxical results that scientists received as they began to look deeper into the new quantum world created a crisis in paradigm which paralleled that of Relativity. A new model was required to explain the world that they observed in their laboratories.

> Elementary quantum mechanics, which was created in stages from 1900 to 1930, was largely the work of six men: Albert Einstein, Niels Bohr, Paul Dirac, Erwin Schrodinger, Max Planck, and Werner Heisenberg. It's first achievements were piecemeal theories formulated to make sense of odd experimental results that could not be fitted into the old classical paradigm. (Marshall & Zohar, 1997, p. 295)

As the new science developed, clear principles of quantum theory emerged. The new science was one that was based on statistical probabilities, not the deterministic, Newtonian world of actualities. "Quantum physics abandons individual laws of

elementary particles and states directly the statistical laws governing aggregations … Quantum physics deals only with aggregations, and its laws are for crowds and not for individuals" (Einstein & Infeld, 2008, p. 286). This notion that accurate predictions could not be made about the outcome of individual experimental events, or for specific particles, is in stark contrast to the empirical (mechanical) principles of determinism and causality. At its core, the goal of physics, and all science in the Newtonian-Cartesian world view, has been that of control and predictability. For the past several hundred years, the discipline was confident in its capacity to do so. However, in the unfolding world of quantum events, "nothing even approaching causality has been found to exist … indeterminism of the quantum mechanical universe is surely one of the most startling changes in the way we view reality to occur in the realm of physics. It assaults our intuitions" (Talbot, 1993, 17-18).

Details of the dual nature of the quantum world, seemingly composed simultaneously of particles and waves, were provided by French physicist Louis de Broglie. de Broglie's equation demonstrates, "that everything has dual wave-particle character … This also tells us that we have no hope of understanding what an electron 'really is". In terms of our everyday, common-sense experience, it is literally like nothing we have ever seen" (Gribbin, 2002, p. 518). Neils Bohr described this wave-particle nature of quanta as the Principle of Complementarity. Bohr's principle states that each description - wave or particle - by definition excludes the other, "but both are necessary – they complement each other. Bohr used his Principle of Complementarity to argue that there was no point in trying to describe the quantum world, or to understand its apparently bizarre picture of reality" (Marshall & Zohar,

1997, p. 101). The emerging complexity and novelty of the quantum age and the discoveries made by its key contributors, provided two additional tenets of quantum theory. Applying their understanding of complementarity - wave/particle duality, physicists attempted to predict the outcome of particle movement in their experiments. Focused on their Newtonian (positivist) goal of determinism, like all other forays into the new quantum world, their efforts for control and prediction were unsuccessful. Werner Heisenberg contributed his Uncertainty Principle in description of this phenomena. This principle asserts:

> that certain pairs of quantum properties, such as position and momentum, can never both be precisely defined at the same time; there is always a residue of uncertainty … in the value of at least one of these parameters. The more accurately one member of the pair is constrained, the less accurately, the other one is constrained. (Gribbin, 2002, p. 520)

Marshall and Zohar (1997) state simply, “if we measure, or focus on, the position, the momentum becomes unfixed; if we measure the momentum, we lose the position. It is the same with any of the other complementary pairs of which quantum reality consists” (p. 182). Heisenberg’s principle has profound implications on paradigm. At its most fundamental level, the Uncertainty Principle suggests that the observer has a direct impact on the outcome of the experiment; that by identifying some criteria for observation – position, or momentum - we impact the potential outcome of the other. This principle of the quantum world is in direct conflict with the essential Newtonian (empirical) principle of independent and objective observation. Positivists believe the, “knower and the known constitute a discrete dualism” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 37). The empirical model is premised on the assumption that observation must be

intentionally, and emphatically separated from the observer, that experimenter has no direct impact on experiment, and that with intention, outcomes are independent from design. "In simplified terms, Heisenberg stated that the observer alters the observed by the mere act of observation" (Talbot, 1993, p. 15).

Twentieth-century physics, with its broader understanding of the incredibly large, and the incredibly small, has proven to be a true scientific revolution in the Kuhnian sense. As predicted:

> Discovery commences with the awareness of an anomaly, i.e., with the recognition that nature has somehow violated the paradigm-induced expectations that govern normal science. It then continues with a more extended exploration of the area of anomaly. And it closes only when the paradigm theory has been adjusted so that the anomalous has become the expected. (Kuhn, 1996, p. 52-53)

The world of Newtonian mechanics has been replaced with the complexity of Relativity and the emergence of the quantum world. And so, Kuhn would say, that a paradigm shift has occurred in physics. But what has been challenged by this scientific revolution has not only been the core understandings and theories of light, particles, and motion, but also the underlying and foundational beliefs in what is thought, what is known, and how science is conducted. These deeper epistemological and axiomatic principles, that have governed the beliefs and practices of the empirical paradigm, have also proven to be outdated. Our new physics makes it clear that determinism, prediction and control are unrealistic goals of modern science. We have learned that the concept of neutral experimental designs and objective observations are inherently flawed, and we have learned that the principles of reductionism, isolation and isomorphic causality do not accurately match

the world we propose to study. The evidence is clear, that our new science has ushered in a paradigm shift of a broader scope, a shift in beliefs and values and perceptions, a change in how we design and develop our scientific methodologies, a shift in the lens through which we view our world – a true paradigm shift in the Capran sense.

The Interpretive Paradigm

The work of Kuhn (1996) and others (Capra, 1982; Schubert, 1986; Wheatley, 2006) has defined the role of paradigm as not only a collective sense of understanding in a field, but also as a shared practice that serves to be constitutive of the research methodologies of that field. A paradigm:

> exerts influence on a field of study by providing the assumptions, the rules, the direction, and the criteria by which 'normal science' is carried out. The accepted work of scientists in a field of study consists of working out the details that are implied by the paradigm and, in so doing, fulfilling the promise of the paradigm. (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper & Allen, 1993, p. 7)

As quantum theory redesigned the new paradigm in physics, fundamental shifts in the broader fields of research and methodology, and the philosophy of science began in response to the new world view. In his 1975 publication, The Tao of Physics, Fritjof Capra simply referred to this world view as the 'new-paradigm'. He identified six criteria for new-paradigm thinking in science. Contrasting the empirical paradigm's focus on reductionism – the separation of complex systems into smaller parts and the belief that understanding the properties of the parts implied understanding the dynamics of the whole, Capra's first criterion involved changing the relationship

between the parts and the whole, favouring a more symmetrical connection. "We believe that while the properties of the parts certainly contribute to our understanding of the whole, at the same time, the properties of the parts can only be fully understood through the dynamics of the whole" (Capra, 2000, p. 329). Capra's new-paradigm also included a shift in focus from structures - the mechanical metaphor of billiard balls causing motion, to processes, as the essential elements of a system. Adapting the work of Heisenberg, specifically the Uncertainty Principle's recognition of the active role of the observer, Capra called for the shift from objective science, to epistemic science. In the empirical paradigm, scientific observations and descriptions were predicated on absolute objectivity with a goal of independence and separation of, "the human observer and the process of knowledge. In the new paradigm, we believe that epistemology – the understanding of the process of knowledge – has to be included explicitly in the description of natural phenomenon" (Capra, 2000, p. 331). The new paradigm moves away from a reliance on the concept of foundational building blocks in science and a focus on hierarchical (primary and secondary) knowledge, and replaces it with the metaphor of knowledge as a network. By shifting from a focus on universal laws and foundational elements, in preference for a focus on the interconnectedness of relationships within a network, "The material universe is seen as a dynamic web of interrelated events" (2000, p. 333). Capra's fifth criterion addresses the ontological challenges revealed in the new physics. "The Cartesian paradigm was based on a belief in the certainty of scientific knowledge, which had been clearly articulated by Descartes. In the new paradigm, it is recognized that all scientific concepts and theories are limited and approximate" (2000, p. 334). In this

sense, the new-paradigm recognizes that when we apply this concept to the description of phenomena, science does not deal in absolute truths, but rather, searches for approximations of reality within a given, limited context. In Capra's final criterion of the new-paradigm, he advocates for a shift away from the role of science as means for man to dominate nature, a value clearly born in the first scientific revolution, to an ecological perspective of cooperation and cohabitation. By the time of the first publication of *The Turning Point* in 1982, Capra had refined this view and referenced his new-paradigm as the Interpretive or Ecological Paradigm.

Margaret Wheatley extends Capra's ecological perspective on the interpretive paradigm outside of the focus on science, to broader organizational and societal structures.

> Each of us lives and works in organizations designed by Newtonian images of the universe. We manage by separating things into parts, we believe that influence occurs as a direct result of force exerted from one person to another, we engage in complex planning for a world that we keep expecting to be predictable, and we search continually for better methods of objectively measuring and perceiving the world. These assumptions … come to us from seventeenth-century physics, from Newtonian mechanics … But the science has changed. (Wheatley, 2006, p. 7-8)

Wheatley supports Capra's (2000) tenets of the interpretive paradigm. "One of the first differences between new science and Newtonianism is a focus on holism rather than parts. Systems are understood as whole systems, and attention is given to relationships within these networks" (Wheatley, 2006, p. 10). With respect to the interpretive paradigm's shift from a focus on the foundational elements of a discipline, to a focus on networks, Wheatley (2006) asserts, "Subatomic particles come into form

and are observed only as they are in relationship to something else. They do not exist as independent 'things'. There are no basic 'building blocks' (p. 11). Furthermore, "These unseen connections between what we previously thought to be separate entities are the fundamental ingredient of all creation" (2006, p. 11). Applying the emerging concepts of Chaos theory, autopoiesis, and self-organizing systems, as well as the principles of modern physics, Wheatley strongly claims that the interpretive paradigm provides for a richer, more comprehensive and naturalistic connection to the world we live in. This new science also questions our underlying assumptions about, "objective measurement, for at the subatomic level the observer cannot observe anything without interfering or, more precisely, participating in its creation. The strange qualities of the quantum world have shaken prevailing scientific beliefs in determinism, predictability, and control" (2006, p. 22).

The outdated world view of the empirical paradigm, rooted in the science of the first scientific revolution, has given rise to the emerging interpretive paradigm. This new world view roots its principles in the science of its time. It embraces holism and a systems view of our world, emphasizing networks of relationships as essential elements, and accepts the realities of the non-deterministic and non-predictive nature of phenomena. The interpretive paradigm understands the participative nature of the universe and the impact that the observer has on the observation. Its goal is to richly and descriptively provide approximations of the observations made of phenomena, and to do so in a way that supports a deep ecological perspective. "Nature is seen as an interconnected, dynamic network of relationships that include the human observer as an integral component" (Capra, 2000, p. 333).

Naturalistic Inquiry

Within the wider research field, the repercussions of the paradigm shift in science could be felt. A new methodology was being developed to better reflect the new world view. Peter Schwartz and James Ogilvy developed the Emergent Paradigm in 1979 in response to the evolving discoveries in a myriad of scientific fields. Several of their key principles (including a shift towards observations within a real environment, mutual causality, and indeterminacy) directly opposed the designs and methodologies of the positivist, quantitative, experimental research of the empirical paradigm. Lincoln and Guba (1985) published a comprehensive framework for research which paralleled the core values, beliefs and principles of the interpretive paradigm. Naturalistic Inquiry served as a revolutionary model for our fundamental approach to knowing. Naturalistic Inquiry provided methodological approaches, truth and knowledge claims, and detailed protocols for the establishment of the essential criteria for effective research. By providing solutions to the challenges of truth, applicability, consistency and neutrality of research design, Naturalistic Inquiry provided the interpretive paradigm with a consistent, methodological framework for inquiry that paralleled its new world view. It validated the efficacy of qualitative approaches and elevated the role of the researcher to that of a participative, thinking and contributing observer of phenomena.

“It is imperative that inquiry itself be shifted from a positivist to a post positivist stance. For if a new paradigm of thought and belief is emerging, it is necessary to construct a parallel new paradigm of inquiry” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, 15-16).

School Leadership

The Evolving Role of the Principal

The current accountability focus in schools represents merely the latest iteration of this trend. The notion of educational accountability is not new. Rather, which variables schools and school leaders are being asked to be accountable for, continues to change. Throughout history, school leaders have been held to account for the principles that a given context (state, province, city, community) values. Leaders have had to demonstrate proficiency and compliance to their constituents on fiscal matters, program and curriculum development issues, athletic or artistic prowess, and as was evidenced in the trial of John Scopes (and many others still occurring today), religious beliefs and practices. These varying areas of focus and expectation for school leaders have been mirrored by a varying role for the principal over time and context. As the factors for which schools have been held to account have evolved over time, so too has the role of the school leader.

Hallinger (1992) comprehensively explored the role of the principal in American schools. This historical analysis identified three major roles and related contextual demands for American principals over the past near century. Hallinger categorized these three roles as: 1) program manager; 2) primary leader/supervisor of instruction; and 3) transformational leader, with much of the evolution of these roles occurring in the past 50 years.

Principal as program manager – a description rooted in the broader role of ‘administrator as manager’, was the central role of principals from the 1920s through

the 1960s. Moving out of the previous century's mindset of 'Head Teacher', principals began the task of consolidating schools and districts and emulating corporate and political management styles. Effective school leaders, effectively managed their schools. Following the hierarchical model noted in other institutions, the principal's role was to ensure that the business of schools – schedules, reports and meetings – was completed efficiently. Effectively maintaining the institution and the status quo for the teaching and assessment practices of schools was the work of principals, without significant change pressure, for nearly half a century. Hallinger (1992) notes that this role began to evolve in response to curriculum reform measure in the 1960s and 1970s. Increasing federal, state and provincial intervention and local policy changes designed to improve curriculum and instruction in math and science, as well as broader reform initiatives, placed a far greater emphasis on the principal's capacity to effectively implement these measures in schools. The result was a growing political and community expectation of principal actions impacting student achievement. The research on school effectiveness and the concomitant development of principal professional training courses placed far greater emphasis on the impact of principal behavior on overall school effectiveness and on the quality of experiences of teachers and learners.

By the beginning of the 1980s, the leadership literature was clearly exploring a new role for principals – supervisor/leader of instruction (Cooley & Leinhardt, 1980; Dwyer, 1984; Edmunds, 1979; Sweeney, 1982). Principals operating in this new role were expected to serve as a primary source of knowledge for teachers and to serve as direct supervisors of classroom instruction (Dwyer, 1986; Glickman, Gordon &

Ross-Gordon, 1995; Hallinger, 1992; Leithwood & Montgomery, 1982). The emerging trend in leadership research was to explore the operationalization of this instruction-based leadership/supervision role in an attempt to quantify and standardize effective practice. Hallinger (1992) and Leithwood, Jantzi and Steinbach (1999) identify that although principals operating in this paradigm were perceived to have direct influence over the instructional agenda in their schools, this agenda – curriculum, policy, and models of instruction - was traditionally externally developed. Therefore, the principal as supervisor/leader of instruction was still primarily a manager – managing instruction and curriculum as conceived by others. Although the constructs of teaching and learning had emerged as important variables in the principal's new role, the underlying philosophy was still hierarchical and power-based. Leadership continued to be something that the principal 'did' to teachers. Although it quickly evolved as the dominant role, the emerging construct of leadership of/for instruction was, and still is, poorly defined, understood and implemented. "Even when principals are armed with a more powerful knowledge base, significant adaptations must occur in the workplace before we can expect to see persisting changes in administrative practice" (Hallinger, 1992, p. 39). Hallinger concludes that, "even as the instructional leadership image became firmly entrenched in professional rhetoric, changes in administrative practice were less evident" (1992, p. 39).

Hallinger's (1992) third and contemporary evolution of the role of school leader is principal as Transformational Leader. Kenneth Leithwood also uses the concept of transformational leadership (Leithwood, 1992; Leithwood & Jantzi, 1990; Leithwood, Jantzi & Steinbach, 1999), contrasting it not only to Hallinger's (1992) description of

supervisor/leader of instruction, but more distinctly from the precursor - transactional model of leadership. As leaders, schools and districts began their exploration of the relationship between leadership and student outcomes, and as a result of the increased emphasis on school level curriculum and instructional reform, limitations to the principal as supervisor of instruction model became evident. As well, relying on the principal as the primary provider of instructional expertise, was not realistic given the comprehensive, nuanced and complex nature of multi-grade, multidisciplinary schools. Furthermore, as schools engaged in the exercise of precisely matching instructional strategies with the unique student learning needs of their school context, obvious limitations emerged with a single, standardized model of instruction. As the emerging 'effective schools research' was identifying, the exploration of common, standardized best practices for teachers and principals was confounded by the variable of school context. An externally-driven, externally-designed model did not apply across the breadth of school, student, staff and community contexts uniformly. As the prevailing push of educational reform continued into the 1990s, "Increasingly, reformers recommended the decentralization of authority over curricular and instructional decisions from the school district to the school site, expanded roles for teachers and parents in the decision-making process, and an increased emphasis on complex instruction and active listening" (Hallinger, 1992, p 38). In the recently released McKinsey Report – 'How the world's most improved school systems keep getting better', the process of decentralizing pedagogical rights to schools is a common practice of highly effective school systems (Moushed, Chijioke & Barber, 2010). "The school is now viewed as the unit responsible for the initiation of change,

not just the implementation of changes conceived by others" (Hallinger, 1992, p.40). Hallinger asserts that by extension, "the basis for school leadership expands to include teachers (and parents) as well as the principal. These facets highlight a new role for principals (and teachers) in problem finding and problem solving – a role increasingly referred to as transformational leadership" (1992, p.40). Effective leaders in the transformational model, master a broader and different set of skills revolving around supporting the collective capacity and problem finding and problem solving skills of others. Participation as head learner (Barth, 1990), lead learner (Robinson, Lloyd, & Rowe, 2008) or co-learner (Reeves, 2006) replaces the expectation of the principal as the primary source of knowledge.

DuFour, DuFour and Eaker (2008) suggest that the new millennium has brought yet another evolution in role for school leaders. "With the turn of the century, principals were urged to embrace 'shared leadership' as the model best suited to the new image of the school as a community of learners" (2008, p. 310). In this model, "expertise is widely distributed throughout a school rather than vested in an individual person or position" (2008, p. 310). The role of the principal becomes one of developing, "the capacity of people throughout the school to assume leadership roles and view himself or herself as a leader of leaders" (2008, p. 310). Engagement, collaboration, shared purpose and shared vision become new variables in the leadership discussion.

Leadership Styles, Models and Approaches

The literature is saturated with research on leadership. This rather nebulous term permeates the journals of psychology, sociology and philosophy. It has been studied as a discipline-specific construct in relationship to institutional structure, organizational effectiveness and professional practice, and it has unique values and connotations within a variety of fields, including education. The variety of implied, and often contradictory meanings across fields, often serves to create confusion and misunderstanding about the term, particularly when one attempts to describe or assess it. In the quest to improve the leadership skills and capacities of administrators, the challenge of defining what effective leadership looks like, and the challenge of supporting others in developing as leaders, is confounded by this inconsistency in nomenclature. Levin states, "knowing the importance of leadership does not necessarily help us know how to do it ourselves or to create the conditions that foster and support its existence" (2008, p. 171). This disconnect continues in leadership publications. "People continue to write about good leadership because we know it is important yet find it very hard to discern how to have more of it" (2008, p. 171).

A variety of strategies have been employed to deconstruct this generic concept of leadership to make sense of its inherent elements and components. Hallinger's (1992) historical analysis explored how the role (expectations and responsibilities) of all administrators has changed over time. Other authors have applied differing organizational templates to the concept of leadership in an attempt to better understand its core values and principles. Leadership has been defined and

categorized based upon the nature of the actions of the leader (democratic versus autocratic leadership), by the involvement of those being led (participative versus managerial leadership), by the underlying value-goals of the process (moral leadership), by the content focus of the leadership actions being provided (pedagogical or organizational leadership), as well as by the nature of the relationship between leader and follower (transactional versus transformational, distributed, and shared leadership). Currently, the trend is to investigate how these varying styles, models and approaches of leadership impact a wide variety of variables, including teacher efficacy, school culture, parent satisfaction, and most notably, student achievement.

Leithwood, Jantzi and Steinbach (1999) completed a comprehensive review of school leadership, exploring a decade's worth of publications in four significant journals. Their review identified the construct of 'influence' as an important element of most conceptions of leadership. "This suggests that most of the variations in leadership concepts, types or models can be accounted for by differences in who exerts influence, the nature of that influence, the purpose for the exercise of influence and its outcomes" (1999, p. 6). The authors' findings included the recognition of twenty separate leadership concepts. These twenty distinct concepts were clustered together with other concepts that shared the same primary focus and key assumptions to produce a model that identifies six 'approaches to school leadership.' Leithwood et al.'s (1999) model identifies these approaches to school leadership as: Instructional; Transformational; Moral; Participative; Managerial; and Contingent. Linda Lambert's model categorizes four approaches to principal leadership.

“Principals confront the work of building leadership capacity from many different perspectives, most often from one of four approaches: Directive; Laissez-faire; Collaborative; or Capacity Building” (Lambert, 2003, p. 44).

In addition to describing styles, models or approaches to leadership, significant research has explored specific leadership practices or behaviors and their relationship to student achievement outcomes and other variables. Hulley and Dier (2005) charge school leaders with mastering ‘seven correlates of effective schools’. The Ontario Leadership Strategy (2009) released by the Ministry of Education of Ontario, describes Five Core Leadership Capacities: 1) setting goals; 2) aligning resources with priorities; 3) promoting collaborative learning cultures; 4) using data; and 5) engaging in courageous conversations. Sergiovanni (1996) identifies nine tasks that principals should perform as leaders. Michael Fullan (2001) applies the leadership research to specifically include the Ontario context and emphasizes the role of the principal in leading within a culture of change. In this regard, he proposes five characteristics of effective leadership: 1) moral purpose; 2) understanding the change process; 3) developing strong relationships; 4) knowledge sharing; and 5) coherence (connecting new knowledge with existing knowledge). In a meta-analysis of the current research on leadership and student outcomes which served as the thesis for Marzano, Waters and McNulty’s (2005) influential publication, School Leadership That Works – From Research to Results, the authors identify no less than 21 responsibilities for the school leader. This growing body of best practice research has resulted in a flood of lists, charts and correlates – one for each of the thousands of studies that have been completed. In the task of bringing meaning to the construct

of effective leadership in schools, the challenge is not one of insufficient evidence, but rather of clarity and precision. In this regard, "it is easy to become confused by the current evidence about what that really means. [As well, the] many labels used in the literature to signify different forms or styles of leadership mask the generic functions of leadership" (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson & Wahlstrom, 2004, p. 6). Confusion about which aspects of leadership are being studied (distributed versus shared, or instructional versus transformational), as well as the myriad of labels used by different sources to describe this collection of ideas, confounds the broader leadership discussion. Leithwood et al. suggest that what is important to recognize, "is that we need to be skeptical about the 'leadership by adjective' literature. Sometimes these adjectives have real meaning, but sometimes they mask the more important underlying themes common to successful leadership, regardless of the style being advocated" (2004, p. 6).

Principal Leadership and Student Outcomes

Current educational leadership research focuses increasingly on the impact of educational leaders and leadership on student academic outcomes. Current practices and expectations are based on the belief that school leadership makes a difference to student outcomes. In recent years, this general understanding has been explored through an empirical lens, one which currently dominates the literature. It is widely accepted that, "leadership is second only to classroom instruction among school-related factors that contribute to what students learn at school" (Wahlstrom, Louis, Leithwood & Anderson, 2010, p. 6). In the influential publication, How Leadership Influences Student Learning (2004), the authors note, "Our review of the

evidence suggests that successful leadership can play a highly significant – and frequently underestimated – role in improving student learning" (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson & Wahlstrom, 2004, p. 5). Furthermore, in reviewing the qualitative, case study and quantitative research findings on the topic, Leithwood et al. conclude that the effects of principal leadership on student outcomes are educationally significant, although small. "While leadership explains only three to five percent of the variation in student learning across schools, this is actually about one quarter of the total variation (10 to 20 percent) explained by all school level variables" (2004, p. 21). Several other recent publications quantify the impact of school leadership on student outcomes. Marzano, Water and McNulty (2005), "computed the correlation between the leadership behavior of the principal in the school and the average academic achievement of students in the school to be .25" (p. 10). This result appears to represent an approximate median as several studies have reported no significant effect (Witziers, Bosker, Kruger, 2003; Van de Grift, 1990; Van de Grift & Houtveen, 1990), while others (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; Robinson, Lloyd & Rowe, 2008) have reported correlational results at .50 or higher. The interest in examining the impact that educational leaders may have on student performance (particularly the focus on quantitative measures) has coincided with the increasing international focus on educational accountability, and the evolving view of principal as a legitimate agent of change with respect to instruction, curriculum and policy implementation. Studies have explored the characteristics of leadership that have been associated with the greatest impact on student outcomes (Hallinger & Heck, 1998; Heck, Larsen & Marcoulides, 1990; Sheppard, 1996; Witziers, Bosker & Kruger, 2003). Significant

debate has emerged about the methodology and reporting of findings of this Instructional Leadership research. Heck, Larsen & Marcoulides (1990) underscore the ambiguous nature of the principal's role as an instructional leader, and state, "instructional leadership has only rarely been defined in research as specific policies, practices and behavior initiated by the principal" (p. 96). As well, "How the individual researcher conceptualizes principal leadership appears to determine, at least in part, the types of variables intended to serve as parameters of important leadership domains" (1990, p. 96). Methodological concerns about the effectiveness of quantifying and isolating specific principal Instructional Leadership behaviors, and validity concerns about the accuracy of findings for the direct and indirect effects of principal leadership on student outcomes further confound the research literature. Witziers, Bosker and Kruger (2003) state that, "The lack of conceptual congruence provides an empirical caution to the study of school leadership regardless of statistical models or other methodology" (p. 402).

The empirical designs emerging in the professional literature serve not only to highlight a quantitative/positivist emphasis, but have also steered the research focus away from the essential interpretive questions necessary to explore the growth, development and construction of meaning by leaders. Although they are accumulating a broader collection of quantitative data, they provide no clarity to Levin's (2008) earlier assertion that the growing information field does not help us to know how to increase leadership within a school or district.

Leading the Learning Process

Of central importance to this study is a specific range of leadership practices and behaviors. Although leadership has been described and explored as it relates to styles, models and approaches, the research questions of this study are rooted in the growth and development of principals with respect to the work of leading the learning agenda in their schools. This collection of leadership behaviors represents those practices and strategies that are intentionally focused on supporting effective instruction, promoting learning outcomes for students and staff, and leading instructional growth and improvement. These leadership behaviors are explored, not as a choice in 'style' or 'model' or 'approach' to leadership, but rather as a compilation of specific, core leadership tasks and behaviors. This sub-set of leadership responsibilities has been described as Instructional Leadership (Hattie, 2009; Blase and Blase, 2004; Hallinger, 1992; Hallinger & Heck, 1996, 1998), Instructional Managaement (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985), Leadership for Learning (Mezzacappa, Holland, Willen, Colvin, & Feemster, 2008), Learning-Centred Leadership (Goldring, Porter, Murphy, Elliott, & Craverns, 2007), Leading Improvement (Levin, 2008), Curriculum Leadership (Glatthorn & Jailall, 2009), and Pedagogical Leadership (Stalhammer, 1994). In exploring these titles, the common theme - but subtle differences, serve to highlight the ambiguity of this concept, which is predominantly referred to as 'Instructional Leadership' within the profession. Instructional Leadership in this sense, refers to all leadership actions whose purpose and goals are intended to support the teaching and learning processes in schools. This set of intentional leadership practices and behaviours whose explicit goal and effect is

intended to support, nurture, sustain and develop the teaching capacity of adults and the learning outcomes of teachers and students, are the key interest of this study and represent the constellation of properties that are referenced as 'Instructional Leadership.'

The current Instructional Leadership literature suffers from the same ambiguity as the broader leadership construct. "Although school principals have long believed that instructional leadership … facilitates school improvement, until recently little knowledge of what behaviors comprise good instructional leadership has been available in the literature" (Blase & Blase, 2004, p. 11). Leithwood, Jantzi, and Steinbach (1999) note that the description of Instructional Leadership, "typically assumes that the critical focus for attention by leaders is the behaviors of teachers as they engage in activities directly affecting the growth of students" (p. 8). However, like other forms of leadership theory, "Lack of explicit descriptions of instructional leadership make it difficult to assess the extent to which such leadership means the same thing to all of those writing about it" (1999, p. 8).

Several studies have identified essential elements of Instructional Leadership, based upon the unique collection of variables each has explored. Sheppard (1996) synthesized the existing research on Instructional Leadership and concluded that there are ten principal behaviors that are connected to teachers' professional growth and performance: 1) framing school goals; 2) communicating school goals; 3) supervising and evaluating instruction; 4) coordinating the curriculum; 5) monitoring student progress; 6) protecting instructional time; 7) maintaining high visibility; 8) providing incentives for teachers; 9) promoting professional development; and 10)

providing incentives for learning. Hallinger and Murphy (1985) identified three broad Instructional Leadership categories that had an impact on student achievement: 1) defining the school mission; 2) managing the instructional program; and 3) promoting school climate. Blase and Blase (1999) identify the essential characteristics of Instructional Leadership as including: 1) encouraging and facilitating the study of teaching and learning; 2) facilitating collaborative efforts among teachers; establishing coaching relationships among teachers; and 3) using instructional research to make decisions; and using the principles of adult learning when dealing with teachers. Glickman, Gordon and Ross-Gordon (1995) report that effective Instructional Leadership is rooted in: 1) direct assistance to teachers in their day to day work; 2) the development of collaborative staff groups; 3) the design and implementation of effective staff development activities; 4) curriculum development; and 5) the use of action research. Spillane, Halverson and Diamond (2001) shift the discussion of leadership from what instructional leaders are, to how Instructional Leadership is done. These authors, "develop a perspective on leading practice that attends to leaders' thinking and action *in situ*. Leadership involves the identification, allocation, coordination, and use of the social, material, and cultural resources necessary to establish the conditions for the possibility of teaching and learning (p. 24). Spillane et al. argue for a distributive leadership model. "By taking leadership practice in a school as the unit of analysis, rather than an individual leaders, our distributed theory of leadership focuses on how leadership practice is distributed among both positional and informal leaders" (p. 24).

Learning as a Meaning-Making Process

Of central interest to this study is the acquisition of skills, knowledge and understanding by principals with respect to the construct of Instructional Leadership – essentially, an exploration of the learning process of these participants. How do principals acquire and refine these skills; what supports, activities and practices prove beneficial in the development of Instructional Leadership; and what do individual principal participants discover about Instructional Leadership and their own learning as they engage in the process of meaning making? This study has intentionally adopted a paradigm, a research and reporting stance, and a specific methodology that are uniquely designed to allow for a deep, rich and comprehensive exploration of these topics. The interpretive paradigm serves to frame the overall belief and value system of this study. Naturalistic Inquiry guides the course of research and the reporting of findings, and the qualitative methodologies of ethnography shape the researcher-participant interactions. As has been stated, it is essential that the underlying belief systems, axiomatic principles and foundational frameworks of these key elements of the study are aligned and consistent. The research paradigm supports the nature of the research questions being asked, and the research methodology allows for the collection and analysis of the appropriate data (raw text) to effectively uncover the phenomenon. Similarly, it is imperative that the essential variable of the study – participants' learning, be framed and explored in a context that parallels the ontological and epistemological values of the interpretive paradigm, and the qualitative stance outlined in this inquiry.

The empirical model of learning has often portrayed the learner as an 'empty vessel' to be filled. The process of learning, therefore was described as the transmission of knowledge from one who knows (a teacher/expert), to one who doesn't (a student/novice). This transmission model of learning is power-based, hierarchical and passive (from the learner's perspective) in nature - all essential traits of the empirical paradigm. From this empirical perspective, education serves the purpose of inculcating generations of learners to the world of agreed-upon facts and truths. This model is based upon the positivist ontology that, "there is a single tangible reality 'out there' fragmentable into independent variables and processes, any of which can be studied independently of the others" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 37). The purpose of schooling in the transmission model is to prepare youth for life as adults. The underlying psychological framework for knowledge acquisition is Behaviourism. "The behaviorists, who represent traditional psychology, are rooted in philosophical speculation about the nature of learning – the ideas of Aristotle, Descartes, Locke, and Rosseau. They emphasize conditioning behaviour and altering the environment to elicit selected responses from the learner" (Ornstein & Hunkins, 1998, p. 101). Referencing the work of B.F. Skinner and Robert Thorndike, Brooks and Brooks (1992) assert that the American Behavioural Psychology movement had strong roots in the education system. "These theorists and researchers described human behaviour essentially by the stimulus-response relationship coupled with positive reinforcement of desired behaviors and negative reinforcement of unwanted behavior" (1992, p. 23-24). This traditional understanding of learning, and the role of the learner in the process, clearly collides with several

foundational principles of the interpretive stance. Although still prevalent in the design of many systems, schools, classrooms and lessons, the empirical model of learning has been challenged for more than a century.

John Dewey's notion of progressive education began to question the role of the learner in learning at the beginning of the twentieth century. In his 1938 publication of Education and Experience, Dewey noted:

> There is, I think, no point in the philosophy of progressive education which is sounder than its emphasis upon the importance of the participation of the learner in the formation of the purposes which direct his activities in the learning process, just as there is no defect in traditional education greater than its failure to secure the active co-operation of the pupil in construction of the purposes involved in his studying. (Dewey, 1997, p. 67)

Challenges to the empirical model also came from the field of cognitive psychology, particularly from the work of Jean Piaget and the exploration of human developmental stages. Piaget's work supported the philosophy of Dewey with respect to the changing role of the teacher and the learner. "Environmental experience is the key to Piaget's cognitive theories, as it was also the crux of Dewey's learning principles. The educator's role involves the shaping of actual experiences … that lead to growth" (Ornstein & Hunkins, 1998, p. 109). Explorations in the fields of developmental psychology, linguistics and philosophy further developed this emerging model that focused on the notion of learning (and the responsibilities and power of the learner) rather than on teaching (and the responsibilities and power of the teacher). This new Constructivist theory of learning focused on the individual as an active player in the learning process who constructed his or her own new understandings, based upon

the experiences they encountered. “The theory defines knowledge as temporary, developmental, socially and culturally mediated, and thus, non-objective. Learning from this perspective is understood as a self-regulated process of resolving inner cognitive conflicts that often become apparent through concrete experience, collaborative discourse, and reflection” (Brooks & Brooks, 1993, p. vii). The concept of knowledge as a tangible thing – a product that can be given from teacher to student - is replaced by an emerging understanding of knowledge as a process of constructing meaning.

> Knowledge does not exist in packages that can be transmitted from one person to another. Being a state of understanding, knowledge can only exist in the mind of an individual knower. And it has to be constructed – or reconstructed – by each individual knower through a process of interpreting or making sense of new information in terms of what he or she already knows. (Wells & Chang-Wells, 1992, p. 94)

A strength of the constructivist approach lies in its capacity to be applied to the broader construct of learning, by all, over time, rather than the more narrowly defined empirical models that emphasized the acquisition of pre-defined skills in highly specific classroom or laboratory settings, often in quite unnatural (positivist) contexts. “The major point here is that constructivism is not a theory of teaching, but a theory of knowing and knowledge, and it is important to understand the role of building constructions of understanding” (Hattie, 2009, p. 26). Wells and Chang-Wells (1992) state that, “The acquisition of knowledge is more appropriately conceived of as an organic process of making meaning than as one of passively receiving it” (p. 94). This foundational principle explains why, “Those who have studied the acquisition of knowledge, such as Piaget (1977) or Bruner (1972), have emphasized its active

nature, preferring to characterize the process of coming to know in terms of 'construction' instead of 'accumulation'" (1992, p. 94).

The mechanism through which learning is constructed from this perspective, is the concept of cognitive dissonance – an intellectual disconnect between the current understandings and beliefs held by a learner, and the newly presented information. Through actively exploring this dissonance, reflecting upon observations, past experiences and current data, new learning emerges as the learner adapts, refines and modifies his or her existing schema. "Deep understanding occurs when the presence of new information prompts the emergence or enhancement of cognitive structures that enable us to rethink our prior ideas" (Brooks & Brooks, 1993, p. 15). Ornstein and Hunkins (1998) state clearly, "To constructivists, each learner must participate in generating meaning. Such learning can only exist in situations in which the new learning is constantly being connected with already existing knowledge, that is, prior experiences" (p. 115). At the core of the constructivist view is the belief that, "individuals actively construct knowledge within social realms that serve to shape the very knowledge constructed. Essentially, individuals participate in the creation of their meaning via various cognitive processes … and the reality that is created is subjective rather than objective" (Ornstein & Hunkins, 1998, p. 115). This concept of individually-constructed realities resonates clearly with the ontological axioms of Naturalistic Inquiry which are premised on the belief that, "There are multiple constructed realities that can be studied only holistically" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 37). Constructivists emphasize the role of learner reflection as a key element of the process of learning. Actively and intentionally exploring how new experiences conflict

with current beliefs and understanding is a key strategy for this new learning model. “Constructivists believe that the task for the learner is not to passively accept information by mimicking the wording or conclusions of others, but rather to engage themselves in internalizing and reshaping or transforming information via active consideration” (Ornstein & Hunkins, 1998, p. 116). The result of this unique, learner-dependent process is that the empirical concepts of single truth and reality, objective facts, and shared understanding, must be questioned. “Meaning is imposed on the world by those who reflect, those who think about the world. It is we who structure the world, as we construct reality so as to comprehend it” (Ornstein & Hunkins, 1998, p. 115). The ontological consequences of this process, however imply that, “there is no ultimate shared reality. Reality is a result of an individual’s constructivism” (1998, p. 115). Wells and Chang-Wells (1992) note the significance of social interaction and talk to the constructivist model’s notion of individual meaning-making and support the ontological challenge to the empirical notions of truth and single reality.

> If knowledge is true belief, as philosophers have argued, true must be taken to mean either ‘verified against personal experience’ or as ‘being in conformity with the beliefs of others as these have been publically expressed.’ It cannot mean true in an absolute and final sense since, as we have already seen, every individual’s knowledge is open to revision and, as the history of science amply attests, even some of the most strongly held theories have been supplanted by others that have been judged to give a better explanation of the available evidence. (Wells & Chang-Wells, 1992, p. 95)

Conclusion

In this chapter, the construct of paradigm was presented and explored. An historical case was developed for the evolution of the empirical paradigm as a world view created from, and related to, the Newtonian-Cartesian perspective which emerged from the first scientific revolution. The broader social, academic and organizational impacts of this mechanistic world view were examined and described in terms of reductionism, positivist beliefs in the sciences, and the quantitative, empirical implications for research methodologies. The second scientific revolution - the transformation of the field of physics from Newtonian beliefs to the quantum world - was used to frame an exploration of the emerging interpretive paradigm. A deepening understanding of the new paradigm's underlying, holistic, interdependent principles was used to describe Naturalistic Inquiry as a valid and valuable methodological foundation for the interpretive paradigm, and this study specifically.

School leadership and the role of the principal were explored from an historical perspective, tracing the evolving role of the principal from program manager, to leader/supervisor of instruction, to transformational leader, to shared or distributive leader. The construct of learning and growth was examined through the lens of Constructivism. This study's focus on principal growth and development was described in relation to the understanding that growth and learning are active processes of meaning making, deeply connected to the unique experiences of each learner.

CHAPTER 3: DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter explores the Naturalistic Inquiry design utilized in this study to gather insights about how participant principals make meaning of the construct of Instructional Leadership as they grow, develop and engage in their work as principals. A description of the characteristics of Naturalistic Inquiry is provided, as well as a description of the specific methodology used in this qualitative design. The chapter concludes with a description of how trustworthiness is effectively established in this study.

Naturalistic Inquiry

This qualitative study examines the complex, interconnected and uniquely human constructs of educational leadership, individual's meaning-making, and personal growth and development. The nature of this inquiry lies clearly within the confines of the interpretive/naturalistic paradigm.

> The capacity of humans to make meaning of life events and to exercise a sense of agency in their lives is not considered to be a confounding variable to be controlled through research procedures. Rather, these interpretive acts of meaning-making lie at the heart of what is to be understood through qualitative – that is, interpretive – research. (Piantanida & Garman, 2009, p. 50)

The naturalistic paradigm also effectively guides the theoretical framework of this study and supports the underlying methodological assumptions and knowledge claims proposed. This qualitative, naturalistic stance has implications for the design and methodology of this inquiry, as well as for the role of the researcher. Piantanida

and Garman (2009) assert that, “At the heart of interpretive inquiry is a researcher’s capacity for encountering, listening, understanding, and thus experiencing the phenomenon under investigation” (p. 59). In contrast to the ‘neutral and objective’ observer model of the empirical paradigm, “an interpretive inquirer, much like a tuning fork, resonates with exquisite sensitivity to the subtle vibrations of encountered experiences” (2009, p. 59). Only through a naturalistic design, can the unique, personal and nuanced experiences of principals be explored with sufficient richness and detail. The emergent design allows for an authentic discovery, construction and re-construction of the essential elements of both participant and researcher meaning with respect to Instructional Leadership and principal growth.

> Generating knowledge from such intimate studies entails a movement from the particular to the general, from the concrete to the abstract, from the idiosyncratic to the universal – in short, from the situational to the conceptual. The movement from the situational to the conceptual is a highly interpretive process dependent upon the researcher’s capacity for making meaning from his or her research experience. For this reason, the researcher is not seen as a detached, objective observer of events. Rather, the researcher is actively engaged in an intrasubjective process of interpreting the meaning of events. It is in this sense that intimate qualitative studies fall within the tradition of interpretive, rather than postpositivist inquiry. (Piantanida & Garman, 2009, p. 53)

Qualitative Research Methods

Qualitative methodologies are consistent with the naturalistic framework and the purpose of this research - applying an interpretive lens to the construct of principal growth in Instructional Leadership. They also effectively support the exploration of context-specific phenomena and allow for description of, “naturally occurring and ordinary events that are in close proximity to a specific situation, over a sustained

period, that locate the meanings that people place on the social world around them" (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p.10).

Ethnography

This qualitative study constitutes ethnographic research, which supports this researcher's goal of exploring the complex and highly detailed concept of participant principal meaning-making. "Ethnographic research has a particular strength … It can reveal nuances and subtleties that other methodologies miss" (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003, p. 513). Ethnographic studies, although complex, are effective in allowing for a holistic perspective of events or situations and through the use of extensive and in-depth interviewing, allow for an emic (insider's) perspective of a phenomenon or construct (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003). Ethnography further supports the interpretive goals of this study by allowing for, and eliciting through process, multiple realities from participants, ensuring a comprehensive exploration of the themes, patterns and perspectives of the identified principal group. The Procedure section below identifies the key elements of effective ethnographic study for this inquiry: thick description, interviewing, and trustworthiness.

Research Design

Population and Sample Selection

This study was conducted in a large, publically-funded school district in southwestern Ontario. This school board serves approximately 34,500 students in a variety of educational settings, including 60 elementary schools (K to 8, K to 3 and grades 4-8 structures), 16 secondary schools (grades 9 to 12) and a variety of adult,

continuing education, and alternative learning locations. This district provides public education services to a city with a population of approximately 220,000 people and the neighboring municipalities in the county.

This study explores Instructional Leadership growth in participant elementary school principals, each of whom was involved in the district's School Support Visit model. Over the course of a four year cycle, all elementary schools engage in this 'school improvement' process – approximately 15 schools each year. This study employs a purposive sampling methodology. "Purposive and directed sampling through human instrumentation increases the range of data exposed and maximizes the researcher's ability to identify emerging themes that take adequate account of contextual conditions and cultural norms" (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper & Allen, 1993).

Phase 1

Participants for Phase 1 of this study were 10, elementary school principals who met the following criteria:

- Participants have gone through (hosted) the School Support Visit process between 2009 and 2011 at the school where they were the principal at the time sampling began.
- Participants have served as a member of the System Support Team, and therefore visited other schools in the system for the purpose of conducting a School Support Visit.
- Participants were not principals under the direct supervision (Superintendent of Schools) of this researcher.

- Participants agreed to take part in all aspects of this inquiry.

At the time of sampling, there were 60 elementary school principals in the host district school board. Of this group, 21 experienced (hosted) a School Support Visit between 2009 and 2011. Of this group, 12 have served as members of the System Support Team and therefore visited other schools in the system for the purpose of conducting a School Support Visit. Eleven administrators from this remaining pool of candidates were not principals under the direct supervision (Superintendent of Schools) of this researcher and, therefore, met the criteria for inclusion. Each of these eligible principles was invited to participate in a series of Focus Group activities, which constitute Phase 1 of this inquiry. Of the eligible sample, 10 principals participated as members of the Focus Group and completed all activities.

Phase 2

The name of each of the 10 principals who participated in Phase 1 of this study as a Focus Group member was recorded and placed into a 'hat' for random selection. Following random selection, four participants were identified to participate in Phase 2 of the study. Phase 2 of the research involved a comprehensive ethnographic exploration of the key research concepts and ideas. Consent for participation was obtained through the appropriate procedures of Wayne State University, and the host district school board.

Procedure

Table 2, outlines the data (raw text) collection procedures utilized in this study. Data collection occurred in two phases, through 7 research stages.

Table 2: Data (Raw Text) Collection Procedures and Objectives

	Research Stage	Participant(s): Activity	Timeline
Phase 1	Stage 1	Focus Group: Task 1 and 2	August 2012
	Stage 2	Focus Group: Individual Survey	August – September 2012
Phase 2	Stage 3	Small Group: Group Interview	August 2012
	Stage 4	Individual: Participant Interviews; & Written Reflections	August - September 2012
	Stage 5	Small Group: Group Interview	October 2012
	Stage 6	Individual: Participant Interviews	October 2012
	Stage 7	Individual: Participant Interviews	April - May 2013

Phase 1

The initial phase of this study commenced with a Focus Group meeting with the researcher and 10 participating principals in August 2012 at a school site of one of the participants. The Focus Group activities were designed to explore the key constructs of interest in this study – principal acquisition, refinement and growth in Instructional Leadership skills and capacity; an examination of the learning conditions necessary for principal growth; and the shared experiences of the School Support Visit process as a tool for supporting school leaders. The goal was to generate key questions and perspectives from the group and to create an additional, broad data set for analysis. Exploring trends, patterns, similarities and differences with a wider

range of voices and perspectives assisted in ensuring a broad and rich starting point for later ethnographic inquiry. The Focus Group format allowed participants to frame their thinking on the topic of study, identify areas of common or shared agreement, interest or experience within the group, as well to as explore possible constructs of divergent views or beliefs. "The object is to get at what people really think about an issue or issues in a social context where the participants can hear the views of others and consider their own views accordingly" (Frankel & Wallen, 2003, p. 462).

Research Stage 1: Over the course of approximately two hours on this afternoon, the participants engaged in three Focus Group activities. Prior to the initial task, participants were asked to self-assemble into three working groups. Within these new structures, the participants were given a set of three guiding questions (Appendix A – Task 1). Participants were asked to discuss and share their personal beliefs and understandings about these issues with their group and to capture a representation of their discussion on recording sheets which were provided. Groups were given approximately 25 minutes to engage in discussion and record their responses. They were then prompted to complete the next guiding question(s).

Task 2 required the participants to work individually. The principals were prompted to reflect on changes in their own thinking, or developments of new personal understanding about Instructional Leadership and the process of supporting principals' growth in this area. Under the prompts: *I used to think … but now I think*; and *I've learned that …*; participants responded on the recording sheets provided. Participants required between 15 and 25 minutes to complete the activity.

Participant written responses for Task 1 and 2 were transcribed and recorded electronically for coding, domain, taxonomic and additional analyses.

Research Stage 2: Task 3 of the Focus Group activities was an eight question, open-ended survey that was sent electronically to the Focus Group participants. Appendix B identifies the questions provided to the principals. Participants were asked to complete this task and send it to the researcher electronically. Electronically submitted surveys (Task 3) were aggregated, coded and deeply explored through domain and taxonomic analysis.

Phase 2

The four randomly selected principals for Phase 2 of this study, engaged in a series of ethnographic interviews with the researcher over the course of approximately nine months. This interaction occurred in one-on-one settings between the participant and the researcher, in small group settings with all four participants and the researcher, and independently as the participants responded to guiding questions through individual written reflections. Employing multiple strategies for gathering raw text from the participants and capturing this text at multiple times throughout the inquiry process promoted the richness of information gathered and supported the development of a thick description of the phenomenon and captured the participant principals' evolving and deepening understanding of the research topic. In-depth interviewing and on-going participant observation are the key tools in all ethnographic settings (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003). Essential to the data collection procedures of this study, was the use of multiple interviews – both in group settings,

as well as individual participant settings. An iterative approach was applied, allowing for on-going interviews in varying contexts throughout the data collection phase. The emergent design of this study required an open-ended, flexible approach to the participant interviews. Emerging patterns, trends and concepts were explored with each principal in subsequent interviews to ensure for the effective representation of the unique individual participant's understandings and perspectives.

All small group and individual interviews were between 60 and 75 minutes in length. In each case, the interview was digitally recorded and transcribed. Interview transcriptions became the essential component of analysis for this study.

Research Stage 3 - Small Group Interview #1: All four participants and the researcher engaged in a small group interview in August 2012. At this initial meeting, details were provided about the data gathering techniques of this study, the use and intent of audio recording strategies, as well as the role of researcher-provided guiding questions and participant reflective responses throughout the process. Guiding questions focused the group discussion on the essential research questions of the study and participants engaged in an open discourse about these topics, asking questions of the researcher and each other, offering supporting anecdotes to each other as well as opposing views. The small group interview lasted approximately 70 minutes. Audio recordings were transcribed and analysed. Participants spoke often about the value they placed on these gatherings as opportunities to share their beliefs and learn from colleagues.

Research Stage 4 - Individual Interviews #1: The key research element of this procedural stage was the collection of raw text from each participant through individual 'informal' (Frankel & Wallen, 2003) or 'unstructured' (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, Franken & Wallen, 2003) interviews. "The primary intent of an informal interview is to find out what people think and how the views of one individual compare with another" (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003, p. 456). At the initial stages of this inquiry, an informal interview model permitted the greatest flexibility for this researcher in refining core research elements, areas of common understanding, as well as provided the best opportunity to explore the unique understandings, attitudes and beliefs that each participant contributed to the research questions. Lincoln and Guba (1985) noted that, "In an unstructured interview, the format is non-standardized, and the interviewer does not seek normative responses. Rather, the problem of interest is expected to arise from the respondent's reaction to the broad issue raised by the inquirer" (p. 268).

Each interview was approximately 65 minutes in length. Audio recordings were transcribed and coded for analysis.

Research Stage 4 – Written Reflections: Following the first Individual interview, each participant received, electronically, a prompt for personal written reflection. Principals were asked to submit their written reflections electronically to the researcher prior to the second small group interview. The goal of this activity was to cause participating principals to reflect more deeply on a particular aspect of their first individual interview. These 'prompts for reflection' are included in Appendix C.

Research Stage 5 – Small Group Interview #2: Participants engaged in the second and final small group interview in this stage. Participant responses and group commonalities and differences continued to be explored in this process to construct meaning and intent, refine understanding, and clarify and hone the scope and depth of the inquiry. Participant written reflections served as a catalyst to more deeply explore areas of participant interest and wondering in Research Stages 6 and 7.

Research Stage 6 – Individual Interviews #2: Participant principals and the researcher continued with semi-structured interviews designed to deepen the investigation and exploration of each principal's unique beliefs and understandings with respect to the research questions. Franken and Wallen (2003) note that, "In qualitative research, structured and semi-structured interviews are often best conducted toward the end of a study, as they tend to shape responses to the researcher's perceptions of how things are" (p. 456). At this stage of data collection, emerging patterns of the phenomena helped to shape and 'structure' the final round of individual interviews.

Research Stage 7 – Individual Interviews #3: In this stage, participants engaged in a process of 'review, clarify and expand'. Researcher wonderings that emerged through the gathered raw text from stages 1 through 6 informed the discussion. Opportunities for participants to expand, reshape and deepen their perspectives and reflections were provided. Participating principals were asked to reflect on the impact of their involvement in this study, on their own growth and development as instructional leaders.

Data Analysis and Reporting

Data Collection

The techniques used in this study to capture raw text and develop a thick description and rich ethnographic record included: researcher journal and field notes, participant written reflections, Focus Group written responses, and interview transcriptions of researcher–participant individual and small group, unstructured and semi-structured interviews. This intentional application of several different data collection strategies, served to satisfy the criteria of triangulation. "By this method, the researcher seeks out several different types of sources that can provide insights about the same events or relationships (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper & Allen, 1993, p. 115). Furthermore, "triangulation may establish that the information gathered is generally supported or disconfirmed; more important, however, it enhances meaning through multiple sources and provides for thick description of relevant information …" (p. 115). Since the essential elements of this study involve participant meaning making and exploring participant growth, the use of the interview technique to deeply examine participant beliefs and understandings is critical. "The major advantage of the interview is that it permits the respondent to move back and forth in time – to reconstruct the past, interpret the present, and predict the future" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 273). Erlandson, Harris, Skipper and Allen note that, "Interviews also help the researcher to understand and put into a larger context the interpersonal, social, and cultural aspects of the environment" (1993, p. 85). Frankel and Wallen (2003) further note that interviewing, "is the most important tool that ethnographers use" (p. 516).

Case Reports

The methodological framework of this study is Naturalistic Inquiry. Chapters 1 and 2 outlined why this interpretive stance is best suited to explore the key research questions, and has highlighted the significance of employing a research methodology which compliments the axiomatic beliefs of the paradigm and research questions being employed. The same integrity and continuity is required with respect to selecting the reporting mechanism for any inquiry. Lincoln and Guba (1985) assert that for the purposes of Naturalistic Inquiry, the case report is the preferred reporting mechanism. Their rationale is that the case report most effectively meets the primary goals of raising understanding and has distinct advantages for this paradigm. In Naturalistic Inquiry, "the principle task of the researcher is to communicate a setting with its complex interrelationships and multiple realities to the intended audience in a way that enables and requires that audiences interact cognitively and emotionally with the setting" (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper & Allen, 1993, p. 163.). The case report format, "is a fitting capstone to the continuous reporting process that characterizes naturalistic inquiry – the culmination and codification of myriad formal and informal reports that have gone before" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 358). The case report format also allows for the necessary detailed description of the holistic, meaning-making process of participants in a way that honours the nuances and complexities of this very human experience.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) also identify six specific advantages of the case report format for naturalistic inquirers. The case report format: 1) is the primary vehicle for emic inquiry; 2) builds on the reader's tacit knowledge; 3) is an effective vehicle for

demonstrating the interplay between inquirer and respondents; 4) provides the reader an opportunity to probe for internal consistency; 5) provides the 'thick description' so necessary for judgments of transferability; and 6) provides a grounded assessment of context.

Trustworthiness

Erlandson, Harris, Skipper and Allen (1993) summarize the goals of effective research and inquiry.

> If intellectual inquiry is to have an impact on human knowledge, either by adding to an overall body of knowledge or by solving a particular problem, it must guarantee some measure of credibility about what it has inquired, must communicate in a manner that will enable application by its intended audience, and must enable its audience to check on its findings and the inquiry process by which the findings were obtained. (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper & Allen, 1993, p. 28)

These are the requirements of all inquiry, and the central tenets of traditional (empirical or positivist) research. Challenges to naturalistic methodologies and, therefore, naturalist findings, are often made on this front. However, although the paradigms differ axiomatically, they do share a common trait in that, "valid inquiry in any sphere must … demonstrate its truth value, provide the basis for applying it, and allow for external judgments to be made about the consistency of its procedures and the neutrality of its findings or decisions" (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper & Allen, 1993, p. 29). Lincoln and Guba (1985) have defined these criteria for naturalistic inquiries as 'trustworthiness'. Defining trustworthiness is essential, not only to allow for claims of methodological soundness, and to defend against empirical claims against validity and reliability, but because the criteria used to determine the efficacy of Naturalistic

Inquiry must be born from, and rooted in, the ontological and epistemological values of the underlying (naturalistic and interpretive) belief system.

The fundamental question of trustworthiness is simple: “How can an inquirer persuade his or her audiences (including self) that the findings of an inquiry are worth paying attention to, worth taking account of?” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 290). Essentially, the questions are, “What arguments can be mounted, what criteria invoked, what questions asked, that would be persuasive on this issue?” (1985, p. 290). This study adopts Lincoln and Guba’s (1985) four essential criteria for establishing trustworthiness: truth value, applicability, consistency, and neutrality. These four criteria roughly parallel the empirical concepts of internal validity, external validity, reliability and objectivity. Table 3 (adapted from Lincoln & Guba, 1985; and Erlandson, Harris, Skipper & Allen, 1993) describes the criterion, the naturalistic and empirical terminology associated with the criterion, as well as Naturalistic Inquiry techniques that were employed in this study to support trustworthiness.

Table 3: Trustworthiness Criteria - Naturalistic and Empirical Comparison

Criterion	**Key Questions** (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 290)	**Naturalistic Term**	**Empirical Term**	**Naturalistic Techniques**
Truth Value	*How can one establish confidence in the "truth" of the findings of a particular inquiry for the subjects with which, and the context in which, the inquiry was carried out?*	Credibility	Internal Validity	Prolonged engagement Persistent observation Triangulation Member check External audit
Applicability	*How can one determine the extent to which findings of a particular inquiry have applicability in other contexts or with other subjects?*	Transferability	External Validity	Thick description Purposive sampling External audit
Consistency	*How can one determine whether the findings of a particular inquiry would be repeated if the inquiry were replicated with the same (or similar) subjects in the same (or similar) context?*	Dependability	Reliability	Reflexive journal Thick description External audit
Neutrality	*How can one establish the degree to which the findings of an inquiry are determined by the subjects and conditions of the inquiry and not by the biases, motivations, interests, or perspectives of the inquirer?*	Confirmability	Objectivity	Reflexive journal Thick description Member check External audit

Truth Value: An ontological foundation of Naturalistic Inquiry is that 'reality' is a human construction, and as such is dependent upon the individual constructor. Complex phenomena, like the ones explored in this study, yield multiple realities across respondents. It is precisely these 'multiple views of reality' that are of interest to naturalistic researchers. As such, the measure of 'truth' in naturalistic studies is not the identification of a single, isomorphic, causal relationship. Rather, as Lincoln and Guba (1985) note, the role of the naturalistic inquirer is to demonstrate that he or she has effectively, "represented those multiple constructions adequately … that the reconstructions (for the findings and interpretations are also constructions, it should never be forgotten) that have been arrived at via the inquiry are credible to the

constructors of the original multiple realities" (p. 296). This credibility is established in two ways. Methodologically, through prolonged engagement and persistent observation techniques, this researcher has engaged in a depth of inquiry that does permit the exploration of authentic participant meanings and reality constructions with respect to the key research questions. As well, the use of triangulation strategies – collecting multiple sources of participant beliefs through individual interviews, small group interviews, Focus Group activities, as well as participant and researcher reflections, assists in developing credible reconstructions of participant meanings. The iterative nature of this methodology allows for participant meaning to be explored, questioned, reshaped and viewed from a variety of perspectives. The second strategy for ensuring credibility in representing the reality constructions of participants is to employ 'member check' techniques throughout the data collection process to ensure that the researcher observations and interpretations are based upon accurate portraits of the participants' meanings. The use of audio recording and transcriptions of interviews, and the use of unstructured, semi-structured and focus group interviews permits for clarification, refinement and authenticity of participant views. Reflexive journaling by this researcher - "introspective journals that display the investigator's mind processes, philosophical position, and bases for decisions about the inquiry" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p.109), were also used to support the establishment of trustworthiness. Finally, the assistance of this researcher's dissertation committee was employed in the role of an external audit to support and establish that the methodology, and data collection and reporting strategies fell within the bounds of effective Naturalistic Inquiry.

Applicability: Like the previous criterion, conflicting views of applicability exist between paradigms as a result of axiomatic beliefs. Central to the desired predictability goal of empirical research is a focus and value on external validity. In an empirical design, the 'power' of research findings are often measured by their capacity to generalize to other populations. In naturalistic studies, this one included, the underlying goals of the study are rooted in developing understanding, meaning-making, and in constructing and reconstructing the realities of participants with respect to a specific context. The methodology employed is designed to highlight the unique individual perspectives of participants. In empirical models, it is the responsibility of the researcher to ensure transferability or generalizability of findings to other contexts. In this interpretive design, the researcher's responsibility is to provide a thick description of the context and sample being studied. Issues of applicability belong to the researcher who chooses to transfer or generalize the findings of this study to his/her setting. This study employed purposive sampling techniques to assist in exploring the key research questions and providing the greatest opportunity to gather insights into the phenomenon of study. This study also appropriately developed a thick description – a highly detailed description of the context, sample and raw text (data) gathered throughout the inquiry. Effective thick descriptions contain specific details and relationships as well as reconstructions of the data collection processes, and often detailed quotations from the participants in the study (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper & Allen, 1993). The richness and comprehensiveness of this description will allow other researchers to make informed

judgments about the appropriateness of the application of findings to their particular contexts.

Consistency and Neutrality: Lincoln and Guba's (1985) final two criteria for trustworthiness share several key elements. Consistency or dependability is paralleled with the empirical construct of reliability, and is concerned with the capacity to replicate the study with similar participants in a similar setting to obtain similar results. Neutrality or confirmability is paralleled with the empirical construct of objectivity. In the naturalistic paradigm, both of these criteria are distinctly juxtaposed by their traditional counterparts. Empirical beliefs demand the neutrality of the observer, the separation of researcher from participant, and the isolation of data from data collector. It is this essential positivist belief that limits empirical methodologies from effectively exploring the intricate, complex and multi-viewed realities of the human experience. Naturalistic inquiries are premised on the mutual influence that researchers and respondents have on each other (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper & Allen, 1993). The costs of positivist designs that attempt to maintain objectivity, neutrality and replicability, are significant methodological limits on the types of questions that can be explored and on the richness and complexity of issues that can be investigated. "To get to the relevant matters of human activity, the researcher must be involved in that activity. The dangers of bias and reactivity are great; the dangers of being insulated from relevant data are greater" (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper & Allen, 1993, p. 15). As described for the criterion of adaptability, this study promotes trustworthiness with respect to consistency and neutrality by employing a thick description and significant detail and reporting of findings, allowing others to develop

a comprehensive understanding of the study. Effective use of researcher reflexive journaling, member check, and the use of the dissertation committee for the purpose of an external audit, also promoted trustworthiness with respect to the criteria of consistency and neutrality.

Conclusion

The methodological framework employed in this study was Naturalistic Inquiry. The interpretive nature of Naturalistic Inquiry supports the complex, interconnected nature of this study – personal meaning-making and growth and development in personal leadership skills. Following the qualitative design, a two phase, seven stage plan was outlined to capture data (raw text) from participating principals. Focus Group activities, small group interviews, individual interviews, participant and researcher reflections assisted in triangulating data. A detailed description of how this study addressed trustworthiness was also provided.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a rich, detailed and comprehensive portrayal of the data that was collected over the course of this study. Multiple data sets were compiled over the two phase methodology, including Focus Group discussions, individual survey responses, small group interviews, participant written reflections and participant-researcher individual interviews. The qualitative research design employed in this study allowed for deep analysis and exploration of these data sets primarily through Spradley's (1979) model of domain, taxonomic and component analysis. These results and samples of the initial Focus Group activities will be shared in detail. The four participants that comprise the main ethnographic component of this study will be introduced and case reports will highlight the understandings and perspectives that each shared throughout the identified research tasks. Finally, a deep exploration of cross-participant findings (domain, taxonomic, component analysis) will be conducted to identify when and how individual participant narratives are constitutive of broader themes and patterns.

Although the original research proposal for this study identified case report as the primary reporting strategy for findings, this methodology serves most effectively to highlight the unique intra-subject narrative that evolved over time. In an attempt to secure the core goals of ethnographic research – a rich and comprehensive description of the phenomena under study, supplemental reporting strategies will be added in this chapter to most effectively share the inter-subject story that emerged as well. Lincoln and Guba (1985) stress the "unfolding nature of design" in Naturalistic

Inquiry stating that for naturalists, "It is anticipated that the design will change as those contingencies are realized (that is, made real or constructed by the inquirer interacting with the circumstances that have evolved) … The final appearance of an inquiry is thus shaped by a large number of interactions (including feedback and feedforward) unfolding over time" (p. 259). Lincoln and Guba further note that:

> Changes may also occur because of deliberate actions on the part of the inquirer. As salient elements in a context are identified through prolonged engagement, relevance criteria are altered; some things considered important initially are put aside, and some new things are taken up … All such considerations may in turn produce a shift in the methodologies employed. (p.260)

The emergent nature of this Naturalistic Inquiry has been shared from the onset, and inclusion of supplemental reporting methodologies serves the integrity of the data collected and honours the precept that the fundamental goal of this study, as is true for ethnography in general, is to use varying strategies, "in an attempt to obtain as holistic a picture as possible of a particular society, group, setting, or institution" (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003, p. 512).

Data Analysis and Reporting

Phase 1 Reporting of Findings

Phase 1: Focus Group Activities – Research Stage 1 (Task 1 and 2)

Phase 1 of the study focused on 10 principals who served as the Focus Group. These participants met the following criteria:

- Participants engaged in the School Support Visit process between 2009 and 2011 at the school where they were the principal (as of May 2012).

- Participants served as a member of the System Support Team, and therefore visited other schools in the system and have participated in conducting a School Support Visit.
- Participants were not principals under the direct supervision (Superintendent of Schools) of this researcher.
- Participants agreed to take part in all aspects of this inquiry.

The 10 Focus Group participants engaged in three research tasks, generating two distinct data sets for analysis. In Task 1, participants assembled into three working groups. In Task 2, participants recorded personal written responses. Table 4 outlines these tasks.

Table 4: Phase 1 - Focus Group Tasks (Data Set #1)

Participants	Questions/ Prompts for discussion and recording
Group Activity (Task 1)	1) What is Instructional Leadership? 2) What does it look like when you do it? 3) I know I'm on the right track when … 4) How does the growth of administrators as Instructional Leaders need to be supported? 5) What is the context (structures and tasks) that supports capacity building for principals? 6) What are the tasks/activities that you engage in that help you grow as an instructional leader? 7) Next year I'll be sure to …
Individual Activity (Task 2)	8) I used to think …, But know I think … 9) I've learned that …

Group and individual responses to Task 1 and Task 2 were transcribed and collated. Domain and taxonomic analyses identified semantic relationships, cover terms and patterns that emerged from multiple passes through the data set. These domain and taxonomic analyses were shared with Student Achievement Officers from the Ministry of Education for member check purposes. Student Achievement Officers are former elementary school principals who currently work to support school districts and their leaders in capacity building measures for staff. They represent a group of

highly skilled professionals who have excelled in the areas of Instructional Leadership and building professional capacity. Erlandson, Harris, Skipper and Allen (1993) identify that, “Member checking provides for credibility by allowing members of stakeholding groups to test categories, interpretations, and conclusions” (p. 142). They identify a key strategy for member check as, “furnishing copies of various parts of the inquiry report to various stakeholding groups and asking for a written or oral commentary on the contents” (p.142). Member check feedback provided validation and/or suggestions for Domain, Subcategory and/or Example inclusion in the domain and taxonomic analyses conducted. Spradley notes that, “It is well to recognize that taxonomies always *approximate* the way informants have organized their cultural knowledge. They are not exact replicas of that knowledge” (1979, p. 150). The taxonomic analysis for this data set is included in Figure 1. Experts from the Domain analysis are included in Table 5, and the complete Domain Analysis for this data set can be found in Appendix D.

Figure 1: Taxonomic Analysis - Focus Group (Tasks 1 and 2)

Focus Group Tasks 1 and 2

1. **Semantic Relationship/Cover Term: Instructional Leadership**

    a. Attributes of instructional leadership
        ii. Leadership style – shared leadership model
        iii. Learning relationship with staff – co-learner
        iv. Monitoring implementation and progress
        v. Visioning and goal setting
        vi. Supporting professional learning for staff
    b. Evidence of Instructional Leadership
        i. Positive impact on staff
        ii. Positive impact on students

2. **Semantic Relationship/Cover Term: Support for Instructional Leaders**

    a. Strategies to support principal growth
        i. Support of peers
        ii. Supports are comprehensive and ongoing
        iii. Creating a learning culture for principals – autonomy
    b. Existing system structures that support principal learning and growth
        i. Formal and informal structures
    c. Supportive conditions necessary to support a learning culture for principals
        i. Sharing and learning with peers
        ii. Collaboration and critical friendship

3. **Semantic Relationship/Cover Term: Changes in Principal Beliefs and Understandings about Instructional Leadership**

    a. Changes in leadership role/ style
        i. Shift from lead knower to lead learner
        ii. Shift to shared leadership model
        iii. Shift in role and responsibilities of the principal
    b. Changes in principal power and control
        i. Empowering teachers/ others
        ii. Providing for teacher voice in learning
    c. Supporting conditions for learning
        i. Risk-taking, non-threatening environment
        ii. Positive culture of caring and support

Table 5: Excerpt from Domain Analysis - Focus Group (Task 1 and 2)

2a) Means-End: X is a way to do Y – Support for Instructional Leaders		
Domain	Subcategory	Examples
Is a kind of strategy/ mechanism to support principal growth in Instructional Leadership	Support of peers	• small groups of principals (triads) to talk about school's needs; helping principals address 'struggles'; • witness the frustrations/ growth plans/ strategies of others; • opportunities to dialogue at system meetings; Share – learn by visiting other schools; • descriptive feedback for principals; mentor/coach. • need Principal Teams to be allowed
	Supports for principals are comprehensive and ongoing	• support needs to be ongoing, not a one-shot deal - a learning process; • can't be piecemeal, needs to be specific and in-depth, based on their need. Going deeper for mastery; • separate administrator support during Visible Learning sessions to allow us to talk/ grow/ discuss in small groups while our teams grow; seeking triad; dialogue with colleagues – time to ask the burning question based on our own personal need as we identify it;
	Creating a learning culture for principals	• trusting environments in which administrators feel comfortable speaking up as we want our staff to engage in those conversations which challenge current thought. We need to feel safe taking risks with our own colleagues and senior administration; • making it safe – okay not to know; • celebrate risk-taking; Trust: some of us have been burned by untrustworthy colleagues – culture of gossip. This is an obstacle – sometimes inaccurate, judgmental commentary reaches the ears of other Principals & even the senior team; • admission - Safe to say we don't have all the answers. We have the collective knowledge to answer our questions. • self-determination; authenticity; • ownership/ autonomy; self-awareness; • accountability – structure that keeps principals accountable to their common focus; • safe, supportive environment - common focus; • trust is enormous in this process;
	Empowering the principal – autonomy for personal and school learning	• listen to the suggestions of those asking for it-an authentic voice; • by honouring the learner and what they want / need to learn – self direction, self-determination – value of our voice; • making the system responsive to learning needs of schools instead of the other way around – on our way!! • ownership– principals & teachers own the learning together • how do we determine [our own] needs?

Figure 1 shares the emerging patterns from Phase 1 of this study. Focus Group participant responses were coded into three domains: 1) Instructional Leadership - attributes and evidence; 2) support for instructional leaders - system supports and learning conditions for principals; and 3) changes in principal beliefs about Instructional Leadership.

Participants shared a description of the instructional leader role as one with a complex and broad set of attributes. Key elements of Instructional Leadership were often associated with a focus on developing positive, productive and supportive relationships with staff, engaging with staff as a co-learner, and engaging with staff through a shared approach to leadership. The effects or 'evidence' of Instructional Leadership were categorized by their positive impact on staff, or students. Specific participant comments include:

P: Instructional Leadership skills include asking questions, facilitating the leaning of others and letting go of control.

P: Instructional leaders need to address the obstacles to learning, engage in 'courageous conversations' with staff, and state a bold vision that includes the belief that all students can learn.

P: Traits of effective instructional leaders include: resiliency, bravery, strategic, positivity, caring, intentionality, boldness, vulnerability, intelligence ….

P: I know I've been successful when staff are open and willing to reflect on practice and support and challenge each other through partnerships.

P: Principals and teachers now own the learning together. We are no longer the 'fountain of knowledge'. My job is to be a co-learner with staff.

Participant responses also focused on the construct of support for the growth and development of principals as instructional leaders. The data set revealed the participants' focus on: 1) the importance of peer support; 2) existing system/district

level supports available to principals; and 3) the nature of the learning culture of principals, as necessary conditions for instructional leader growth and development. 'Principals helping principals' emerged as a clear trend across participants. In formal and informal networks, triads and principal learning teams, as well as through opportunities to simply share and dialogue with colleagues, the role of peers was identified as an essential element of principal support. Participants also shared the critical importance of a safe, open and trusting system learning culture for principals as a necessary component of principal support. The Focus Group also identified a wide variety of activities and structures that served to support their personal learning in the core skills, stance and understandings of Instructional Leadership. The district's School Support Visit process and Visible Learning Model, as well as formal Student Work Study and Collaborative Inquiry Learning – Mathematics initiatives, and more general, System Principals' Meetings, collaborative learning and Professional Learning Community activities, were also shared as effective system-sponsored supports for principals. Significant participant response also focused on the conditions necessary to create and maintain an effective, positive and supportive 'culture of learning' for principals. The data set revealed two clear patterns across the Focus Group. The first was an emerging understanding that the nature of Instructional Leadership work, and Instructional Leadership learning required a social commitment and approach. Participants identified the need for 'critical friendship,' feedback from peers, and learning together with colleagues. Secondly, principal participants identified the culture of the system – particularly the degree to which principal learning situations could be characterized as open, risk-free, trusting and

non-threatening, as an essential factor in their growth and development. Sample participant responses include:

P: I've learned that I cannot do this alone. I rely on my colleagues for support to assist in this process.

P: Only with honest and open dialogue - conversations and meetings that build on trust, can people feel they can take risks, experiment with practices and give over control to those who can make a difference.

P: I've learned that there is power in vulnerability, and there is strength in humility.

P: I've learned about the importance of transparency and the creation of a risk free environment for teachers, students and principals, because that leads to real change.

P: Providing opportunities for principals to dialogue and work together in a non-threatening, trusting environment is the key to our needs and growth.

The final domain that emerged from Phase 1 of the research methodology was the concept of new, changing or emerging principal beliefs about Instructional Leadership – the idea that what I now believe and understand about Instructional Leadership is different from my earlier or previous collection of beliefs and understandings. Participant principals identified three areas in which their views and perspectives about Instructional Leadership had evolved or changed over recent time: 1) leadership style; 2) the construct of power and control in leadership; and 3) in the necessary learning conditions required to do the work of Instructional Leadership.

Analysis of the data set revealed a consistent trend that respondents identified the core Instructional Leadership tasks, goals and stance as being rooted in a model of leadership that shared leadership practices and distributed the work of planning, implementing and monitoring a student achievement focus with a wide variety of 'others'. Participants identified a fundamental change in the role of school leaders in

the learning relationship with staff - a shift in the role of principal as the expert, or 'lead knower', to the description of the principal as a facilitator of the learning of others, and as the principal as a co-learner with staff. Participating principals further identified a specific shift in the role of positional/ hierarchical power in their work as instructional leaders. Identification of the value of empowering others, seeking input from staff, and cultivating ownership and responsibility for leadership in others, was a clear pattern.

The final subcategory identified in the domain: changing beliefs and understandings about the role of the principal as instructional leader, was a trend of principal recognition that the new role of the principal included the intentional cultivation of a culture of learning in their school community. Actively engaging in activities, conversations and tasks with teachers to build this learning culture was a common goal shared by the Focus Group. Sample participant responses include:

P: I used to think that the principal had all of the answers, but now I consider myself the lead learner in the school and that I don't know all of the answers.

P: I've learned that Instructional Leadership is about collective ownership and responsibility.

P: Now I know that I need to consult teachers more, collaborate more, and consult more than ever before. Resistance comes when people feel that you don't know them, or care about what they do.

P: I now understand that successful changes in teacher practice require multi levels of support which included emotional and motivational support accompanied by multiple opportunities for guided practice.

P: I've learned that this is a relationship business. Instructional Leadership is not about "delivering the goods" – it's about finding out where people are and where they need to go.

Phase 1: Focus Group Activities – Research Stage 2

In Research Stage 2 of the Focus Group activities, the 10 participating principals received an eight item, open-ended questionnaire. Figure 2 identifies the questions provided. Nine of the 10 participants completed the survey and returned it, electronically to the researcher. Participant responses were aggregated by the question which was asked, and then coded and recoded through Spradley's (1979) domain, taxonomic and componential analysis procedures. Completed domain and taxonomic analyses were given to Student Achievement Officers for member check purposes.

Figure 2: Focus Group – Individual Survey Questions

Focus Group – Individual Survey Questions

1. Describe the actions that you take as a principal that constitute instructional leadership to you. " I am being an instructional leader when I …" ; "I am most effective as an instructional leader when …"
2. What do these actions look like/sound like when you do them?
3. Do you/what do you – reference as a model or guide for instructional leadership? Are there sources/resources for instructional leadership that you refer to, follow or try to emulate?
4. How do you monitor your growth and development in these areas?
5. What components of the School Support Visit process (formally and informally; when you were visited, or when you visit) have contributed to your growth in these areas?
6. How have you grown and developed as an instructional leader over time? Describe your journey through this process. What were the challenges that you faced, the key questions that you addressed, and the understandings that you developed?
7. What is different about your current understanding of instructional leadership from your earlier understanding?
8. What supports do you need (actions do you need to undertake) to continue to grow and develop as an instructional leader?

The taxonomic analysis for this data set is included in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Taxonomic Analysis – Focus Group Individual Questionnaire

Focus Group Individual Questionnaire Responses

1. **Semantic Relationship/Cover Term: Instructional Leadership**
    a. Attributes of instructional leadership
        i. Identifying the learning needs of students and staff
        ii. Engaging in personal learning
        iii. Engagement as a co-learner with staff
        iv. Monitoring implementation and progress
        v. Creating the supporting conditions necessary for a learning culture
        vi. Maintaining a focus on teaching and learning goals
        vii. Improving/ changing teacher practice – pedagogical change
        viii. Intentionally seeking and responding to student voice
    b. Evidence of Instructional Leadership
        i. Evidence of a learning culture – teacher collaboration, principal as co-learner, leadership focus on culture
2. **Semantic Relationship/Cover Term: Instructional Leadership models or frameworks**
    a. Leadership models to follow
        i. Formal structures, models or frameworks
        ii. Informal structures, models or frameworks
3. **Semantic Relationship/Cover Term: Monitoring growth and development in Instructional Leadership**
    a. Monitoring strategies
        i. Personal/ reflection
        ii. "Dialogue with peers/ others – seeking feedback
        iii. Personal growth plan
        iv. Monitor school improvement plan progress
4. **Semantic Relationship/Cover Term: Support Visit Process**
    a. How hosting a SSV contributes to the growth of principals
        i. Identifying a school needs assessment and improvement plan
        ii. Pressure and support
        iii. Feedback from the SSV report
    b. How being on the system SSV Team contributes to the growth of principals
        i. Deepening personal understanding
        ii. Access to multiple examples/ "comparatives"
        iii. Understanding/ developing multiple "lenses'
        iv. Understanding/ developing multiple "perspectives
        v. Developing/ modelling/ providing for a learning culture
        vi. Supported the construction of a system-wide focus/ perspective
5. **Semantic Relationship/Cover Term: Changes in participants' beliefs and understandings about Instructional Leadership**
    a. Participants' new or current beliefs about Instructional Leadership
        i. Shift in beliefs about the roles/ responsibilities of the principal
        ii. Cultivating a learning culture
        iii. Shift in style of leadership to shared leadership
        iv. Shift from principal as lead knower to lead (co) learner

6. Semantic Relationship/Cover Term: Support for Instructional Leaders

a. Strategies to support principal growth
   i. Support of peers
   ii. System supports – personnel, structures
   iii. Creating a learning culture for principals

The taxonomic analysis (Figure 3) reveals the 6 domains that emerged from the Focus Group individual questionnaire date set. Participants explored: 1) the attributes and evidence of Instructional Leadership; 2) existing leadership models and frameworks; 3) strategies to monitor personal growth and development in Instructional Leadership skill and capacity; 4) the benefits associated with engaging as a principal in the district's School Support Visit process; 5) new, changing or evolving principal beliefs about Instructional Leadership; and 6) the strategies necessary to support principals as they seek to grow as Instructional Leaders.

Participants described essential elements of the instructional leader's role as including: 1) the identification of student, and concomitantly staff, learning needs; 2) focusing on personal learning and capacity building and engaging in the learning process with staff; 3) maintaining a focus on, and monitoring the implementation of pedagogical goals and their impact on student outcomes; and 4) explicitly engaging in activities which serve to develop and nurture a positive culture of learning in their school, a culture that includes a growing respect for the role of student voice. Evidence of Instructional Leadership was described by the participants as being manifested in the culture of the school, including the degree to which principals engage with staff in the learning process, and the degree to which teachers

collaborate with each other, as examples. Specific samples of principal responses include:

P: I set the course for student improvement by working with staff to examine a range of data and other information – then to collectively come to an understanding about needs, and the direction we should take.

P: I am part of the learning. I tell the staff that I don't have all the answers, but that we will learn them together. I seek to personally learn as much as I can around our identified goals, so that I can knowledgably respond to the questions and the learning of my team.

P: I need to continue to be the lead learner, but I also need to build relationships, gain trust, and learn about the students in the school. I have to find out where my staff is in relation to professional learning, and where they need to go.

P: We need to encourage risk taking, as we do with our students, and recognize successes and encourage staff to share with others.

P: Evidence of a learning culture would be collaborative work – teachers not afraid to take a risk and perhaps fail; teaches talking to each other about their learning.

None of the 9 participants articulated that they followed a specific model, framework or source as a primary guide for Instructional Leadership. Participants referenced a variety of authors (M. Fullan, D. Reeves, K. Leithwood, as examples); programs (Ministry's Turn Around Program, the district's Starting Strong Program); resources (Ontario Leadership Framework, LNS monographs), and sources (Principal Meetings, superintendents, colleagues) for information that they found useful. No significant common patterns, trends or sources were evident from participants, despite being in the same district. Table 6 is an excerpt from the domain analysis for leadership models or frameworks.

Table 6: Excerpt from Domain Analysis – Leadership Frameworks or Models

2a) Strict Inclusion: X is a kind of Y – Instructional Leadership models or frameworks		
Domain	Subgroup	Examples
Is a kind of leadership model or framework that participants follow or emulate	Formal structures, models or frameworks	• I was very fortunate as a vice principal to be involved in the Ministry's Turnaround program; • I was part of the Starting Strong Program that matched me with a retired superintendent; • CIL has had a great impact on me. I saw it working so well for the students and began using the same principles for our teachers, this is a constructivist approach; • The Ontario Leadership Framework • My Critical Friends Group (12 admin meet monthly and are dedicated to discussing and resolving problems of practise) • Putting Ontario's Leadership into Action • My extended PLN (connections I have made through my work as an Academy class member of Learning Forward)
	Informal structures, models or frameworks	• I also have a network of colleagues that I am in regular contact with; • Information, strategies, ideas from Principal Meetings; • My collaborative work with my instructional coach has been very important. Instructional Leadership is not something you can do alone so I have been able to rely on my instructional coach and a few key teachers to help in the implementation of our action steps. • Ministry documents such as the Guides to Effective Literacy Instruction, Growing Success, Caring and Safe Schools, etc. • My complete Principal PLN through twitter; • Another very important source has been the formal and informal mentor networks that I have been part of; • Some influential works would be Fullan on change leadership, Muhamad on understanding school culture, Marzano on effective practice, Reeves on implementation, Hargreaves and Leithwood – academically on leadership. I wouldn't say I follow a model but I am aware of the leadership framework which acts of a kind of gauge for me. • Going from Good to Great – High Yield Strategies – got this a few years ago from a ministry visit from someone –it helps me every year to focus and refocus! I have attached my notes because I refer to this often through the year and use it with teachers especially as I do my walk-throughs; • I also have my own "homegrown model" – this model incorporates frequent and numerous visits to the classroom as well as numerous conversations with the teacher – the conversations are important because the message is received and I also gain a great deal of insight as to where the teacher is on his/her growth and development;

Participants identified a variety of strategies that they use to monitor their own growth and development in the skills and actions of Instructional Leadership. Consistent trends and patterns across participants were not evident, nor were formal

structures, programs or procedures for collecting evidence and evaluating personal growth. Some mention was made about the use of a Personal Growth Plan as a mandated component of the Principal Performance Appraisal process. Principal responses focused on the role of personal reflection, engagement in discussions and dialogue with others and with peers about progress, seeking feedback during leadership activities and using the results of pedagogical implementation and student outcome measures as a proxy for Instructional Leadership effectiveness. Sample participant responses include:

P: Mostly I just remain highly self-critical which motivates me to continually improve and develop. I reflect on strengths and weaknesses and try to limit avoidance behaviour around aspects of leadership which are less comfortable.

P: Many times when we leave a professional learning session, I will have an 'exit card' that polls the staff on what they have learned and where they need to go. This also provides me with the feedback that I need to grow and develop.

P: I use 'critical friends' to keep me honest to my goals, help me re-frame, re-evaluate, change, resolve, inform, etc.

P: I revisit my annual Growth Plan regularly to see what I also committed to completing.

P: I set goals for my own learning. I track and monitor the achievement of goals.

The Focus Group interview data set reveals clear patterns with respect to the construct of the district's School Support Visit model – a multi-staged process led by the board's School Effectiveness Lead which includes elements of a school needs assessment and determination of a pedagogical focus, followed by an in situ observation of classroom teaching and learning practices conducted by the School Effectiveness Lead and a System Support Team comprised of principals within the district. Participants identified benefits from engaging in this process, both as a school

that is being visited by the System Support Team, and as a member of the visiting and observing support team.

Hosting a School Support Visit was identified as being helpful in assisting schools to develop a deep and authentic needs assessment and improvement plan. The “pressure” of having an external team observing classroom practice was also identified as helpful to principals in their overall Instructional Leadership goals, since it was framed within a broader context of support.

Engaging as a member of the System Support Team with a responsibility for observing and providing feedback to other schools was consistently identified as a singularly powerful strategy for supporting principal growth in Instructional Leadership. Participants, in the role of the support team, worked in a team setting under the direction of the School Effectiveness Lead. This experience supported principals in deepening their personal understanding on a host of pedagogical and leadership issues and provided opportunities to view multiple schools, teachers and principals engaging in the process of implementing similar pedagogical or leadership foci. Participants consistently stated that the most powerful element of this process was the opportunity to engage in deep, authentic dialogue with a peer(s) about the teaching and learning observations that they co-experienced. Principals identified that this task assisted them in developing an understanding of different lenses – different approaches and areas of focus for an observation; as well as different perspectives – differing beliefs and values about the importance or effectiveness of a co-observed event. Survey responses also consistently recognized the role that participation on the System Support Team played in assisting principals in engaging

in, and providing a model for, an effective learning culture – promoting and encouraging risk-taking, collaboration and a co-learning stance; as well as in developing a broader appreciation and understanding of a system or district perspective for their work. Sample principal remarks include:

P: The School Support Visit process was a vital part of the growth that happened at my school. We really examined closely the needs of our students and where we needed to go. The staff really embraced the goals that we set and worked hard to meet those goals.

P: The feedback and report is still being used today as we work on our SIP.

P: It is really about the opportunity to be in someone else's school and learn from walking around and talking to others – modelling practice, and questioning it.

P: I have also learned a great deal on the visits that I have been on. Some of it comes in the form of validation of the things that are happening at my own school.

P: I can come back to my school and speak confidently about what is happening in the system, because I have seen it first-hand.

The Focus Group individual survey data revealed that participants identified several common areas where their beliefs, values and/or understandings about Instructional Leadership have changed over recent time. Commonalities were found across participants with respect to perceived new or different responsibilities for the principal as an instructional leader, with a belief that the new work of principals requires an explicit focus on cultivating a learning culture in a school, and in the way in which school leaders interact with others – specifically a shift to shared leadership beliefs and practices, and the restructuring of the principal's role in the learning relationship of the school with a move from the concept of the principal as the lead knower, to a practice of co-learning with staff. Sample principal responses include:

P: I used to think that the answers came from experts. I now know that they come from us, in practice … Finding the answers starts by looking at the problem from the student desk and seeking tailored solutions that are put into practice and then evaluated for their impact on what matters – improving outcomes for students.

P: I guess what I have truly learned is that adults need to feel safe and unthreatened, probably as much, if not more, than children, if we want deep learning to occur. The older the person, the more the fear of being perceived as being 'wrong' surrounds the person.

P: Teachers must have a sense of ownership and students must also be invested in the school focus. The learning that takes place has to be differentiated.

P: We used to think that we had to know everything and do all the leading. We now realize that the vision is shared and leadership is shared.

P: My earlier understanding was that I had to be perfect and know all of the answers. But if I had to be perfect, so did my staff. They could not allow me to see them in any other way. And, we all know that perfection is a myth, or an illusion at best.

The final domain that emerged from the Focus Group individual questionnaire was the concept of 'support for instructional leaders'. Participant responses identified trends in the roles that peers and the district play in supporting the growth and development of principals. A description of the supportive conditions necessary for principals – the learning culture of the profession, was also described. Participants identified the need to engage with peers in a variety of settings – formal professional learning teams and networks, as well as informally at system meetings and through school visits. System personnel, primarily the Instructional Coach and the Supervisory Officer, were noted as important supports for principals. The system was also identified as having a support role in the organization and facilitation of a wide variety of structures and resources, including the provision of teacher release time for Professional Learning Community activities, the structuring of school network or 'hub' meetings, and the continuation of data, research and professional development supports. Sample participant comments include:

P: I need to continue to talk to my colleagues and learn about effective techniques used in their school. I need to continue to grow my network of colleagues to include those that are not like-minded.

P: Meeting and talking with my colleagues is an important part of my growth and development.

P: I need a supportive Senior Administration which allows me the opportunity to direct this [time] in my own way.

P: I need to be allowed to make a mistake and learn from them as I go – in a comfortable way.

P: I need to be able to freely visit my colleague's schools and talk with them to learn from and with them.

Phase 2 Reporting of Findings

Phase 2: Small Group Activity – Group (4) Interviews

Phase 2 of the research methodology focused on four principals who were randomly selected from the Phase 1 component of the study. Case reports later in this chapter will introduce these participants and explore the personal narratives they shared about their individual Instructional Leadership journeys. In addition to the individual interviews which comprise the content of the case reports, the four participants met with this researcher on two occasions to engage in small group interviews of approximately 70 minutes each. The interviews were recorded digitally and transcribed. This unique data set was coded for domain and taxonomic analyses, and provided an opportunity for participants to begin to immerse themselves in the research foci of this study. Completed domain and taxonomic analyses were forwarded to a Ministry of Education Student Achievement Officer for the purpose of member check.

Three domains emerged from the coded and re-coded data of the small group interviews. Participant patterns were identified with respect to: 1) Instructional Leadership; 2) monitoring growth and development; and 3) supporting the growth of principals as Instructional Leaders. Figure 4 shows the taxonomic analysis for this small group interview data set.

Figure 4: Taxonomic Analysis – Phase 2 (Small Group Interviews)

Taxonomic Analysis – Small Group Interviews

1. **Semantic Relationship/Cover Term: Instructional Leadership**
    a. Goals of Instructional Leadership
        i. Improving/ changing teacher practice
        ii. Cultivating teacher mindset
        iii. Creating a learning culture in school
    b. Attributes of Instructional Leadership
        i. Knowing your building – understanding the teaching/ learning context
        ii. Nurturing positive relationships
        iii. Cultivating teacher 'buy in'/ ownership
        iv. Maintaining a focus on teaching/ learning goals
    c. Change in the role of the principal
        i. Engagement as a co-learner
        ii. Shift from lead knower to lead learner
        iii. Change in leadership style - shared leadership model
    d. Challenges facing principals as Instructional Leaders
        i. Workload/ competing priorities
2. **Semantic Relationship/Cover Term: Monitoring growth and development of Instructional Leaders**
    a. Challenges for principals in monitoring their growth and development
        i. Authentic feedback - hierarchy
        ii. Isolation
        iii. Ambiguity of the concept of Instructional Leadership
3. **Semantic Relationship/ Cover Term: Support for Instructional Leaders**
    a. Strategies to support growth and development
        i. School Support Visit process
        ii. Support from peers

The small group data set differentiated the 'goals' that principals have for Instructional Leadership - improving the pedagogy of teachers, cultivating a mindset

of responsiveness in teachers, and creating a supportive culture of learning within their school - from the 'attributes' of Instructional Leadership. These key attributes were reported to include an understanding of the teaching and learning context of one's school, nurturing positive relationships throughout the school, and maintaining a focus (and requiring others to maintain a focus) on the identified teaching and learning goals of the school. Participants identified that the new work of the principal required a shift in the roles and responsibilities of the school leader, particularly with respect to engaging with staff from a stance of co-learner. Leadership actions and intents were also consistently identified as residing in the shared leadership model. The unique challenges of workload and competing interests and priorities also emerged from the data. An excerpt from the domain analysis is presented in Table 7.

Table 7: Excerpt from Domain Analysis - Small Group Interview

1c) Strict Inclusion: X is a kind of Y – Instructional Leadership		
Domain	Subgroup	Examples
Is a kind of statement about the shift in the role of the principal as an Instructional Leader	Engagement as a co-learner	• I think they have to see us as being a co-learner. • The fact is, we are learning along with them and if we're going to be cooperating then we have to build those relationships so that they're happy not just collaborating with us but with their peers. • That's some of the discussions that we've had already is that we all are starting at the same place and we're going to learn together. • That co-learning piece has become so important. Even when I first got my principalship one of the first things I said to the staff was, "When I was a vice-principal I used to run to the principal to ask the answers. Now I'm the principal so who am I going to ask? So we're going to learn it together.
	Shift from lead knower to lead learner	• I'm getting better at admitting & learning to ask for help and being okay with that. • If we're expecting our kids to be able to say it's okay for them not to know, we want our teachers to be able to say that they don't know and we want them to adopt more of a lifelong learning inquiry base, then we have to be willing to do that too. To me that's what it's all about is we've come to a point now where we know that we're always going to be learning. There's never going to be anybody that's doing everything perfectly and we have to just be okay with that. • We keep saying, "We don't have all the answers." Used to be, back in the day, the principal was supposed to know everything. Well, it isn't that way. It should never have been that way anyway. • I'm going to say that I think I'm more confident now with the Instructional

		Leadership and the reason I say that is when I first started I would have told you that I needed to have the answers. • I thought I had to know everything. Being a vice-principal there I thought if teachers came to me then I had to have the answers. • I think I've learned along the way that I don't need to have all the answers, that there are people out there that have the answers and I can find out who those people are and get the help that we need for the staff. • The older I get the more I don't know.
d) Is a kind of statement about the shift in leadership style and focus associated with Instructional Leadership	Shift in leadership style - shared leadership model	• Lucy West alluded to that in that workshop too, that if you're dictatorial you're not going to get very far. • If our leadership style is dictatorial and we say that they have to do something and they're unhappy, unfortunately that then translates into the classroom environment. • I'm going back to my experience again, that shared leadership piece too, I have a lot of people that I can go to and I didn't even have to say anything anymore. Those people would go out and say, "Okay, this is what we need to do." • I believe that's simply because I used to think I needed to do all of it by myself. Now I know I can't do it all by myself. I need other people to support me in it. • I'm going to go back to talk about moving teachers. I'm uncomfortable with that as an analogy because to me it is to some degree the teacher that decides where they need to move to and I don't come in as an instructional leader and determine where the teacher needs to move. I try to support the teacher in their own movement & so the direction in many cases is determined by them. • You also talked about empowering others- for me a big portion of growing into the Instructional Leadership role was empowering others to do the work that they could do that I didn't need to be doing all the time. • That's another learning curve too. Letting go of things.

Sample participants comments within this domain include:

P: I think what we're doing is shifting teachers' perspectives on what they bring to the classroom.

P: If [teachers] have the spirit of inquiry and a willingness to try something new, then I think we've done our jobs as Instructional Leaders.

P: We need to be aware not only of the student need which is driving the teacher need, but the teacher need which is driving our actions.

P: If people aren't comfortable, they're not going to take risks and they're not going to be willing to try new things.

P: If we're expecting our kids to be able to say it's okay for them not to know, we want our teachers to be able to say that they don't know and we want them to adopt more of a life-long learning, inquiry base, then we have to be willing to do that too.

Data from the small group interview process revealed emerging patterns about the challenges that principals face, particularly with respect to monitoring their progress. Participants discussed the unique position of the principal within the organization – hierarchically positioned as a supervisor to everyone else in their building, and yet supervised by someone without a deep knowledge of this specific context. Principals described that authentic feedback was often difficult to secure in an environment where the principal is ultimately the appraiser of those who would offer feedback. Isolation from other administrative peers also proved to be a challenge to receiving peer-based feedback or engaging in reflective dialogue with other principals. Finally, the ambiguity of the construct of Instructional Leadership, and the lack of agreed upon descriptors and shared beliefs meant that conversations about monitoring leadership practices were often confounded by a lack of agreement of what those practices could and should be and what evidence of their implementation would look like. Sample responses from the small group interview include:

P: I think it's very difficult to find efficacy in a role where all of the messaging we get about our performance comes from the people who are working for us for the most part.

P: So even the presence of the VP in and of itself, doesn't guarantee that you'll have feedback … it may be that you have a vice principal that's so deeply impacted by the hierarchical nature of the role, that they don't feel comfortable being open.

P: [Monitoring] relies almost exclusively on our own perception. That is a challenge, I think in the job, because we don't have a supervisor who we readily report to, who we readily work with, and I think we are left to our own devices to determine if we're getting better, and how.

P: The ambiguity of the concept is a tough one, because you don't know. We try to be self-reflective and say, "Okay, I think I'm doing a good job, because I'm seeing this in the school, or I'm hearing these conversations," But there are other times too, when you're out with colleagues and you start talking about what you're

doing and you think, "Gosh, am I doing the right thing in my own building?" It's so big, sometimes you're not sure. You're not sure yourself, whether it's happening or not.

The small group interview data set revealed a final domain – support for principals as instructional leaders. Participants identified the district's School Support Visit process, and the support they receive from peers, as common and effective mechanisms to support their growth. Engaging with colleagues in discourse about classroom observations was consistently identified as a beneficial practice. Networking with colleagues was also identified as important. Sample interview excerpts include:

P: The second [strategy] would be in a leadership role, being involved in the School Support Visits. Going around and seeing the classroom practice, but then also discussing the classroom practices with other leaders. I found that to be extremely helpful, also.

P: [Participant #1] spoke earlier of the value of being together for the long car rides to Toronto, and I think coaching was what was happening. What made that valuable was we were quite willing to share our problems, but we were also happy to, and comfortable to say, "Have you tried this?" or, "You're not thinking about this aspect of the problem." That really is coaching. Not hierarchical coaching because we're coaching each other, but we were, I think, pushing each other's thinking. I think it's better if it's not hierarchical coaching.

Phase 2 Reporting of Findings – Case Reports

In Phase 2 of this study, the researcher engaged in case analyses of the four selected participants. Each principal interacted with the researcher in three distinct interviews. These interviews occurred in August 2012, October 2012, and April/May 2013. Each 60 to 75 minute individual interview was recorded and transcribed to allow for detailed analysis, review, coding and recoding. The data set that emerged from these transcriptions was supplemented by participant written reflections that followed the first interview. The nature of the interview methodology was open-ended, semi-structured and recursive in nature. Following the themes, interests and emerging narrative of each participant, these interviews served to visit and re-visit the essential research questions of this study in a variety of ways over time.

A case report will be provided for each of the four participants with a goal of effectively capturing the rich, comprehensive and evolving story that emerged over the course of the participant-researcher interactions from August 2012 to May 2013. Chapters one and three of this study highlight the efficacy of the case report method for reporting the findings of Naturalistic Inquiry. These case reports, supplemented by the domain, taxonomic and component analyses provided thus far, are intended to provide an accurate portrait of the narrative experienced by the researcher and participants. The case report format will focus on researcher description and interpretation. To achieve Lincoln and Guba's (1985) goals of applying an emic lens to the study, and effectively demonstrating the interaction between researcher and participant, an extensive use of transcript excerpts is included in these reports.

Case Report – Participant 1

Participant 1 has served as an administrator for the host district for eight years. She taught for an additional 12 years prior to these leadership positions in the areas of Primary, Junior and Special Education. Her administrative career includes serving as a vice principal in two schools, for two years each, before assuming her first principalship. Participant 1 began the 2012 academic year in her fourth year as a principal of an urban school in the district. The population of approximately 300 students registered in classes from Junior Kindergarten to Grade 8, makes this a relatively small school in the board. In addition to the JK to Grade 8 program, there were two specific classes for students with formally identified special education requirements. In January of 2013, midway the through the data collection phase of this study, Participant 1 was moved to a different elementary school in the system to replace a retiring principal. This new school's population was almost double the size at approximately 600 students, and would be deemed as a medium to large sized Junior Kindergarten to Grade 8 elementary school in the district.

Participant 1 described her new school as, "recently built on a central philosophy of environmental stewardship. The staff, students and parent community take great pride in the new idealism of the school. That being said, the community struggles to adapt an Eco-friendly way of life and continues, like most communities, to hold strongly to a lifestyle of disposable products and the need to drive children to and from school. The education of environmentalism appears to rest with the young.

The community is socioeconomically diverse. We draw from a highly educated, professional sector to a middle class population and an equal mix of families living in subsidized housing. Experiences and opportunities for the children vary widely and the school is seeing a strong need to provide these experiences for the children. Both the student and staff population is growing. Families are drawn to the school on the belief that a new school provides a better education with newer technologies and broader opportunities. As such, the staff work to make this perception a reality. A blend of the old and new are the expected and the staff are committed to bringing the best of all worlds to our students."

A comprehensive analysis of the interviews and written reflections of the interactions with Participant 1 revealed a highly reflective and articulate educator who consistently engaged in a deeply personal and passionate approach to sharing her thoughts, beliefs and understandings. Although clearly comfortable expressing her thinking on a significant breadth of ideas and prompts, a pattern emerged over time that identified a clear and consistent message about her role, effectiveness and interests in engaging in the work of the instructional leader. Over the course of three interviews, a change in assignment, and nine months of elapsed time, our key discussions frequently distilled to a core structure and focus on her goals and intentions for this work, the tasks that she deemed essential to her success, and the supports that she valued or wished for as a principal. Our discussion also explored her perceptions of the changes in the principal's role, and her personal growth over time.

The goals of Instructional Leadership shared by Participant 1 were rooted primarily in the two key areas of developing a highly effective and supportive culture of learning within her school(s), and then using this cultural requisite to inform pedagogical change to meet the needs of students The focus of both pedagogical change and student outcomes, was consistently described as a function of 'precision' – of matching the specific learning needs of each child with the necessary assessment and teaching practices of adults. Participant 1 consistently advocated for the intentional gathering of authentic voice – student and teacher, as an essential and fundamental value of her leadership. Construction of the 'learning culture' that she so deeply seeks is rooted in her belief that the vision, and the responsibility for that vision – planning, implementing and monitoring, must be a shared exercise with staff. Staff 'ownership' was highlighted as one of the most frequently discussed concepts over the course of these interactions. Explicitly noting, nurturing and planning for shifts in the mindset of teachers was viewed as the work of Instructional Leadership. This mindset was one of ownership, of responsibility to the learner, and of responsiveness of pedagogy. Participant 1 spoke of the urgency she felt, and the concern she had at the lack of urgency that others felt, when it comes to teachers, and all staff owning this journey of student learning. A second key element of this learning culture goal was an emphasis on developing a collaborative environment for staff, such that they intentionally shared, co-planned, and accepted each other in an open, trusting learning stance.

Participant 1 identified a key role that she plays as an instructional leader as being one of alignment, coherence and organization for staff. She used the metaphor

of principal as puzzle master, principal as staff researcher, principal as conductor, and principal as assimilator to describe her role in overseeing, connecting and integrating the complexity of tasks, priorities and agendas that make up the adult world of schools. Maintaining a focus, assisting others in sharing the focus, and monitoring the impact of pedagogical precision, were key attributes of her model of Instructional Leadership. Sample participant-researcher quotations are listed below. A more detailed sampling of this narrative is found in Appendix E.

R: Is there a common set of beliefs or understandings or values that you have as a goal for these teachers?

P: Own it. Own it. Own the learning. Own everything in the school and have that sense of urgency. This school, I've never been able to instill that sense of urgency. We've got ten months, and it's a sprint. We tend to sit back and think, "Oh, we've got ten months, a long time to get things done," but ten months and owning one child is a sprint to me.

P: I'd say probably the past five or six years, a major shift in us thinking about us owning the learning, till today where we are given that license to own the learning and direct the learning, so there's much more ownership and buy-in. From a leadership perspective within a school, I think you have more buy-in by your staff, it's not just the staff are necessarily, who always go to PD and come back with that information just for their classroom, but now it has become a school-wide thing. It makes me more intelligent about the conversations I'm having with teachers because we are learning it together, and we are trying it together, and I guess just because we own it.

R: Are there other bigger, broader kinds of goals you have around Instructional Leadership?

P: Ultimately student improvement, student achievement … but it's student achievement at that precise student's level.

P: For me the leadership is so individualized depending on which teacher you're talking about, I really believe just like a classroom that I have to be precise and individual with my teachers. Yes, we have overlying goals, but because we've built that relationship with the individuals, how can we precisely help each teacher move forward?

P: I think that there might be a piece missing. I think we need to honestly ask teachers what their instructional … how their instructional leaders support them,

because maybe we are doing what we think is right, but are… We are doing what we think is right for them, but are we asking them if what we are doing is right?

P: We can keep the ship on a straight road, because often times in education, because we have so much to deal with, we meander back and forth, we go from not necessarily initiative to initiative, but a reactive process where we deal with what the latest concern is on the table. Now we say, "No, this is our goal, this is what we are aiming for, or I'm going to stick with it."

P: I needed those new people to have a chance to have a voice, and I think that's part of the orchestration piece, is to make sure that all of the members there have a voice and that they're there representing their group so that their voice is sharing their population.

P: The other thing I needed to see within the school that I wasn't seeing was that they seemed to be working in islands of learning and I needed to see that school-wide approach to learning. How can I weave the learning so it's appropriate developmentally for all the levels, but still make it a school-wide focus?

Participant 1 spoke with specific detail about the changing role of the principal. When asked to reflect on her work as a vice principal, or her early work as a principal and to explore the apparent shift to an Instructional Leadership focus, Participant 1 specifically recalled involvement in the Ministry of Education's Turnaround Program as a watershed moment. She also shared an anecdote where her administrative mentor stated that he was unable to assist her, because he had no experience in this new work. Participant 1 also consistently referenced her efforts to engage in and model a shared leadership style, not merely to be less hierarchical, but because shared leadership is an essential element of her Instructional Leadership approach and a necessary condition for the broader cultural conditions which she espoused. Explicitly focusing on developing leadership in others and in distributing leadership tasks across the wider staff were intentional strategies. A fundamental change in the nature of the leader-learner relationship was also noted. Participant 1 spoke frequently of positioning herself, not as the lead knower - the one with the answers,

but as a co-learner, engaged as a peer with staff in the problem finding and problem solving cycle. Actively experiencing the problems of practice, from the perspective of the students' desks with teachers, was identified as a non-negotiable component of Instructional Leadership for Participant 1. She valued these experiences, not only for the specific content and pedagogical learning that they afforded her, but for the impact they had on her broader goals of cultivating a culture of learning for the adults in her school. Sample participant-researcher quotations are listed below. A more detailed sampling of this narrative is found in Appendix F.

R: Can you think of a time as a leader when the job you did didn't involve the kinds of things you're talking about now?

*P: Yeah, I can almost tell you to the day when I had that epiphany … [**] was my mentor back when I was first Principal at*** PS, and he met with me and I was talking to him about the initiatives that we were working on, and he had been retired for one year, and he, honestly, looked at me and said, "I have no idea what you're talking about; no idea." Things changed that rapidly, so to work back in the timeframe, that would have been six years ago, seven years ago. I'm not kidding when I say over the past five years the job has changed completely.*

P: I talk to some of my retired colleagues and I think that may be some of the reasons they decided that it was time to get out because the job had changed so much.

R: As a Vice Principal, were you an instructional leader?

P: That's a good question. Was I? No, I don't think so … that wasn't part of my experience.

R: In what ways have you earned, changed or grown in your style or approach to leadership?

P: Me as an instructional leader?… shared leadership, I think I didn't do that well before. I needed to ... I'm a control freak (laughs).

R: What do you do differently to ensure that kind of buy-in, that kind of distributed or shared leadership amongst a larger staff?

P: That's the point I'm at right now, and that's kind of my aha right now is I can just say at the last staff meeting, my voice was only heard for maybe a quarter of the

time where in the past it would've been my voice probably for probably up to 75% of the time, right, sometimes even 100%, mine or the VP's. Now I'm trying to find a way for those teacher's voices to be heard and different teacher voices from different perspectives at the staff meetings and the PD learning.

Participant 1 identified the essential role that her peers play in providing support to her as an instructional leader. The development of a small network of highly trusted peers was the most significant support structure that she identified. Participant 1 advocated strongly for the nurturing of a culture of learning for principals that paralleled the learning culture that she valued for teachers on her staff. Highlighting the significant contribution that trust, respect, honesty and openness played in the success of a true learning culture. Participant 1 explored the challenges that she identified in the broader culture of the principalship and the organizational culture in which she serves.

Participant 1 spoke in detail about the nature of the relationship between principal and supervisory officer. These exchanges explored how the complex goals and attributes of Instructional Leadership, the ambiguity of these elements and the positional hierarchy of teacher-principal-superintendent, leave principals vulnerable as they discover, innovate and implement their leadership approaches and activities. The role of the superintendent as an explicit support for principals as they develop and grow in Instructional Leadership was discussed in detail. Explicitly supporting principal risk-taking, reassuring school leaders of the instructional path they've chosen, and engaging in a co-learning stance with principals, were all identified as powerful strategies for superintendents to consider. Sample participant-researcher

quotations are listed below. A more detailed sampling of this narrative is found in Appendix G.

P: I've come to the epiphany … I can say that I formed the PLT with three other administrators from the perspective that we needed to emotionally support each other, but what I'm seeing now with going into the instructional rounds piece is I'm now going to select that PLT group to support what I'm doing here at my school. We have the colleagues that we can go to for emotional support and I'm not saying that these people won't be emotional support, but there's a division between them.

P: Reassurance from your supervisor makes you feel more confident. Having them say, "You know what? I know you're doing your best. You're running a good school," to the point where sometimes they even turn to you for advice, reciprocal advice. You must think if that person in that role is seeking out what I think, then they must not think I'm a total fool. I don't know about you, but I went through a time in the beginning when I had [retried superintendent] who I put on a pedestal, [a second retired superintendent] on a pedestal. I thought the world of them, but I was terrified of them. You did not want to let them down. I still have that feeling. I don't want to let my superiors down, but, I have more of a comfort, and I think that just comes with maturity.

R: What other work should and supervisory officers engage in co-learning because that's where learning is happening?

P: I want him to be part of the conversations, I want him to hear what the other teachers were saying.

R: How does the [SO] role need to change to best support this new work that you're doing?

P: I think there is a shift, I think it's happening and the SOs role, like everybody's role, is huge. I think they are trying to own their schools more, and when I say own their schools - know exactly what's going on as far as student achievement and staff support, that kind of thing, they really do. Where it used to be, sorry, but their ivory tower, they worked downtown, and you called them if you needed something, it's just like going to a bank, to do a withdrawal. [Now] there is more investment, but what do I need from them? I need them to listen.

An additional component of principal support that emerged from the comprehensive interviews with Participant 1 was the role that the district's School Support Visit process played in her personal growth and experience. Engaging with

peers in a supportive and positive learning culture provided frequent opportunities to learn with and from the observations and understandings of colleagues. Sharing observations and then refining and comparing what was viewed, and what was believed about those observations, created a context of professional discourse that was described as highly effective in deepening principal understanding. Providing access to multiple schools, multiple classrooms and multiple comparatives of instructional and assessment practices also allowed Participant 1 to hone and refine her beliefs and perspectives about instruction and Instructional Leadership. Sample participant-researcher quotations are listed below. A more detailed sampling of this narrative is found in Appendix H.

P: The biggest learning that happens for the instructional leader in a school support visit isn't … what the teachers are learning from it, or what the children are learning from it, it's what the Instructional Leaders are learning from it. When they sit down in that room with you and had the conversations about what they saw, and inquired about how the school was implementing something, but that was the thing that … was the biggest learning for them.

*P: I think we have evolved. I think we really have. The work that *** did was amazing. In the beginning it was the stages we needed to go through, like an inquiry itself, to see where we needed to go.*

P: I think all of us came in with our isolated viewpoint of what our schools looked like and what our viewpoint on, say, a strategy was, and when we go into other schools and we see how that team has looked at presenting that strategy or something we haven't even considered, they brought something new to the thinking.

R: Let's go deeper with that. Part of it is that you're seeing a strategy, a goal, in a different light, in multiple lights, so simply having access to see something more times becomes helpful?

P: Comparative. More comparative.

*P: Me as an observer, if I go in and I've seen Daily Five at *** PS, I know about Daily Five at my own school, I go and see Daily Five at **PS and ****PS, what I'm doing constantly as the observer is going, "How does that measure with what I'm*

doing? How does it measure with what my teachers are doing? How are they interpreting that delivery model differently than we are?" Then the conversations about that, because what we're constantly trying to do is say, "This is a good practice. This is a really good practice, but how can we refine it to make it the best practice?" I think that's what really came out of it. I think we are at the crux of being able to do that with teachers.

P: I think that's the only way we get better is having differing opinions, and some of the different opinions come from our understanding of what the purpose is. It's bringing refinement to our understanding sometimes, but it's also bringing refinement to the strategy as well or the process in the classroom.

As a final reflection on her growth as an instructional leader, Participant 1 reinforced the supportive culture that she values so deeply, as the critical element of her personal journey through Instructional Leadership. She spoke of the importance of trusting others, sharing her path, and developing her confidence and voice through their encouragement and support and through her active engagement as a co-learner with staff.

P: I think our instructional leader is still a fledging idea that many of us, depending on the day, feel very vulnerable about; about whether we are doing it right.

P: One of the biggest things in building confidence, and it might seem strange to you, is just more familiarity with your superiors, having them come out, and maybe some of it is just because some of my superiors now I've worked with as principal-vice principal; the [superintendent] coming in and sitting down and just saying, "I just want to have a real conversation. I don't want you to tap dance for me. Just sit and talk to me."

P: The biggest thing I probably, too, discovered is I always thought I would be the insecure and vulnerable one, and I've discovered that we all are.

P: Our small group of colleagues who talk, I value that more than you know. Don't want to get all gooshy on you, but I do. I value that very much. Sometimes you know I just have always been very quiet and just absorbed, and I'm getting my own voice, all right … I'm speaking loud enough, not that I want to speak in front of thousands (laughs), but I will definitely speak to you and my friends, and that's all I need because that helps me grow.

In addition to the case report provided above, the data set that contains Participant 1's transcribed interviews and written reflection was coded and re-coded for domain and taxonomic analysis. A summary of the taxonomic analysis is contained in Appendix I.

Case Report – Participant 2

Participant 2 was entering his first year as the principal of a new elementary school. Having served as principal for 3 years in a medium sized 'county school' previously, Participant 2 was moved to a suburban school that had just undergone an amalgamation process with its neighbour school. September 2012 would represent the first year where student populations from both schools (and some of the staff population as well), would become a single, Junior Kindergarten to Grade 8 elementary school with a population of approximately 350 students. Prior to his work as a principal, Participant 2 spent five years serving as a vice principal, and 6 years teaching in the district.

In his own words, Participant 2 described his new school as: "in a middle to upper class neighbourhood. Students transitioned well into the school but many parents had difficulty with the change. The strengths of the school are the students. Students are highly motivated and 'nice kids' as remarked by a parent at the Meet the Staff function. Most have good supports at home and parents 'push' their students to do well in school. Staff tended to be more traditional in their teaching and many held the 'if it ain't broke, don't fix it' type of mentality. While not all staff were resistant to change many were either openly resistant to change or more passive in their resistance. Relationship and trust-building has been key in affecting change."

Participant 2 identified that his personal beliefs, values and understandings about Instructional Leadership were formed in his previous settings, but that he was

pleased to reflect on the application of these leadership skills in his new school. Participant 2 referenced both past leadership practices and intended leadership goals as the lenses through which he shared his narrative.

Participant 2 spoke passionately about his goals for Instructional Leadership. They consistently included the intentional creation of a genuine learning community. He spoke of this goal as not as an end in itself, but as a means to ensure that the necessary working relationships were in place to allow for the work to occur that he deemed essential to the task of schools. Only in a genuine learning community, with relationships based on trust and shared goals, could teachers and leaders engage in the rigorous professional discourse and debate needed to adapt and modify teaching practice to meet the needs of students. As such, an explicit focus on building relationships was noted as a clear trend across all interview sessions. Participant 2 shared that his focus on relationships was a necessary precursor to his other goals of implementation and monitoring - particularly given the unique context of starting a year as a new principal, with so many new staff and students. Intentionally cultivating the concept of 'team' was discussed in response to several exchanges over the course of the three interviews. Participant 2 identified that two important elements in the creation of a genuine learning community included the development of a shared vision of 'the work' with staff; and as such, the need to nurture a culture of ownership and 'buy in' with staff – the sincere belief in a shared purpose and responsibility by all. Participant 2 identified that these core elements of his Instructional Leadership focus needed to be applied, in context, to focus on the unique and diverse learning needs of the students whom they served. These student learning needs would then

be explored and used as the source for developing a shared plan for an adult pedagogical focus. Participant 2 described that this focus on the identification of student (and staff) learning needs was a more holistic approach than simply examining student performance data – it needed to be rooted in the observations and conversations of the school. Sample participant-researcher quotations are listed below. A more detailed sampling of this narrative is found in Appendix J.

P: [My goal] is creating a genuine learning community that includes everyone and that's one of the things that we try to do as well.

P: I really look at the beginning of this year, just like the beginning of every school year as a teacher with their new students the first part of the year. It's about building that relationship, building that team.

P: Again, our end goal is always to improve student achievement.

P: In the back of your mind you always have to keep' the main thing – the main thing 'and that's student achievement.

P: Right now, in this building, the first step for my Instructional Leadership here is building those relationships so that there's some trust, there's some communication that takes place, we build that relationship. Sure, I'm still going to demand things and there's timelines and all sorts of stuff that has to happen, but for the learning to take place we always talk about a safe learning environment where they're not afraid to take risks.

P: I haven't looked at my data, I'll be quite honest, in a little while. I know now from the conversations that I've had and walking into classrooms and hearing from the parents and hearing from the students and hearing from the teachers that math is where we're struggling right now … I can see our focus and it's not because I was in here crunching numbers. It's because I was out there talking to people and hearing. I didn't walk into the classroom and say what should our focus be in September? It's my observations and my conversations. Again, you do look at student product; you do look at the numbers. They do justify what my conversations and observations are saying.

P: We look at the data and we collectively come up with it, which I think really creates a sense of responsibility too. They own that work.

P: Is the doing it together piece important simply for buy-in or do you get a different answer when you do it together?

P: I think of my own personal style too. I like to be included in the decisions. If there's something that I can be included in, it's important to have that buy-in rather than someone saying 'thou shalt' do that.

P: In my experience, what I've seen is when they have ownership of the learning, when they have direction around what it is that they're learning about, they put their heart and soul into it, because they're the ones who chose that direction. Not to say that there aren't things that are nonnegotiable … but when we're sitting down as a team and we're saying, okay.

Participant 2 identified that an important part of his work as an instructional leader was to maintain a deep focus on the teaching and learning goals of the school. Clearly articulating this vision and encouraging others to do so as well, protecting the work of the school from becoming derailed from competing or distracting priorities, and monitoring the implementation of the work that was co-developed by the staff, were all examples used of this attribute of Instructional Leadership. A second pattern that emerged from the coded data, was the work of the principal in balancing the "pressure and support" of monitoring implementation and progress. Participant 2 spoke often about the concept of non-negotiables – articles of practice or assessment or policy, that simply 'had' to be done. He described the role of the principal as one of balancing the needs of the entire staff, both those who actively engage in deep pedagogical reflection and refinement, as well as the few who don't. He identified that an important part of his new work was being responsible for ensuring that all staff were engaged in learning and applying or implementing effective teaching and assessment practice. In this more traditional 'accountability' component of administration, the concept of when to apply 'pressure' and when to apply 'support' to and for staff was a unique challenge of the principalship. It is also a challenge that interacts with this principal's focus on relationships with a clear tension being

identified between these often competing elements of the principal's role. Sample participant-researcher quotations are listed below. A more detailed sampling of this narrative is found in Appendix K.

P: I want it to be worthwhile and make sure that what we're doing is towards the school's goals. That's one of the things that I want.

P: What I would always try to do is make sure that I was able to articulate what our focus was so that the kids knew, teachers know, parents know. If you walk into the classrooms you know this is our focus, this is what we're working on.

P: Sometimes it gets derailed and it gets derailed by the day-to-day things that happen, and sometimes it gets derailed by the teachers.

P: It's important to stick to your guns. It's always, again, making sure that the focus is the focus. Making sure that what you're about is the student achievement in the classroom so your decisions are based on that. Yes, we have to support teachers and we have to support our support staff, and everybody that's around us, but the ultimate reason that we're all here is for the kids. If it doesn't benefit the kids then we shouldn't be doing it.

P: I know I've had a lot of conversations with my colleagues about that pressure and support piece. I think one of the things that I really had to do is read the building and know how much they wanted to be pushed and how far we could go.

Researcher-participant exchanges throughout the three sessions together frequently revolved around the shift in role of the principal – those areas where what the participant believed, valued and understood about Instructional Leadership, was different from what was considered the model or practice of the past. Four core trends emerged: 1) shifts in the style of leadership that was needed; 2) shifts in the nature of the learning relationship between principal and staff; 3) greater autonomy for principals with respect to school-based professional learning; and 4) the nature of the evidence needed to monitor effectiveness.

Participant 2 discussed the important role that shared leadership played in his work with staff. Intentionally including staff (and students and parents) in co-planning was an important Instructional Leadership lesson. Participant 2 described that in his first year as a principal, he would frequently review student data himself, determine the course of action that he felt was most appropriate, and then share that decision with staff. As was shared in his discussion on teacher ownership, 'buy in', and shared visioning - that is not a practice that he engages in anymore. Shifting from a perspective of being the lead knower – the one in charge of directing the learning of others, to being a co-learner, actively engaged with staff to solve problems of practice together, was also described as an important move. Assuming the responsibility for telling teachers what and how they need to learn supposes that the leader has the capacity to do this, and implies an epistemological stance on learning that is inconsistent with the broader Instructional Leadership framework – namely, that knowledge is a set of discreet facts that can be given from one person to another.

The work of Instructional Leadership was also described by this participant as being fundamentally about guiding the learning agenda with adults in ways that respect the culture of learning of the school and the goal of precisely matching student learning needs with teacher learning needs. The new autonomy for leaders to develop highly precise and school-specific learning plans, and to shape this learning based on the emerging needs of staff, was seen as requiring new skills in understanding and monitoring evidence from the field in the form of student work, staff communication and the voices of learners. Sample participant-researcher

quotations are listed below. A more detailed sampling of this narrative is found in Appendix L.

P: I met with our new instructional coach and she said, "What are your goals for this school?" I said, "I don't know yet." I said, "We have to discover that together."

P: I think that the biggest change is that when I first started I thought that I had to be the one that was the person that delivered all the knowledge, that it was my job to impart knowledge on the staff. I quickly learned that that wasn't what it was.

P: When we first came in, when I first started in administration, it was my thought that I had to know everything. People looked to me for the answers. That certainly has changed. I learn along with the staff. if I don't know the answers, there's people out there that do and we'll find those people and we get those people to come in and help us out.

P: Now that I've come here, we've got a totally different focus that I'm not so caught up on at this point. There's some learning that's going to take place again, so again you go back to square one. I'm going to be learning alongside you. I think you really have to have that mindset too. I'm not the expert in the building. I'm the facilitator I think of the learning, and that my job is to make sure that we're on the right path, that we're doing the right things, but I'm learning along with everybody.

R: If doing the work together has, as a product, some powerful things in the school and you don't do the work together …

P: Yes, you're missing out on a great opportunity there. Especially that relationship piece is so big and I know we've talked about it a number of times. Just being in there doing it with them, you're going to get a lot of payback from that.

P: Again, that most powerful piece is that co-learning.

P: As we went, our needs changed throughout the year. It wasn't set in stone. It was a guideline … We let the learning take us where it's needed to take us.

P: The quality of conversation is one of the things that I would speak to. When I have a conversation with a child and they say I don't know why I'm doing this stuff. Well, we're doing this because and they give you a few reasons why. To me that's the evidence or that's the proof.

Approximately one third of all of the coded data from the more than100 pages of interview transcripts with Participant 2 fell under the broad domain of supporting the growth of principals as instructional leaders. The role of peers in formal and informal

networks was consistently identified as a necessary support for Instructional Leadership. Dialoguing with colleagues, both like-minded, and not, served several purposes for Participant 2: 1) knowledge mobilization – the sharing of good practices, activities and ideas; 2) feedback from others about the effectiveness of a plan or potential dangers of a strategy; 3) mentorship; and 4) exploring shared goals or foci.

System supports – tasks, programs and activities that the district provides, were cited as important elements for personal growth. These included formal leadership programs, professional development sessions and district networking sessions for schools and leaders. Instructional coaches and school superintendents were also consistently highlighted as district personnel who have played, or have the capacity to play a significant support role for this, and all principals. Sample participant-researcher quotations are listed below. A more detailed sampling of this narrative is found in Appendix M.

P: I find sometimes, the most powerful [networks or connections] are those informal ones, right, because you're honest, you're open, you're comfortable that you're talking to. You don't have no fears of how you look in the eyes of other administrators. When it's my buddy, I can say, "hey, I did this and he can turn to me and say, "what's the matter with you? Why would you do that?" There's that comfort that I trust whereas when you're in a meeting and you're with some one that you may not know so well, you may not be able to share some things that you clearly need to learn about.

P: I think we need to know what our colleagues are doing. We need to be able to talk about what our colleagues are doing and share what's working and what's not working.

P: I also realize that there are some colleagues that have been doing this a lot longer or some might have been doing it not as long that have great ideas that I should be getting that from them. That networking piece of talking to colleagues

and interacting and being able to get into schools and see what's happening in other buildings I think is so important.

P: With my colleagues I've had a lot of conversations especially with the loss of the instructional coaches pending. How are we going to support each other in the future like how are you going to because, I'm quite honest - I rely on my instructional coach to be that other voice, that other opinion. I'm going to bounce an idea. What do you think if we do this at our next PLC? On our next staff meeting, I'd like to do this and I kind of get a read because her role is so much different than mine.

P: One of the things that we try to do too, is we talk to other schools that had similar focus, getting different perspectives not only from within our school, but from outside of school is really important.

P: Having that formal network, and then the informal network I think is invaluable too. You don't want to reinvent the wheel. There's lots of great ideas, protocols, formats for meetings and things that you should be using, so don't reinvent the wheel. Talk to those people.

P: Area breakfast meetings where we sit down and talk about what's happening in our schools and talk about issues are where sometimes some of my greatest learning takes place, right. That's just informal ... one of the principals just said let's get together next Friday and meet at 7:15 and we're going to have breakfast together and talk about and we need more opportunities like that because that's where we learn about what's happening. I don't know how much I can tell you how much I've learned just in informal meetings. I've learned a great deal.

P: Along with that mentoring, I think there should be opportunities for us to shadow each other, experienced and less experienced principals. I'd love to go, and obviously I've had the opportunity to go into buildings and see what's happening in classrooms. I'd also love the opportunity to go in to see what's happening during PLC time. What's happening during a PD day, those sorts of things. Especially for new leaders, I think that would be an invaluable opportunity, right from Day 1. Not just because you're a principal, but when they're in that vice principal role too.

The final dominant theme explored in the interviews with Participant 2, was the concept of learning culture as it applies to principals in the organization – identifying the supporting conditions necessary to allow principals to engage in this new work and grow in the process. Participant 2 identified key requisites of this culture,

including a recognition of the social needs of administrators – the feelings of vulnerability and lack of confidence that are inherently part of the principal role, and uniquely part of the emergent work that is Instructional Leadership. Networking, mentoring and authentically sharing with peers - that is, engaging in a genuine learning community, was believed to have the capacity to make a significant impact on new leaders. Participant 2 identified the need to realign the focus of principal meetings and learning sessions around the core elements of Instructional Leadership. He described a disconnect between what the organization focuses on at Principal Meetings, and the work that Instructional Leadership entails. Concepts such as choice of content, and focusing in smaller groups around common problems of practice were cited as suggestions for improvement. Sample participant-researcher quotations are listed below. A more detailed sampling of this narrative is found in Appendix N.

P: That self-reflective piece and confidence issue [is important]. That really needs to be addressed because, like you said, it's not in the books and nobody ever said it to me. You know what? This is your first-year as principal? You're not going to feel confident when you go into a PLC meeting.

P: I went into this role, the vice principal role, just scared to death … Now I'm going to be working with people from the ministry that are going to expose me as a fraud because I don't know anything about this Instructional Leadership thing that I'm supposed to know so much about my role.

R: What are the pieces that you think would be critical to helping you with that?

P: I think it's up in the nonjudgmental line. You go in and then you have to have the discussions. Sometimes there might be difficult discussions, but you have to have those discussions afterwards to say, this is what I saw. What does it mean? Or, this is what I didn't see. What does this mean? I think the follow-up, obviously, that comes out from it, so that, okay, here's what I saw. Here's what I didn't see. Let's talk about what it means, and then where do we go from here then. That obviously has to take place. The learning afterwards is crucial.

R: That part of your learning needs to be not only being visited, but subsequently continuing your learning by visiting others?

P: Absolutely. I think that was invaluable learning. Even just having the opportunity to go through a school and then sit down with that administrator and say okay, how are you doing this? How are you getting it? Every class has learning goals and success criteria that are crinkled, used-up. They're using them. How did you do that, right? Having those conversations I think are very important.

P: Are there barriers to that?

P: There's that relationship building thing again. There's got to be relationships involved. How do we ensure that there are existing relationships, and relationships that are going to be grown in this process?

An interesting end note to the reporting of the case analysis of Participant 2 is an observation that this principal made when asked 'who' he learns from in his efforts to grow and develop as an instructional leader. Having not specifically used the nomenclature of empirical and interpretive paradigms throughout the three sessions, Participant 2 responded, "I would think prior, it would almost be like a hierarchy. Principal at the top and people below, your staff below; or you might have the people at the Board Office above you. Now I kind of see it more like a web, an integrated web. I'm in the middle and I learn from everyone."

In addition to the case report provided above, the data set that contains Participant 2's transcribed interviews and written reflection was coded and re-coded for domain and taxonomic analysis. A summary of the taxonomic analysis is contained in Appendix O.

Case Report – Participant 3

Participant 3 was entering his eighth years as a principal with the host district. All seven of the previous years were as the principal of a medium sized (approximately 375 student), rural, Junior Kindergarten to Grade 8 elementary school. Our initial August interview (and all others), were conducted from the office in his new location, as the principal of a very large elementary school in a growing community. More than 1,000 students make up the population of this JK to 8 and dual track – English and French Immersion school in an affluent suburb. Prior to his principal career, Participant 3 spent two years as the vice principal in a large, suburban school after teaching for 6 years for the district. Participant 3 found the timing of this administrative change helpful in terms of his ability to reflect, not only on what past leadership practice has been, but also on what he plans to do as a leader in his new role. In his own words, Participant 3 described his new school as, “a large, dual-track, theme-based school set in a rapidly growing suburban setting. Census data shows a much higher than average family income combined with an average educational background for parents. Strengths are a state of the art facility combined with a hard-working competent staff who work hard to create a 'family' environment in a large building. Challenges are creating a cohesive school culture and creating an environment of academic rigour which places the focus on the work of the students over the work of the teacher. Monitoring classroom practise is also a challenge.”

Participant 3 presented as a highly reflective leader with strong, well-established views about school leadership and the role of the principal. Articulate arguments in both oral and written formats will be evident in this report. The core themes that

emerged from our comprehensive exchanges can be described as falling within the domains of: 1) the work of Instructional Leadership; 2) support for principals as instructional leaders; 3) the significance of a learning culture for principals; as well as 4) the influence of paradigm on the evolving work and system response to Instructional Leadership.

Participant 3 consistently referenced the intentional development of a collaborative learning environment for teachers as his central leadership goal. Creating the conditions that allow for teachers, in teams, to engage in the process of co-planning, co-teaching and co-reflecting on their practice was critical. Understanding the importance of engaging in this cultural creation process, with staff, was a trend that was evident throughout our conversations. Cultivating the supporting conditions necessary – trust, risk-taking, and openness, for this culture with an end of encouraging responsiveness of pedagogy and positive student outcomes, was referenced across all interview segments. Participant 3 was intentional that his reference to student outcomes was not phrased in the terms of 'academic achievement' or 'performance.' Stated goals for students included critical thinking, problem solving and being positive contributors to society.

Participant 3 identified his work as an instructional leader as being about leveraging change, in both teacher and student practices, towards the described goals of his learning culture. This includes understanding his role in organizing and facilitating structures and tasks that encourage the growth and development of staff. Intentionally supporting the professional learning needs of teachers was cited as

essential work. Sample participant-researcher quotations are listed below. A more detailed sampling of this narrative is found in Appendix P.

P: I've always had the sense that when teachers collaborate, they're stronger as a result so what I envision is, especially in a big building, are teams of collaborators where you've got maybe three or four different people who are all tackling the same instructional problem. That, I think, is very exciting. That's kind of where I'd like to see things and I think that exists in pockets already, that's my guess. So to grow that and to make it kind of the way we do business, as opposed to just something that happens a little bit here and there, would be a goal I would have.

P: I want to build that collaborative culture so that it's as widespread as possible.

P: The first thing I think about is the students. If I can walk in to a grade 8 class and have really, really good conversation about something critical where five other kids can have different opinions but they can all articulate those opinions very well and support their opinion with evidence… If I'm graduating students who are good critical thinkers, then I think I've done my job. The challenge, of course, is I don't do that directly, but that's the measure of success to me.

R: So it's highly-successful students?

P: Successful, but also good citizens in the true sense.

P: [There are doors that divide the classrooms] they were put there so that I could share with my colleague and the door is full of dust because it's never been open, that's a barrier. It's a physical barrier, but it's also a sign of the way that they work. So those doors wouldn't be dusty. That would be pretty good evidence to me.

P: Isn't it great for staff to see that you're a learner. I think that's a huge part of, being part of that process, to be at the table and active in learning yourself. That's something I think I'm better at.

R: R: What is it about the work that you're trying to do that makes safety, trust, a prerequisite to the work? …Is it a component of Instructional Leadership?

P: I definitely think [trust] is a component; I don't think that it's just nice to do. They have to trust the leader that they're leading in the right direction and unless you have a discussion where people feel safe to put all the counterpoints on the table so you can work through them, they're not going to follow you if they're not buying into what you're saying. So I think trust is absolutely a precondition.

P: And I guess one of the ways that you combat that is to be vulnerable yourself and to share your own learnings along the way, so that people understand that this is a safe place to do that kind of thing.

P: I love that he [Steven Katz] referred to the PLC not as an event but as a culture, so there's another reference to the culture that you have to build.

Participant 3 captured the profession's shift in the role of the principal as operations manager to that of instructional leader, through several personal reflections about his unique experiences in the role and his observations of the broader system response to the new work of Instructional Leadership. Participant 3 is clear that the work that he was trained for and hired for (at least to his understanding), is not the complex, cultural and pedagogical work that he now engages in. Furthermore, over the three interviews, Participant 3 shared that his leadership efforts have been confounded by the ambiguity that exists between the role that he was trained for, and the work that he now knows is critical to moving forward. This lack of clarity and the lack of authentic appreciation or understanding of the new work of principals, has implications for the manner in which he interacts with supervisors and the broader system structure as a whole. Participant 3 shared the belief that engaging in the work, supports and structures that he identifies as essential for highly effective Instructional Leadership, often cause him to feel that these actions are 'rogue' and need to be engaged in through clandestine ways, as they have not (yet) been 'sanctioned' by the system. Autonomy to meet with colleagues and network staff across schools to support the professional learning of teachers, for example, is not part of the existing 'menu of strategies' that the district regularly supports; at least not in the ongoing, autonomous manner that he deems necessary and appropriate. Participant 3 has also shared that his personal journey

has included a shift in how he positions himself within the leading and learning relationships he has with staff – a shift in the style and role of his leadership. Sample participant-researcher quotations are listed below. A more detailed sampling of this narrative is found in Appendix Q.

P: Over the last several years, it has been fascinating to watch changes in the ways that we engage teachers in their own professional growth. Gradually, I have seen a transition from what I believe to be a 'top-down' model of teacher development to a constructivist 'grass roots' model. This change can be seen in the implementation of PLCs, job embedded instructional coaching as well as the reduction in 'train the trainer' and workshop models. The role of people in the Program Department has also shifted from curricular expert to facilitator with much greater emphasis placed on 'how teachers learn' as opposed to 'what teachers learn'. Improved teacher efficacy seems to be a positive byproduct of this shift.

P: Over this same period of time I believe that the role of Principal has also altered significantly. While the paradox of 'leader versus manager' is not new, the expectation of principals to be Instructional Leaders has taken the front seat. Our own sense of success is closely linked to our self-perceived ability to lead the instructional program. While supports for principals have included content knowledge around effective teaching strategies, there seems to be no clear model for what constitutes effective leader practise. While the contextual nature and built-in complexities of the role make this a challenge, a principal's sense of 'what this looks like' seems to be a logical pre-cursor to successful growth. The lack of clarity in this regard represents a significant barrier to growth among principals. It is tempting, therefore, to consider that a shift in the way that principals learn may also offer an opportunity for greater clarity and improved principal efficacy. The result of this, one hopes, should ultimately be improved student achievement.

P: I thought that the job was taking care of the plumbing when it was leaking, and making sure that there were supplies, and all those managerial pieces, I thought that was the job. That was what I was trained to do. That's what the Principals Course dealt with. That's what my VP experiences dealt with. And now all of the sudden were confronted with this other very pressing, urgent issue that I have no conception of what my role was. So I was seeking an answer to what the role was, and I didn't feel that I had an answer to that. And talking to other people, they didn't seem to have an answer to that either.

P: And I'm even wondering, thinking back about my experiences as Vice Principal, whether there ever was any opportunity to do Instructional Leadership. And certainly in the way I conceive of it now I don't think there were. It was very

managerial. Business items, dealing with student discipline. I don't think we even knew what PLCs were then, never mind the whole notion of what they're supposed to accomplish, and professional development was something that, you know, you might talk to the principal about making photocopies for. That was kind of the only role I would've played at that point.

P: Certainly when I started I thought that I needed to know everything I needed at least to be able to get the answers. I now know it's not about the answers. For me, to be with people pursuing the answers is what it's about, the process rather than product.

A consistent trend that emerged across all interactions with Participant 3 was the concept of support for instructional leaders. Rich discussions explored the ways in which this principal intentionally engaged with peers in the context of principal learning teams to provide the feedback, conversation and support that he required to learn, grow and monitor his progress as an instructional leader. These principal learning teams were developed and utilized for different purposes – personal support, content support and feedback, and they highlight Participant 3's strong belief in the significant role that culture plays in the principalship. Recognizing the critical importance that having a trust-based, positive, and non-judgmental professional relationship plays in supporting the growth of all principals, Participant 3 questioned the existence of any such learning culture at the principal level. Personal and positional vulnerability, isolation from peers, the underlying hierarchical structures and beliefs of the organization, and the prerequisite of trust as a necessary condition for principal growth, were all described as critical elements of the Instructional Leadership construct and challenge. The role that the superintendent of education could play in intentionally supporting principal growth in Instructional Leadership was also noted. Participant 3 explored the tension that is unfolding in this new work for

administrators which seems at its core to be about cultivating cultures of learning, supporting the growth of others in relationships of co-learning and co-planning which is deeply rooted in the emerging needs and voice of both staff and students. This is juxtaposed by the comments of Participant 3, about the capacity and speed with which the existing, formal, hierarchical structures of school systems adapt. The responsibilities of the system, the professional organization, and of the principals themselves for leading this support were explored across all interview sessions. Sample participant-researcher quotations are listed below. A more detailed sampling of this narrative is found in Appendix R.

P: A barrier to principal learning is the urgency and pressure that exist within this framework. The cost of 'getting it wrong' may represent an unacceptable risk as principals consider investing significant time and energy into their inquiry. This cost is both formal and informal in nature as school communities and superintendents are always looking for improved results. Few teachers experience this level of pressure, excluding perhaps, those who teach in an EQAO year.

P: I really appreciate that you mention the formal and the informal because, you know, five years ago I never would've thought about the informal because I'm a concrete thinker. So the idea that there's an informal structure that has an impact wouldn't have resonated with me, but you know, I certainly recognize that some really good discussions and really valuable learning opportunities come out of our trips to London, or Toronto.

P: First step is, they [SOs] need to become really acquainted with what we do in a real way, whether they're following us for a significant period of time. We're not putting on a show, giving you a tour of the school but you really know how we work. P: The role of the superintendent is also important and I wonder about the importance of their direct participation in this process.

P: I think it's important to remember the importance of trust in growth. And I think one of the things that has been very powerful in an informal environment is that you're able to build a level of trust with your colleagues, then you can really question, without taking offense or feeling that your ego is involved in any way, you know, what the other people are doing. And I feel very happy to know that I have four or five colleagues are there that I can talk to and they would, without hesitation say, "are you out of your mind? That's crazy! And that's really good".

Or, you know, people will say, "well, have you thought about trying it this way?" And that feedback, you know, that you get only when the trust is there.

P: One of the disadvantages of a formal structure is we tend to be a little guarded. I certainly tend to be a little bit guarded with what I'll share, and it came become, you know, here are the things I'm doing well, here are the things I'm doing well, well, neither of us really learned anything. We have to be able to share those things that we don't feel we're doing well.

A unique series of discussions emerged with Participant 3 that were specifically focused on the concept of paradigm, and the implications of interpretive or empirical perspectives and positions on the work of schools and systems. Participant 3 described that his journey through Instructional Leadership has necessitated a shift in focus from exclusively quantitative measures of progress, to an understanding of how to capture rich, qualitative measures of student and staff growth. The unique work of Instructional Leadership has proven to be more precisely rooted in the specific and emerging needs of students and teachers, and therefore necessitates an understanding of how to capture and explore this evidence. Participant 3 further described how hierarchy and empirical system structures do not effectively address the emerging work in schools and broader social institutions - that the nature of the relationships required for networking and shared planning presuppose an interpretive organizational structure. Sample participant-researcher quotations are listed below. A more detailed sampling of this narrative is found in Appendix S.

P: I think when you're in the classroom, you have to follow the path that presents itself. It might be interactions with students, it might be what's on the wall, it might be the work that the kids are doing, but you don't really know until you're in the room, so it's almost a qualitative versus the quantitative approach … you allow this context to determine what you are looking for.

P: How do you describe a culture with numbers? What bar graph would show you the effectiveness of one over the other. I mean, these are all big questions.

P: I go back to when I was sort of first introduced to that framework of the paradigm or whatever you want to refer to it and being really challenged by it initially and having to really wrestle through it, but it was through course work that it happened for me and I'm so grateful for that because it's changed everything in terms of how I look at things. To know even that you can understand the world in different ways is pretty mind-blowing and I'm not sure if you didn't have that, if you could really even have a meaningful conversation.

P: I'm starting to think that the work of the leader is not isolated work and that's a challenge because of the structure.

R: What does it look like when a system says, "It's not about hierarchy?"

P: As much as the organization may espouse a kind of a hierarchy-free zone or safe zone, really, it's something you have to feel. It's not something that you can just say. It has to exist based on relationships and conversations.

In addition to the case report provided above, the data set that contains Participant 3's transcribed interviews and written reflection was coded and re-coded for domain and taxonomic analysis. A summary of the taxonomic analysis is contained in appendix T.

Case Report – Participant 4

At the initiation of the data collection phase of this study, Participant 4 was beginning her eighth year as a principal, all seven previous years in the same school – a small (250 students) suburban elementary school. Prior to this role, she served as the vice principal in the same building for two additional years. Participant 4 taught for 24 years, in a variety of speciality areas including French, music and special education, and across all elementary grades, in the same district before becoming an administrator. All interview sessions were held in Participant 4's school. She also hosted the two small group interview sessions for the four principals engaged in the case analysis component of this research. Participant 4 proved to be highly reflective and personal in the narrative that she provided over the course of the study. A strong sense of the district's structures and organizational history were incorporated into her responses in many areas.

In her own words, Participant 4 described her school as follows: "Our school is a small, community school where everyone is a valued member of our school family – students, staff, parents. Our motto is '… imagine, believe, achieve every day.' One of our challenges is our declining enrollment. It is difficult to maintain all of the extras with reduced resources. We have a very positive climate and teachers collaborate willingly. Our staff has not changed much over the years, so it is important to keep restating our goals and be open to trying new things. We are actively trying to increase school spirit through a variety of ways. All of our staff are working to increase their knowledge and use of technology. The demographics of our community have changed over the years. It is much more diverse. Most parents are

working and not able to volunteer at the school. We strive to continue to involve and engage parents in a variety of ways. We have a small, but dedicated group of parents who spear-head special events and fundraisers."

Participant 4 explored the majority of the interview topics through the lens of personal relationships. Interactions about the needs of students, the needs of staff, and the goals of her specific leadership tasks were consistently referenced with respect to her role, and her expectations of others in their roles, to identify, support and nurture those whom she/they served. Coding and re-coding of this data set revealed four primary domains of focus: 1) Instructional Leadership goals and attributes; 2) monitoring roles and responsibilities; 3) changes in the role of the principal over time; and 4) the district's School Support Visit process as a tool for developing principal Instructional Leadership capacity.

The primary goal of Instructional Leadership for Participant 4 was consistently described as creating an environment that supported, respected and met the needs of both staff and students. This culture of learning included a focus on the professional learning needs of staff, including the importance of collaboration, co-planning and problem solving, and a sense of ownership or 'buy in' for the pedagogical foci of improvement planning. Another component of this learning culture was an explicit focus on the 'mindset' of adults – on the belief that the key responsibility of teachers and leaders is to be responsive to the needs of students, and to problem solve and 'own' the process of overcoming the challenges that face students and families. A focus on nurturing relationships was identified as a trend throughout the data set. In the described culture of learning, the focus on student

outcomes was defined, not in terms of assessment scores, but rather on supporting students in being successful in the real world. Sample participant-researcher quotations are listed below. A more detailed sampling of this narrative is found in Appendix U.

P: I was always more for collaboration. That's just the way I am. That's my whole experience from being a music teacher to being a French teacher to working with everybody, to being a kindergarten teacher, to working with the support staff, that's my whole range of experience. It never seems not normal to me to have everybody sitting down together. What was difficult in the beginning was trying to get the other, the teachers to feel empowered that they had something to offer because for so many years, people told us what we should be doing.

P: We have to provide an environment where they're going to be able to talk and problem-solve and think things through. If they can't do that right now, what are we going to do? How are we going to have to change what we're doing? So that we are allowing those opportunities to work through problems, challenge other's ideas, but be polite about it.

P: I think what's happened is that people are realizing is that they have everyone has to take responsibility. Everybody has their role and everybody has a deep responsibility to try to figure it out. Nobody has the magic bullet. Nobody's going to solve a problem. Everybody has a part. Everybody is a part of solving the problem, whatever it might be, whether what you're trying to do in the school. Everybody has to bear a responsibility for that.

P: To me it is a lot about a mindset. I keep hitting on that about what we want our children to be. We've brainstormed this, what we want our children to be. We want them to be able to problem-solve. We want to be able to think. We want them to be able to take information and apply it and put it into new contexts. Well, then we have to be able to do that and we have to be able to show that in our everyday practice … that we're going to find a way. I have to say with the support staff too that this is the attitude here. We will make it work.

P: I really think what it comes down to, I'm not downplaying all these other pieces, but at the heart of the matter you have to know how to work with people so that they feel respected and that they feel that they're safe. They have to feel good about what they're doing and they have to feel like they have something to offer … I find that when people are calm, people can learn, people can grow in a situation where things are pretty calm. But if everyone's all freaked out all the time, it's not good.

Participant 4 expressed the importance of monitoring in all three interview sessions. She identified the role of monitoring pedagogical practices, implementation strategies and the impact of adult actions and practices on student outcomes (data), as being an important role of Instructional Leadership. Participant 4 frequently referenced her 'hands on' approach to leadership and the importance of understanding the teaching and learning context of her school through regular interactions with staff and students. Evidence for this monitoring focus was identified as being visible in the practices of teachers and in the work of students. Sample participant-researcher quotations are listed below. A more detailed sampling of this narrative is found in Appendix V.

P: It's a necessary step to monitor ourselves, to monitor each other, to touch base. I know one change I made in the staff meetings … and I mean that we still have to have operational things … we also have to have an opportunity to discuss just even school issues or parent issues, whatever it might be. But in the staff meetings, we have to set aside that time at every staff meeting. I use that as a time to say, "Okay, let's stop. How are we doing?" Sometimes we'll sit in divisions. "Where are we on that? Okay, let's go back and look at that. We were working on this step, we were working on this step. Where are we with that?" "Oh, yes. What do we need to do? Do you need something?"

P: You're coming back to it, you have to come back. We have all have to be brought back to what we're doing because in that course of ... Schools are so busy. I just find that we have to build that in because if we don't build it in, it won't necessarily happen. Something will get in the way of that. I would say, for myself, I think I'm doing a much better job of monitoring.

R: When we're, "keeping it on the table" or, "coming back to it," what is the "it"? Are those school improvement plan goals?

P: It's everything. It's looking at the achievement, looking at the data. When we talk about EQAO data, we've looked at it, but now we look at the small group, then we look at the big group. Everyone will take a look at it. Where the CAT scores came so late, we're going to revisit that. These are the kinds of things that we have to take some time to digest and look at our student profiles, and we have to just keep coming back and seeing how are we doing. Looking at

specific kids, how are our interventions working? We just have to keep doing that all the time.

P: [The evidence we monitor is in] what we see the teachers doing. We look at, we're traveling around, we're seeing changes in the practice. They're trying different things.

P: I would say one of the ways we know that we're at least heading in the right direction is the evidence that we see around us, so what we see the children doing.

Participant 4 referenced several significant changes to the role of the school leader and to the profession in general over recent history. These changes are evident in the style and actions of principals, particularly in the degree to which they are predicated on shared leadership, consensus building and co-learning as essential elements of their practice. Participant 4 identified that her personal leadership goals – her focus on cultivating a learning culture and her emphasis on nurturing positive relationships, are inherently consistent with this philosophy, and therefore she, unlike some colleagues, has not had to modify her leadership stance or practices significantly in this new work. Focusing on developing shared vision and ownership, actively engaging with teachers in the work of planning for, implementing and monitoring changes in pedagogical practice, intentionally developing the leadership capacity in others, and striving for a continuous cycle of growth and refinement in practice is how she manifests this Instructional Leadership focus. Sample participant-researcher quotations are listed below. A more detailed sampling of this narrative is found in Appendix W.

P: That's where I see the role had changed so much. "The principal has all the answers. They are going to fix all the problems." It's so different. When you think back to principals, it's such a difference. Even five years, it's such a difference. It's such a different world. It's such a different world.

R: That's not the work we were taught to do 20 years ago.

P: No, it wasn't … everything's changing so fast. You're going to be a learner, we're all going to be learners until the day we die. This is the way it is. I think that's the biggest thing right there … I'm the first. I know, I need work in some areas and I admit it … I know I've got to do more work. I've just got to do more work.

P: We're expecting people to problem solve. We're expecting people to just experiment, become innovative and all that. If we're not willing to do that ourselves, how are we going to expect our staff to do it and our staff is supposed to be teaching our children to do that, so I think it's we're going through an evolutionary process.

R: Do you sense, in any way, that the work you're doing as a principal today is different than the work you did as a vice principal … as a principal when you first started?

P: Yes, but now we were just saying the other day even three years ago the things are … the role is constantly changing, but we can use that information. We say our role is changing, the secretary's is changing, the teacher's role is changing, the educational assistant's role is changing. It's all about change. We just have to adapt ourselves to the given situation and try to do the best job that we can, that's just the way we're doing business.

Participant 4, as well as the other principals in the Phase 2 of this study, engaged in both components of the district's School Support Visit process. Originally, she experienced the process when the School Effectiveness Lead and the System Support Team visited her school. Individual planning sessions with the SEF Lead, planning session with the SEF Lead, principal and staff representatives, as well as formal staff and informal staff learning sessions over the course of the year of the visit, supported Participant 4 in identifying a school needs assessment and a concomitant pedagogical focus for the school. Observations from the System Support Team during a half day visit of classroom teaching and learning provided specific feedback about the implementation process that the school identified as important to them. This feedback was then integrated into subsequent school plans.

In the following two years, Participant 4 served as a member of the System Support Team, charged with the task of visiting other schools and making observations and providing feedback based on each school's identified focus. A key component of the School Support Visit process was the collaborative sharing and construction of a feedback plan for the observed school. In this process, observing principals shared their observations of practice and engaged in deep, comparative discussions about what they saw, and what that meant in the teaching and learning story of the school. Participant 4 identified this structure as particularly helpful in supporting her personal journey as an instructional leader. Notably, the opportunity to see multiple schools and learn from the ideas and efforts of other schools was important. It was noted that understanding this broader perspective of the system helped to validate her beliefs that all schools are unique and that the work of principals and teachers must be specific to the context they serve. Sample participant-researcher quotations are listed below. A more detailed sampling of this narrative is found in Appendix X.

P: I think it's been good to see other people's ideas on school improvement plans too, and I think for all of us we've all gotten much better. I think in the beginning we were trying to hit everything. This helped me too to see different people. Their goals were fewer goals, more precise.

P: So I think that's been a real valuable piece. I know that a lot of people have taken a lot of pictures. I've taken some pictures here and there, but more than that I think I've just noticed the many different ways people are doing things.

P: One of the biggest things for me was having the opportunity to go to the different schools. That was a huge learning experience to give you an overview and that's, I said it would be great if people could go and spend some time with a peer and see what it looks like in different buildings.

P: I think that it was very useful for me to go into other schools as part of that team, to see what else was going on, because one of the things that did happen there was that I think people remembered that different people are at different points …

You see people at all different, I guess, points along the continuum. That was very good, because I sometimes feel that I should be doing better in a certain area.

P: Yes, and [it provides] a big picture, because again I think we get into our buildings and we get into our own school and we don't necessarily see our school … what's happening in relation to other things, but sometimes it's people from the outside that come in that will give us really good feedback too.

In addition to the case report provided above, the data set that contains Participant 4's transcribed interviews and written reflection was coded and re-coded for domain and taxonomic analysis. A summary of the taxonomic analysis is contained in appendix Y.

Dominant Trends Across Data Sets

The four participants highlighted in the case reports share a common set of criteria, described in Chapter 3, which made them eligible for this study. However, they do represent a significant level of diversity. Two male and two female principals were selected. These principals have different experiences with respect to the urban/suburban, city/county context of their assignments, the size and structure of schools they served, and their previous vice principal and teaching experiences within the district. In short, their personal narratives are unique. The case report methodology allowed for an intra-subject description of these distinctly personal stories. In addition to the significant value of understandings these journeys, domain and taxonomic analyses were conducted across the four participants (inter-subject), and across all other data sets in Phase 1 and 2 of this study, including Focus Group activities, and small group interviews with the case analysis principals. Figure 5 contains this overall, cross-methodologies taxonomic analysis. As a function of reporting these findings, the taxonomic analysis highlights the dominant patterns that emerged across all aspects of this research.

Chapter 5 will make meaning of these findings with respect to the research questions posed for this study.

Figure 5: Taxonomic Analysis – Summary of All Data Sets

All Data Sets - Taxonomic Analysis

I. Semantic Relationship/Cover Term: Instructional Leadership

a. Goals of Instructional Leadership
   i. Improving/ changing teacher practice and mindset
   ii. Creating a learning culture in the school - ownership
   iii. Improving student outcomes

b. Attributes of instructional leadership
   i. Leadership style – shared leadership model
   ii. Monitoring implementation and progress
   iii. Visioning and goal setting
   iv. Identifying the learning needs of student and staff
   v. Engagement as a co-learner with staff
   vi. Maintaining a focus on teaching and learning goals
   vii. Knowing your building – understanding the teaching/ learning context
   viii. Alignment, coherence and coordination

c. Evidence of Instructional Leadership
   i. Positive impact on staff
   ii. Positive impact on students
   iii. Evidence of a learning culture – teacher collaboration

d. Change in the role of the principal
   i. Shift from lead knower to lead (co) learner
   ii. Shift from a focus on operations/management to Instructional Leadership
   iii. Shift in leadership style – shared leadership model
   iv. Empowerment of principals - autonomy for personal and school learning

e. Challenges facing principals as Instructional Leaders
   i. Workload/ competing priorities
   ii. Increased accessibility
   iii. Ambiguity of the 'new work'

II. Semantic Relationship/Cover Term: Support for Instructional Leaders

a. Strategies to support principal growth
   i. Creating a learning culture for principals
   ii. Support of peers – formal and informal
   iii. System supports – personnel/ structures
   iv. Role of the professional organization
   v. Formal leadership framework/ growth plan

III. Semantic Relationship/Cover Term: Monitoring Principal Growth & Development

a. Monitoring strategies
   i. Personal/ reflection
   ii. Seeking feedback from others – formal/ informal
   iii. Evidence in teacher practice
   iv. Evidence in student work/ understanding/ communication

b. Challenges for principals in monitoring their growth and development
   i. Authentic feedback – hierarchy, isolation
   ii. Ambiguity of the concept of Instructional Leadership

IV. Semantic Relationship/ Cover Term: Culture of the Principalship

a. Learning culture of principals
   i. Nature of a formal learning culture - collaboration
   ii. Social conditions – Trust, vulnerability, Isolation, confidence

V. Semantic Relationship/ Cover Term: School Support Visit Process

a. Results of engaging in the School support Visit process
   i. Deepening personal understanding
   ii. Access to multiple examples/ "comparatives"
   iii. Understanding/ developing multiple "lenses"
   iv. Understanding/ developing multiple "perspectives

Conclusion

In this chapter, the findings from the two phases of this study were reported. Spradley's (1979) methodology for domain, taxonomic and component analysis were applied to the two Focus Group activities – group tasks and individual surveys. An additional data set was developed and analyzed for small group interviews with the researcher and the four randomly selected participants. The main report of findings in this chapter came in the form of four individual case reports which described and summarized the significant research-participant exchanges throughout the interview model employed in this study. Finally a taxonomic analysis was presented that makes visible, the overall, cross-task, multi-method dominant patterns that emerged and that will be explored in chapter five.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Introduction

This chapter will serve to apply the significant, rich and detailed data and raw text described in Chapter 4, to the fundamental research questions posed at the beginning of this study. Through the process of coding and re-coding and analyzing and re-analyzing, not only the case study details, but the totality of data collected in all phases of this research, what narrative has emerged with respect to the specific research problems that inspired this study? How have the understandings that have emerged through the participant and participant-researcher exchanges informed these core questions? In this chapter, each specific research question will be explored. As well, the implications of these findings for future research, and personal researcher reflections will be provided.

The five essential research questions explored in this study are:

1. What are the intended goals/outcomes and meanings that principals ascribe to Instructional Leadership?
2. What are the experiences which have supported the growth and development of principals as instructional leaders?
3. What are the conditions necessary to support the growth and development of principals as instructional leaders?
4. How does the School Support Visit process support principal growth?
5. What role does paradigm play in supporting the growth of principals as instructional leaders?

Question 1: Instructional Leadership – Goals and Attributes

Instructional Leadership serves as the primary focus of this study. The research questions proposed and the methodological approaches applied, were designed to help uncover the meaning of this construct. As was described in the 'Need' and 'Inspiration' for this study in Chapter 1, Instructional Leadership has emerged and evolved from the work of leaders in schools. Significant focus and attention has been applied to defining this idea in the educational leadership research. Despite an abundance of findings, there has been no common, agreed upon set of skills, intentions or practices that the field has accepted as most or best representative of Instructional Leadership. As such, a core and preliminary question posed in this study, is what do the participants believe constitutes Instructional Leadership? What are the activities that these principals engage in to fulfill the role of instructional leader? What have they intentionally changed about how they operate, now that Instructional Leadership is the metaphor in use? What are the goals that they have for these Instructional Leadership actions? What will be different in how their schools operate because of their Instructional Leadership focus? And finally, what will Instructional Leadership look like and sound like when they are doing it? This constellation of ideas, questions and participant responses, have served to uncover the beliefs, understandings and values that these principals have developed about this complex construct.

The research methods employed in this study effectively generated a significant amount of raw text and data across several data sets and participants. No topic was covered more deeply than the exploration of participant ideas with respect to what

Instructional Leadership means to these principals. Domain and taxonomic analyses of all data sets – Focus Group activities and interviews, small group interviews, and individual participant written reflections and interviews, identified clear trends with respect to this construct. Despite the literally hundreds of pages of transcripts which explored this topic, two very consistent, dominant trends emerged. These trends are categorized as participant meaning-making that represents: 1) the goals identified for Instructional Leadership; and 2) the attributes participants ascribed to Instructional Leadership. These key components will be explored in detail.

Goals of Instructional Leadership

Clear patterns emerged with respect to the goals that participants had for Instructional Leadership. Although only a few principals could explicitly articulate their goals or reasons for engaging in Instructional Leadership at the beginning of the study, the ethnographic nature of the interview process allowed for exploration, re-exploration, and clarification through a recursive approach to the participant-researcher exchanges. Through this process, participating principals became clearer and more consistent with respect to describing why they engage in Instructional Leadership. Taxonomic analysis identified three key goals for participants in the study. They include: 1) positively impacting student outcomes; 2) positively impacting changes in teacher practice; and 3) the intentional creation of a 'learning culture' in their schools.

Student outcomes were defined in a variety of ways by the participants. Terms such as achievement, skills, and performance were noted, however, the

overwhelming references to student outcomes in this study described student outcomes as representing: potential; success in the work world; being creative thinkers and problem solvers; and being good citizens. Although the focus on student outcomes was a clear trend, so too was the description of these outcomes as broad, holistic and qualitative in nature. Principals cared deeply about their students' success, considered it a primary goal of their focus as a leader, and they defined this measure in a humanistic and individualistic way that intentionally viewed growth as significantly more than the sum of academic performance measures.

P: Ultimately, it's about student achievement; but it's about student achievement at that precise student's level.

P: If I'm graduating students who are good critical thinkers, then I think I've done my job.

P: Critical Thinking. I think critical thinking for me is a piece of an even bigger puzzle which drives me … I think it is critical that we have people who are graduating to become good citizens and good stewards of the earth, and who aren't going to be fooled by the sales pitches that are thrown at them all the time. So it's global for me.

P: I wanted students to be successful, but also good citizens in the true sense.

P: The first things I think about are the students. If I can walk in to a grade 8 class and have really, really good conversation about something critical where five other kids can have different opinions but they can all articulate those opinions very well and support their opinion with evidence, then I'll be satisfied.

The second goal that emerged in this study was the idea of supporting changes in teacher practice. This goal was represented in a variety of ways across participants, but generally included the notion of a continuous cycle of pedagogical refinement for the purposes of securing responsive pedagogical practice – the concept that the unique and personal learning needs of students were met with the necessary and complimentary response in teaching and assessment approach.

Participants frequently included the idea of teacher mindset as a component of this broader pedagogical change. Cultivating and 'shifting' mindset was a common pattern that focused on supporting teachers' belief that they 'owned' or shared ownership in the school's pedagogical goals. Ownership and responsibility for meeting the unique needs of all learners was a separate characteristic of this goal. Principals identified that significant attention was paid to the process of encouraging, inspiring and requiring that teachers 'bought in' to the collaborative plans of the team, owned the work that they committed to, and were responsible to responding, as needed, to the emerging needs of their students.

P: So that individual teachers are reflective practitioners that are engaged in seeking out new information, because it's coming out all the time about how to improve their practice.

P: I want them to be more responsive – their practice, to learn to respond to the learning needs of the students.

P: We have to make people take responsibility. They're a team. They are responsible for those kids.

P: I think the first thing I want to see is a seamlessness that we all own all of the kids, and I mean from every aspect – from their social, emotional, right through to their academic.

P: If they have ownership of the learning, when they have direction around what it is that they're learning about, they put their heart and soul into it, because they're the ones who chose the direction.

The final goal that emerged from the domain and taxonomic analysis in Phase 1 and Phase 2 of this study was the intentional work of creating a 'learning culture'. Although' learning culture' was used as a term by many participants, others also included the terms learning organization, authentic learning community, and collaborative learning culture to describe the same broad construct. It was clear that

participants were not describing a shared definition that was utilized by the district, in fact, many did not describe their collection of goals for their students, staff and school as a specific 'culture' until they engaged in the interview process with colleague participants and the researcher. By the final interview stage, approximately 8 months after the initial individual interviews, not only the concept of learning culture, but the distinctive use of that term, was consistently applied by all participants in the study. This consolidative term represents a large collection of beliefs, understandings and conditions that varied slightly from participant to participant. Fundamentally, participants described a learning culture as a supportive, collaborative and nurturing condition of co-learning and care for the growth and development of all learners – student and adult. The supportive conditions constitutive of this learning culture include trust, openness, risk-taking, non-judgment, a willingness to share, respect for the ideas of others, and a core belief that through learning together, all can succeed. This focus on the culture of learning in the school was described as a goal for engaging in the work of Instructional Leadership. When asked why principals would engage in shared leadership, position themselves as a co-learner with staff, include student voice in decision making, or co-construct the school vision with staff, the response, resoundingly, was to ensure the creation of a learning culture in their school.

P: Encourage staff to take risks – celebrate the successes and learning that they experience.

P: Develop a non-judgmental, risk-taking, supportive environment for teachers as well as the school community. The trust that is needed for teachers to be reflective and open to changing their practice cannot be overemphasized.

P: Creating a genuine learning community that includes everyone [is my goal].

P: I want to build a collaborative culture so that it's as widespread as possible; I've always had the sense that when teachers collaborate, they're stronger as a result, so what I envision … are teams of collaborators.

P: We have to provide an environment where they're going to talk and problem solve and think things through.

Attributes of Instructional Leadership

The exploration of the essential elements or attributes of Instructional Leadership spanned both research phases, and all data sets of this study. Participant-researcher interactions consistently probed the questions: What is Instructional Leadership? What are the actions, tasks and activities that you engage in that constitute Instructional Leadership? In some interview exchanges, the discussion was prompted with: When you are being an instructional leader, what are you doing, saying, understanding?

Significant participant responses, examples and anecdotes were shared throughout the Focus Group, small group and individual participant activities. Domain and taxonomic analyses served to sort and classify these responses into broad categories. Figure 5 summarizes these individual taxonomies. For the purposes of this chapter, and as a specific response to the formal research question posed, additional coding and re-coding and further refinement of the multiple domain and taxonomic analyses revealed four distinct and dominant trends. Principal responses and communications identified that they believe that the work of Instructional Leadership can be categorized as: 1) actions related to leadership style and approach; 2) actions which serve to facilitate the 'Improvement Planning Cycle' of schools; 3) establishing and maintaining a focus on the tasks of teaching and

learning; and 4) engaging in actions that intentionally cultivate the learning culture of the school.

The concept of leadership style resonated throughout all components of this study. Whether in survey responses, personal written reflections, small group or individual interviews, the dominant theme from participants was the notion that the work of Instructional Leadership required a specific stance and approach to leadership – specifically, a model of leadership that emphasized shared or distributed responsibilities, an emphasis on co-construction of group goals and direction, and an explicit shift away from leadership approaches that were rooted in hierarchical or positional power as a means to get work done. The term 'shared leadership' was the most frequent descriptor of this style used by participants. In general, they did not use this term to reference a specific model or design from the research literature, but rather employed it as a generic term referencing their need to move problem finding, problem solving, and school-based decision making to a more collaborative model. Participants identified that this shift to a shared leadership approach was not simply a 'nice way to operate', but rather was essential as a means to engage staff in the emerging work of Instructional Leadership that required autonomous, precise, and innovative responses from adults to meet the unique needs of students.

A second component of leadership style that emerged as a consistent and dominant theme across all data sets, was the importance for principals to situate themselves within the learning relationship of the staff and the school. All participants referenced the need to move from the position of principal as the lead knower – responsible for directing others and answering all problems of pedagogy, to a new

position, one of either lead learner – responsible for facilitating and supporting the professional learning of staff, or more frequently, to a position of co-learner with staff. This 'principal as co-learner' construct is a significant and consistent revelation throughout this research. The positioning of the principal in a co-learning relationship requires the presupposed shift from a hierarchical model. It also requires the described shift in the understanding of principals and staff, away from the notion that the administrator either knows the answer, or has an outcome predetermined. Participants emphasized the need to cultivate and nurture this new learning relationship over time to allow teachers and leaders to comfortably and openly share what they do not know, and to engage in the work of constructing a pedagogical plan or inquiry to discover and explore new solutions together. Participants also identified the role of the principal as a researcher for and with staff, and the need for principals as instructional leaders to focus specifically on personal learning strategies, and most importantly, to actively engage with staff, at the level of exploring student work. Katz and Dack (2013) describe the work of refining pedagogical practice to address the learning needs of students as the 'heavy lifting' in education. In this metaphor, the work of the instructional leader is to be a lifter with staff.

P: I give staff input into planning. I can write a plan, but ultimately they have to work it, so 'buy in' is greater when they have input into the plan and they own it.

P: The changing model of school leadership - Instructional Leadership requires shared leading, collaborative goal setting, ownership by all and a learning focus and process orientation.

P: Instructional Leadership … it looks like I am present. Simple statement but I need to be there for the learning. I need to be seated at the table. I need to be in the school and in the classrooms. I need to be invested in the learning. I don't think "being present" can be overstated.

P: Demonstrating your willingness to learn, gives teachers the freedom to breakdown their defenses and take the risks necessary to learn new skills or hone existing skills.

P: I have had some spectacular failures which I am grateful for due to the personal growth they produced. It comes back to the idea stated above about process. If all learning is a process then it's okay if I don't know everything, even if I am the leader. I am a learner too.

The second category of Instructional Leadership attributes involves engaging and leading the cyclical school planning process. Described by participants as an improvement planning model, by others as a school or collaborative inquiry model, and by some as cycles of instruction, the core work identified by all participants included: 1) identifying the learning needs of students; 2) identifying the professional learning foci for staff; 3) implementing pedagogical change; and 4) monitoring impact. Both formal and informal processes were undertaken in schools. Formal School Improvement Planning in the district studied, as well as involvement in district-mandated professional learning models, such as Visible Learning, and a variety of additional structures sponsored and supported by the Ministry, district or superintendent, required principals, at varying levels (student, class, school, family of schools) to engage in this cyclical process. A clear pattern that emerged from the data was the identification of this planning cycle work as an essential component or attribute of effective Instructional Leadership. Other trends identified the importance of engaging in all stages of the cycle through the lens of shared leadership. Principals described the necessity for staff to 'buy in' to all steps in this process, including the investigation of data and evidence of student learning needs, and particularly, decision making about the pedagogical focus that teachers would engage in. Principals described the significance of using 'urgent student learning

needs' as a proxy for the teacher learning needs. This is a model described by Katz and Dack (2013). Instructional Leadership actions included developing and refining a new understanding of monitoring. Participants described this variable as uniquely different in the role of principal as instructional leader. Other models of school leadership emphasized the role of the principal in ensuring that requirements, initiatives and agreed upon teaching practices – the non-negotiables, were, in fact being implemented. This notion of principal monitoring as compliance checking represents a significant variation from the monitoring responsibilities of the instructional leader. Participant principals consistently identified that monitoring within the structure of a school-based collaborative model represented a series of actions designed to help understand the impact on both students and teachers, of the actions that were being engaged in. Monitoring in this sense, was done from the stance of a co-learner or co-participant. It involved identifying the types of evidence, in both teacher practice and student work, that would provide information about the progress of the work enacted and of its impact on student understanding relative to the identified learning goals. Principals shared that a shift to valuing qualitative measures, the need to examine and moderate student work together, and the need to be flexible and adaptive with planning to allow for mid-course changes if appropriate, were important. A key skill for instructional leaders in this work, was identified as the ability to authentically understand the teaching and learning context of one's school – to engage in these processes on a consistent basis so as to allow for a sufficient depth of understanding about what the improvement or planning cycle, or

collaborative inquiry work looks and sounds like from the perspective of the student desk.

P: I need to learn about the needs of the school. Being a fairly new principal I needed to find out the needs of the students, the professional needs of the teachers and the needs of the parents in our community. This involves collecting data, both qualitative and quantitative and then discussing the results with the staff.

P: Your staff must be provided with goals and the clear rationale of why these are the goals. By involving them in the diagnostic and/or data examination, the staff feels like they can see the areas of need and own the path to assisting in making the change. Beyond the goal setting, staff must have a clear path identified.

P: I work with my staff using data to get a clear picture of the students' needs; I work with my team of teachers/staff to identify our large and individual learning needs.

P: It is vital to monitor where we have been, what we have been doing, and where we should be going next. Did we achieve what we thought we would? Do we need to refine it or scrap it altogether and go down another direction?

P: I visit classrooms and talk with staff and students about what they are doing.

Participating principals described a key element of Instructional Leadership as including not only the development of a vision and a set of key learning and teaching goals, but importantly, on maintaining (and causing others to maintain) a strong focus on these goals. This attribute of Instructional Leadership incorporates several distinct skills and actions for school leaders. Previous findings in this study have described the role of the Instructional leader in sharing the leadership responsibilities with staff and in co-constructing vision and goals to ensure teacher 'buy in' and ownership. Additional responsibilities include organizing and connecting the ongoing work of schools and systems with the key goals of the school to assist staff in understanding their relationship and interconnectedness. Metaphors such as principal as puzzle master or conductor were used to describe this important role. Supporting staff in

understanding the alignment of initiatives and the coherence of their goals within the broader work of the profession was identified as critical. How is the new focus on problem solving skills in mathematics not something completely new for staff? How does it relate to the understanding that we co-constructed last year about open and parallel tasks, for example? In addition to coordinating the work and learning of staff into a meaningful whole, instructional leaders identified the need to serve as gatekeepers for staff. A key element of maintaining a strong focus on teaching and learning goals, was described as removing distractions – activities and initiatives that may be well-meaning, but serve to re-direct the resources of time and energy away from the agreed upon school focus. Knowing when to say, "no," to others, including supervisors, was a skill that developed over time with the participants of this study. Understanding the nature of these distractions, and intentionally managing the competing priorities, was an important component of maintaining a focus on teaching and learning goals.

P: That's a major skill that an instructional leader needs to have is the ability to stay focused among the chaos. I know we all have days where we think we're going to do this and it's four o'clock and you haven't done it yet. But I think that tenaciousness or the ability to stay fixed on that part of the program is critical and very difficult.

P: I try to align our professional learning cycle with teacher learning needs as it stems from our most urgent student learning need.

P: I make sure all that we do in our school is connected to our values, goals for learning and School Improvement Goals for student achievement. How? Articulating in words with questions and statements about what we are currently doing and whether there is a linear connection to our goals.

P: It's my role to establish that student achievement is our priority and that school decisions are made with this in mindset.

P: I do my utmost to keep the time provided for learning, focused on learning. Timetable structures, special events and daily interruptions can either impact the

learning positively or negatively. As the instructional leader, it is my task to do whatever needs to happen to guarantee that the highest level of positivity is provided.

The concept of 'learning culture' has emerged in a wide variety of aspects of this study. Participant principals identified the creation of a learning culture as a key goal of their Instructional Leadership. Participants described the existence of a learning culture for principals as an essential condition for their growth and development, and a core component of the School Support Visit Process that participants identified as powerful for their learning, was the presence of a learning culture for the System Support Team. As well, principals identified that an important role that they played as an instructional leader was the intentional cultivation of a learning culture within their school. This broad concept of culture represents a wide constellation of beliefs, values and principles that interconnect in a way that supports an environment of collaboration, co-learning, and sharing with colleagues. It is a culture where the principal is positioned to engage in the 'heavy lifting' with staff, as a genuine partner and co-learner. It is a culture that is described as open to learning, non-judgmental and where risk-taking is safe and important because the authentic challenges of practice are deeply wondered about because of their potential to benefit student learning. Learning culture has emerged as a construct that is both general and very specific. It is described through the shift in leadership style of the principal, and through the engagement of all in collaborative structures. It has been described as both the means and the end of Instructional Leadership by participants in this study. As such, principals identify that nurturing and intentionally supporting this culture is the foundational work of instructional leaders, even when the details of how do this

remain nebulous and emergent. The trend found in this study was that a learning culture was simultaneously a formal structure, an outcome of shared work, a collection of common beliefs and understandings, as well as general stance that administrators ascribe to Instructional Leadership.

P: I try to develop a non-judgemental, risk taking, supportive environment for teachers as well as the school community. The trust that is needed for teachers to be reflective and open to changing their practice cannot be over-emphasized .

P: My goal is to encourage staff to take risks – celebrate their successes and learning that they experience when they encounter difficulties.

P: I've learned the importance of allowing risk taking, sharing in the investigation of new learning. I nurture a welcoming, safe climate for learning for students and staff.

P: From the beginning, I have always known the importance of relationships. It is impossible to be an instructional leader without having strong trusting relationships with the staff. You may be leading but no one will follow you if they don`t trust you and believe in the cause.

P: I see an emerging emphasis on creating a learning culture (risk, trust, vulnerability, openness, importance of relationships) for the adults, not just the students.

Significant researcher-participant discussions explored the concept of a learning culture as a means to an end. Principals were asked to articulate what they were better positioned to do because of the existence of a learning culture. They were prompted with: What doesn't work as well when a learning culture is not in place? What parts of the work that you do in schools is made easier, more effective or more efficient with a supportive and collaborative learning culture? You are putting significant time and focus into the cultivation of a collaborative culture within your school, what are you hoping to get from that? A clear trend emerged from these conversations that identified that the essential work of schools had as a

requisite, a culture of trust, co-learning, honesty and a willingness to take risks. Principals identified that although these were nice conditions to have in and of themselves, that they were critical to the work that they asked staff to engage in, particularly the learning or improvement planning cycles described earlier. As staff engage with colleagues in the process of examining student learning needs, they need to do so in a mindset of non-judgment. Identifying that students in the junior grades struggle with their ability to 'communicate effectively in mathematics' must be viewed as a learning need for students, and not as a judgment of poor instruction from previous teachers – particularly the ones sitting beside you. Likewise, co-constructing a vision of pedagogical change with colleagues needs to be done from a perspective that all teachers have an obligation to learn, and this is best done with and from each other. Effective school planning models were described as being rooted in this core belief, rather than a deficit model that implied that pedagogical change is for those who need it, not for a collaborative staff. Furthermore, the discovery in this study of the significant difference in the concept of monitoring for principals and teachers in an Instructional Leadership model, has clear implications for school culture. As principals describe their new monitoring work as being rooted in de-privatizing practice, engagement in co-planning and co-teaching with peers, and with engaging in challenging questions about the impact of teaching practice on student outcomes, the necessity of a true or 'genuine' learning culture becomes evident. As teachers are asked to observe and be observed by others, to question the efficacy and impact of the their practice and the practice of their peers, and to try to implement new and different instructional and assessment

strategies that may, or may not prove effective, the capacity to support, promote and learn from each other is fundamental. Participants were clear – engaging in this type of deeply personal and vulnerable work with adults who do not openly trust each other, nor the process, is ineffective at best. Bryk (2010) describes that for principals, establishing a focus on building relationships is critical, because the new work of schools is fueled by this trust. “Not surprisingly, cultivating teacher buy-in and commitment becomes a central concern in promoting the deep cultural changes required for such an initiative to be successful. At this juncture, concerns about building relational trust come forcefully into play” (p. 27). Bryk further adds, “Some of the most powerful relationships found in our data are associated with relational trust and how it operates as both a lubricant for organizational change and a moral resource for sustaining the hard work of local school improvement” (p. 27). As described, cultivating a culture of shared commitment, openness and collaboration based on relational trust is essential, because “improving teaching and learning places demands on these relationships” (p. 25).

Katz and Dack (2013) describe the work of principals and of schools as requiring engagement in authentic cognitive dissonance as a requisite to new adult pedagogical learning. It is this requirement that places demands on the relationships and trust of teachers as they engage with their peer and leaders. “The experience of cognitive discomfort is not an unfortunate consequence of new learning; it is an essential prerequisite of new learning” (p. 20). The authors further note that, “In the adult world of professional learning, the challenge comes … by way of other people, whose ideas, beliefs, understandings, and practices are

different. But it is no less important as a foundational ingredient of real new learning. And you want to intentionally create the conditions for it to be there" (p. 20).

Question 2: Experiences Which Support the Growth of Instructional Leaders

Participant responses in Phase 1 of this study, and researcher-participant interviews in Phase 2, deeply explored the concept of support for principals as instructional leaders. The focus of these exchanges uncovered the actions, events and tasks that principals have engaged in that they felt were important to their personal growth and development as instructional leaders. Participants were asked to explore not only what experiences they found essential, but more importantly, why – what was it about what principals were asked to do, engage in, and reflect on that had an impact on their learning? What was the context, with whom were they learning, and what was it about the nature of the tasks that proved to be critical to their personal growth? Clear themes emerged from the data sets that identified essential principal experiences as residing in: 1) support for self; 2) support from peers; 3) support from the system; and 4) support from the professional organization.

A common theme identified by participating principals was the role that personal reflection played in their growth. In the de-centralized model described by participants, principals identified the need to examine the effectiveness and impact of their actions on their intended Instructional Leadership goals. Determining if professional learning experiences for staff, school pedagogical implementation goals, and activities designed to promote a school learning culture were progressing as

intended and were having the impact on student outcomes as desired, required principals to actively reflect in a different and more intense and intentional manner than they had previously. Additionally, this reflection often necessitated the explicit collection of evidence – open conversations with staff, 'exit tickets' for teachers following learning activities, and a focus on gathering student and teacher voice throughout the process. Principals also consistently identified the need to actively engage in personal learning – deepening their understanding of both content and pedagogy with respect to the identified areas of focus that they co-developed with staff.

P: I would have to say that I think [reflection] has to exist at all levels … That whole idea of reflection is where I think we're going in leaning.

P: That reflection time is so important. I think that's a good thing that we can do with our peers, too. I think it's really important to take the time. I think that's really important.

P: Mt strategy is to reflect on my actions and see if they've been effective.

P: There really is no formal way of saying, "okay, I can improve my Instructional Leadership and I know this because …" It's basically because of your own feedback or your own reflective nature, and maybe some of the feedback you get from kids and staff.

P: The use of surveys with staff, students and this year, parents, informs my practice.

A clear, dominant trend from this research about the supporting experiences necessary for participants, was the critical role that peers play in supporting the growth and development of principals as instructional leaders. All data sets consistently and explicitly revealed peer support as an essential element of principal support. Peer support models took on both formal and informal properties and were created and directed in both internal (principal led) and external (system led) models.

Fundamentally, principals require like-role colleagues with whom to share, talk, question and explore the complex construct of Instructional Leadership. Simply talking through the goals, strategies and outcomes of their Instructional Leadership work was identified as essential. Certainly this is consistent with the social nature of learning outlined in Chapter 2. In addition to needing to talk with peers and immerse themselves in conversations about Instructional Leadership, participants identified the importance of specific feedback from peers as a distinct concept. In the new, autonomous environment of leading school change, asking for feedback on potential strategies, suggested professional learning activities, and one's interpretation of qualitative evidence gathered, was deemed critical by participants – especially noting their unique position within the organization. A clear trend emerged with respect to the importance of trust with peers, for a feedback model to be effective. The concept of a principal learning culture was explored, and will be shared independently.

Peer support was described as casual connections with friends in the role (informal) which occurred spontaneously over the course of the year, as well as specific Principal Learning Teams and networks who met at pre-determined times and dates for the purpose of supporting each other (formal). In both cases (and those in between), participants identified the need to receive authentic feedback from peers. This principal-instigated and controlled process (internal) was the construct that allowed participants, in a safe environment, to be told, "You're crazy! Don't do that?" Principals identified that nowhere else in the organization could this type of clear, blunt feedback be given, and that this environment was essential – a space of

open, honest discourse designed to help, grow and nurture the learning of colleagues.

A variety of external (district designed and supported) peer models were also described. Participants identified principal networks designed around common problems of practice; the family of schools superintendent; and specific initiative involvement, as additional peer support structures. Although almost all opportunities to connect with peers were described as beneficial to principal growth, the concepts of trust, vulnerability, honesty and openness were consistently listed as mitigating factors for these peer models. The degree to which principals felt safe to share in a non-judgmental environment was the limiting condition for the effectiveness of these external peer models.

P: Sometimes, it's just having someone to listen and talk through a problem with. It's like the teachers with problems in their classrooms. Lots of times they can come up with the answer just because they voiced it, brought it out loud instead of just a voice in their head.

P: The other thing that I think is really important is to make sure that there is a network of colleagues that you can call upon. Our board has been really good with that – especially for new leaders.

P: Having that formal network and then the informal network I think is invaluable, too. You don't want to reinvent the wheel. There's lots of great ideas, protocols, formats for meetings and things that you should be using, so don't reinvent the wheel. Talk to those people.

P: I would suggest that we need to access our colleagues more, in meaningful and critical ways.

P: I think we need to know what our colleagues are doing. We need to be able to talk about what our colleagues are doing and share what's working and what's not working.

The participants in this study desire support from the district. Individual and group responses from all methodologies captured this emerging narrative. Instructional Leadership is complex, multifaceted and potentially overwhelming work. It involves elements of management, human resources, social work, professional learning and accounting. The need to engage in this work is compelling, but the model of how to do it is unclear. Furthermore, the time requirements, competing priorities and ambiguity of the work itself add additional elements of complexity and challenge. Participants want clarity from the system. They actively seek, and are eager to co-learn with their colleagues and superiors. A clear theme that was identified by these principals was the disconnect between their desire to 'be led', to co-lead, to learn with and from the system, and the current district structures. Many highly effective strategies and models of district support were identified by participants. They noted that the challenge was not the presence of an example of highly effective support, but rather the accessibility of these structures to all principals. Many participants identified how their unique set of experiences has provided for strong personal support. The concern that emerged was that these experiences were unique and not necessarily reflective of the broader administrative population. To some degree, a small collection of principals with unique skills, understanding and beliefs shared in a small number of initiatives, experiences, activities and networks that did effectively support their growth. The question that arises then, may not be one of understanding principal support, but rather one of scaling system support.

The system or district role in supporting principal growth and development in Instructional Leadership was described as including the structuring and organizing of peer networks (as described above). Principals also identified the need for the district to provide and support ongoing professional learning opportunities and structures. Authentic tasks – actually assessing student work and planning or monitoring pedagogical practice for your school – rather than theoretical learning, was shared as important. Furthermore, participants described the power of providing learning opportunities for principals as co-learners with their staff. Models such as the School Support Visit (where principals learned with peers), or the district's Visible Learning model that allows principals and school-based teams to learn together, were consistently described as the most effective models for supporting principal growth. The traditional Monthly Principal Meeting structure was consistently described as less effective, or in-effective in supporting Instructional Leadership growth. Participants identified a disconnect between the structure of these meetings - tightly timed agenda items, expert at the front, externally controlled content - and the nature of Instructional Leadership work. Recent district efforts to provide a learning focus, rather than an operations focus, as well as increased principal choice were described as positive shifts in this model.

A unique and dominant theme that has emerged in this study is the role of the superintendent as a support for principals. As the principal's 'boss' and as a member of a district's senior administration, supervisory officers (superintendents) represent significant positional and hierarchical power. In the Ontario education setting, the director of education leads a team of superintendents with responsibility for

overseeing schools, but also the myriad of portfolios in a board – special education, professional learning, business and finance, technology and others. In this design it is the superintendent with the ultimate responsibility and authority for decision-making with principals and school-based issues. Superintendents also function at the intersection of pedagogy, policy and politics. In an empirical framework or a hierarchical mindset, the superintendent as a person and a position, wields significant power. The nature of how schools and school leaders interact with the supervisory officer has been shaped by this empirical history.

The emerging description of Instructional Leadership and the new work of principals presented in this study, portrays a shift in the foundational framework and perspective of schools and schooling. Previous sections of this study have identified the specific goals and attributes of this work and subsequent sections will explore the specific role and influence of paradigm. The principal-superintendent relationship lies at the crossroads of this shift. A clear trend in the data collected and analyzed in this research identified the significant role that principals require superintendents to play in supporting their growth as instructional leaders. Participants described the role of 'superintendent as a support for principals' as including: 1) providing the system structures and supports that provide for authentic co-learning environments for principals and their staffs; 2) validating and valuing the emergent, complex, constructive and interpretive journey that Instructional Leadership represents and the unique place that each principals finds themselves at along this path; and 3) cultivating a personal and systemic learning culture for the principals that is rooted in the essential conditions that instructional leaders provide for teachers – trust,

honesty, vulnerability, active engagement in a co-learning environment, and a shift to a shared leadership model. This clear theme – superintendent as co-learner and superintendent as instructional leader, implies a significant change to the historic role and relationship of superintendents with their schools. As the principals in this study identified, their work as an instructional leader is essential in cultivating the space in which teachers learn together, grow and thrive as they change pedagogical practice and mindset to provide highly effective and responsive pedagogy. Principals articulate that these underlying goals are simply not capable of being propagated without these new cultural conditions. Similarly, as the participants are asked to engage in adapting, adjusting and refining the practices of the adults in their charge to meet the evolving needs of students and their families, they collectively ask where their supporting conditions are. Like their teachers before them, the consistent questions that these principals identified were: Is it safe for me try something new – to take a risk? Do I have a voice in the work that I am being asked to engage in – have I 'bought in' and do I own this work? Is it okay to say that I don't know the answer to how to do this, yet? Have I been given the supports – the relationships, tasks, provocations and feedback in a safe environment so that I can be successful?

P: The way that Visible Learning was structured this year with grouping the schools based on need, not just geographic location, I think that is a model that we can follow.

P: My superintendent … came in and one of the things that I appreciated the most about her was that when she came in, she said, "You know what, I don't know about this. When we're talking today, you're going to be teaching me."

P: I think it's important for the SO to hear the teacher's voice. I really do. I think for so long, many of us thought we just had to brag to our SO.

P: I think he would understand better our successes if he knew the struggles and the work along the way more deeply, and I think the only way he's going to get that is by sitting down and … I'll get shot for saying this, but … being part of a PLC.

P: Ultimately, I think what you want [from superintendents] is a deeper sense of ownership of, "These are my schools and I understand my schools and I'm just a natural element within the school."

The findings of this study contribute to an emerging body of research that is exploring the concept of superintendent as Instructional Leader – a leader of principals in the context of improving outcomes for schools (Campbell, Fullan & Glaze, 2006, Duke 2010, Elmore 2000, Katz & Dack 2013, MacIver & Farley 2003, Waters & Marzano 2006). These findings support the growing recognition of the significant role that these senior leaders play in shaping the growth and development of the organization as a whole, and principals, specifically. "Recent Ontario research shows that supervisory officers need to take on the role of instructional leaders to support student achievement" (Campbell, Fullan & Glaze, 2006). Richard Elmore describes the challenge of this shift in role for the superintendent by noting that for these system leaders, "direct involvement in instruction is among the least frequent activities performed by administrators, and those who do engage in instructional leadership activities on a consistent basis are a relatively small proportion of the total administrative force" (2000, p. 7). This is despite that the fact that a recent survey by the Council of Directors of Education in Ontario (2006) found that superintendents recognize that engagement with their schools in the role of instructional leader is increasingly a key part of their role.

The role of the professional organization - the local principals' association, the provincial self-governing body (The Ontario Principals Council – OPC), or a less

formal organization of the district's administrators, was explored by this researcher as a potential source of principal support. In all cases, it was researcher questioning, not participant sharing, that led to the very tertiary discussions of this construct. There was no evidence in this study that principals required or sought out support from their professional organization(s) for direct support in Instructional Leadership. This finding will be briefly explored with respect to the research question related to paradigm, later in this report.

Question 3: Conditions Which Support the Growth of Instructional Leaders

Formal research Question 3 explored the conditions necessary to support principal growth in Instructional Leadership. Although clearly connected to research Question 2 which explored the experiences and activities that principals value in terms of supporting their growth, Question 3 is distinct. The essential elements of this focus of the study involve the supporting conditions, cultural elements and leaning environments with which principals interact. What does it look like and sound like to learn as a principal? What conditions need to be in place to allow for the rigor, dissonance and push back in peer learning experiences that are necessary to uncover the complexities of Instructional Leadership? In this study, a clear theme emerged as participant principals described the learning culture that they strive to cultivate in their buildings. Research Question 1 identified that participants describe a learning culture as a supportive, collaborative and nurturing condition of co-learning and care for the growth and development of all learners – student and adult. And that the supportive conditions constitutive of this learning culture include trust, openness, risk-taking, non-judgment, a willingness to share, respect for the ideas of others, and

a core belief that through learning together, all can succeed. Significant researcher-participant interactions explored whether these conditions represented the learning culture of principals, and whether they should. A clear theme across all data sets was the desire for principals to experience this culture within the broader organization – to co-learn with peers in authentic collaborative structures, to engage in deep, personal and rigorous discussions with colleagues for the purpose of questioning, deepening and broadening personal understanding. As principals articulated that they are refining their understanding and capacity to structure a learning environment in their schools – to nurture a collaborative mindset, a non-judgmental, co-learning culture that allows for shared problem finding and problem solving conditions, they consistently spoke of the role of shared leadership, of co-construction of vision and planning and monitoring elements, and of the significance of 'flattening the organization' and redefining their position within the learning relationship of the school. As principals have matured in this new work of the school leader, they have identified that this culture and these learning conditions, which are now understood as precursory to the emergent, complex, adaptive work of schools, do not consistently exist for them. The critical importance of a leaning culture for schools has been described as the structure and mechanism through which a staff learns together. However, principals described that they are left to learn how to develop a learning culture independently, through learning structures and teaching models that are still based on 'expertise' to be transferred from one to another. Leaning to share leadership is difficult in an environment where leadership is not shared with you. Learning to 'co-learn' is difficult if one does not engage with you as a co-learner, and

learning how to say, “I don’t the answer,” is difficult in a relationship that requires you to know the answer. Participants described many positive elements of a learning culture for principals that were evolving or emerging in their particular experiences. Some spoke of a highly supportive group of peers who collaborate together. Others spoke of a positive and strong personal learning relationship with their superintendent, and others still, described district-led learning sessions that clearly met the key conditions of a learning culture. However, when participants explored system-wide, formal models that intentionally and explicitly addressed all of these conditions for all principals, the trend was clear. The construction of an intended, systemic learning culture was not perceived by participants as a clear, articulated and agreed upon construct. Individual principal experiences were dependent upon the specific superintendent, initiative, and colleague interactions that they engaged in. Consistently, participants spoke of the value they placed on the cultivation of this culture, as a necessary condition for their growth. Intentionally engaging principals with peers to cultivate trust, honesty and respect was deemed critical. Continuing to organize learning activities that were authentic and relevant for principals and which provided opportunities for autonomy, choice, co-learning and collaboration with peers was identified as important. Modelling a co-learning stance, an ‘open to learning’ perspective and shared ‘heavy lifting’ at all levels of the organization, emerged as a dominant theme of system support for principals. Uniquely, participating principals understood the active nature and intentional actions that are required for culture building – in fact, their participation in this study required them to deeply reflect on their own efforts in this regard. As such, not only did all participants describe the

need and significance of cultivating a learning culture at the administrator level, but they implied, suggested and explicitly stated that this was the work of the leaders – senior leaders; to do as they had done and strive to do daily - explicitly construct a systemic learning culture based on the supportive conditions identified, through authentic engagement with their schools.

P: A collaborative culture needs to be nurtured at our [principal] level so that we trust each other, use each other as sounding boards and critical friends and stop competing with each other.

P: If we can get to a place where we are open, honest and trusting, we will be able to build capacity for Instructional Leadership within all of us. I think some time at Principals Meetings should be intentionally spent on building this culture.

P: We need trusting environments in which administrators feel comfortable speaking up as we want our staff to engage in those conversations which challenge current thought. We need to feel safe taking risks with our own colleagues and senior administration.

P: Relational trust must exist in order for principals to engage in inquiry with their colleagues. Participants must have a genuine desire to help their colleagues improve and must avoid the desire to make themselves or their school look good. Effective facilitation must consider this reality.

P: What I was really struggling with was we are trying to get teachers to work in a collaborative culture when we don't ourselves - we don't work in a collaborative culture. I know that there's people out there who are doing things better than I'm doing them and I think I have a couple things to offer as well, so why isn't there a structure whereby we have the same opportunities that we provide for our staff?

Question 4: The School Support Visit Process as a Tool for Growth

Case study analysis revealed that all participants identified the district`s School Support Visit process as a positive, important and unique structure for supporting their growth and development as instructional leaders. The benefit to principal learning of engaging in this structure was noted in the two domains of the process:

1) hosting a School Support Visit in one`s school; and 2) serving as a member of the System Support Team and conducting an observation and feedback process at other schools.

Participants highlighted the positive aspects of hosting a School Support Visit. By engaging in the process with their staff and the system School Effectiveness Lead over the course of a school year, principals noted that they benefited from support in developing and refining a school needs assessment and an adult pedagogical focus for implementation. The process of hosting visiting principals in an observational capacity in all classrooms, was identified as helpful in supporting a principal`s efforts to encourage the implementation of pedagogical goals. Understanding and managing this "pressure and support" was recognized throughout the study by some participants, as an important role of the principal. The School Support Visit Process was also identified as providing leadership support to principals through the development and sharing of school-specific feedback to the host school and leader, based on the identified area of focus. This feedback was noted as serving as an important support for future school-based planning.

With respect to the goal of supporting the growth of principals as instructional leaders, the School Support Visit process most deeply addressed this function for the System Support Team – those principals who worked as a team, to conduct focus-specific classroom observations of host schools and to collaboratively develop feedback messages for the schools they observed. In this sense, the mechanism for supporting the growth for principals, appears to lie within the processes and structures in which these principals engaged. Participants identified these key

elements as essential to allow for the deepening of personal learning: 1) access to multiple comparatives of instructional or assessment practices; 2) the development and refinement of multiple lenses; and 3) the development and refinement of multiple perspectives. Additionally, participants identified that the mechanism through which these elements of Instructional Leadership capacity were supported, was rooted in the nature of the tasks engaged in, and the culture in which this work was conducted. The consistent theme across all data sets was the significant contribution that collaboration, co-observation, and open, respectful and non-judgmental discussions made in allowing for the refinement of personal understanding and the support of principal growth.

P: A big part of that School Support Visit was invaluable because of the talk that I had with my colleagues. Learning from the discussions where we didn't agree, that part was, to me, as important to the visit to my own school.

P: The learning that took place – my own personal learning that took place during that was phenomenal.

P: What contributed to my growth was walking through the rooms with colleagues and discussing what I saw with a partner.

P: I think it was about being in the classroom when instruction was taking place and then debriefing and sharing what we learned from being together ... it was in the discussion and bringing together of ideas of the observation of it that I thought was really powerful.

P: The professional dialogue amongst the principals involved in the visits has also been invaluable. It was like a PLC for principals. I did not always agree with my colleagues and it was great to hear their explanations or argue their points.

Participants described that an essential element of the School Support process that supported their learning was the access that school and classroom visits provided to multiple examples of instructional or assessment practices. Participant 1 described these as "comparatives." All participants spoke about the value of seeing a

particular formative assessment strategy, or instructional approach to mathematics, for example, in several iterations and across varied and, not so varied contexts. As principals, in their role of instructional leaders, were supporting the implementation of pedagogical structures or practices in their own building, having the opportunity to see seven, or twelve, or thirty other variations of these efforts, and then to discuss their observations, beliefs and interpretations of these examples with one or more colleagues in a safe and trusting environment, was consistently noted as critical to their growth and understanding. Participants identified that this multiple viewing opportunity allowed them to continually refine their personal understanding. This was described in a variety of ways that referenced deepening an understanding of the particular instructional focus and the interaction of this pedagogy with the unique, social teaching-learning contexts of each principal. The growth of participant understanding, therefore, was not limited to a refinement in understanding about the use of 'descriptive feedback', for example, but rather a deeper understanding of how that construct fits within the unique teaching and learning environment of each school. Access to multiple comparatives also served to support principals in understanding the particular trajectories of a given skill or strategy – a visual understanding of what 'descriptive feedback', for example, looks like at varying stages of efficacy and fidelity. Developing an understanding of these stages of implementation was frequently noted as a powerful benefit of engagement in the process.

P: Seeing evidence in other buildings and in other classrooms has been amazing.

P: Visiting so many different classrooms has been eye-opening. Everyone is on the same journey - we're just at different stages.

P: One of the biggest things for me was having the opportunity to go to different schools. That was a huge learning experience.

P: I think all of us came in with our isolated viewpoint of what our schools looked like and what our viewpoint on, say, a strategy was. When we go into other schools and we see how that team has looked at presenting that strategy, or something that we haven't even considered, they brought something new to our thinking.

P: I think that having an opportunity to be in multiple schools and see the variants, even though we're talking about the same thing, seeing the variants that exist really has value.

The activities engaged in by the members of the System Support Team served to support the development and refinement of what has emerged from this study to be termed as 'multiple lenses'. Principals noted this as a key area of growth and development. When observing classroom instruction, or observing students engaged in learning tasks, participants were frequently surprised to find that their partner in the process did not make the same observations or have the same experiences. They described the process of discussing their notes with colleagues and wondering if they had, in fact, visited the same classrooms at the same time. Exploration of this dissonance revealed the importance of the observer's 'lens' – area of focus or interest for the observations – 'what' they saw. Participant's described that one partner would discuss the quality of the classroom library, while the second partner did not even notice that one existed. A different participant described a small group lesson that occurred between a teacher and three students, while the other observer was engaged in watching a different group of students engaged in an entirely different task. Participants described the power of working in a collaborative environment with the other members of the System Support Team, to develop, over time, a deeper understanding of the unique 'lenses' they apply to observations, and the growth in

being able to learn other lenses from colleagues, and ultimately to intentionally apply a specific lens to a specific observation to provide precise feedback. Participants progressed over their involvement in the system process, to discuss prior to and during visits, what lens they would apply to best meet the identified goals of the team or the host teacher or school. The moving of these observational biases from unconscious to explicit and intentional, is an example of a highly specific, Instructional Leadership skill that was cultivated and honed through the School Support Visit process.

P: "Discussing evidence by framing, "this is what I saw", was essential. I believe that we all need to get better at describing what we see, before interpreting."

P: I am better at, "reading the room" now.

P: No, we're not [looking at the same things], but he makes me look at things differently. The first thing I need to do is say, "Okay, where is he coming from?" As an elementary administrator, I'm hearing a secondary voice.

P: I was comfortable saying, "I'm going to disagree with you right here". There was an openness to be able to do that. Then the second question was why. Why are you thinking that? What is it you see through your lens? What are you seeing that makes you say that?

P: Observation with a partner made a difference, because there was quite a lot of informal discussion between the two partners that go into the room and sometimes, those are the best comments because you're right there watching it happen. As you go from classroom to classroom, usually if I have a new partner, the first couple of classrooms, we would be sizing each other up to see what he is looking for. Who did he talk to? What did he look at? And then by the third or fourth classroom you start to develop a rhythm of who's looking for what.

The final key element of the School Support Visit process that participants identified as significant for their growth in Instructional Leadership was the development and refinement of multiple 'perspectives'. Distinct from its related construct of 'lens,' participants described 'perspective' as the value, benefit,

effectiveness or importance of a strategy or practice. While principals differed on what they saw or chose to focus on – the lens they applied, perspective represents what they believe about what they saw. Principals identified that often they focused on the same thing, that is applied the same lens (e.g. a literacy lens) to their observations. However, they often differed on what they thought about these observations - Observer 1 noting that the small group, guided reading session she observed was highly effective; while her partner believed that the same small group, guided reading session that he observed was not. The structure of the System Support Team process required participants to openly share their observations and thoughts. The focus of these discussions was on description, not evaluation, of observed practise, with the ultimate goal of providing feedback to the host school. As such, significant effort and time was devoted to collaboratively discussing, debating, questioning and challenging the observations and understandings of colleagues. Participants consistently described the safe and trusting culture of the System Support Team as a place for openness, risk-taking and vulnerability which allowed for the co-construction, deconstruction and reconstruction of shared understanding and the personal refinement of highly complex and contextualized pedagogical principles.

P: To hear the other people at the table say, "I think this worked because of that," and then someone across the table who is just as intelligent as the first person saying, "No, it didn't work, and here's why I think so." We were able, I think, as a team to come to some shared understandings.

P: I think [this co-refinement]it's the only way we get better, is having differing opinions, and some of the different opinions come from our understanding of what the purpose is. It's bringing refinement to our understanding sometimes, but it's also bringing refinement to the strategy as well or the process in the classroom.

P: The biggest learning that happens for the instructional leader in a school support visit isn't … what the teachers are learning from it, or what the children are learning from it, it's what the instructional leaders are learning from it. When they sit down in that room with you and had the conversations about what they saw, and inquired about how the school was implementing something, but that was the thing that … was the biggest learning for them.

R: What was it about that piece [of the SSV] that was a powerful learning piece for you?

P: You know what; I don't think it's any different than what we do with PLCs for the teachers. It's keeping the focus around the student learning and the student work, so with the school support visits, we were going into the classrooms looking at what the student work was, how that was being delivered, and now we came back and dialoged around it. Same thing at PLCs, we take a strategy away, and we try it in our classrooms, we bring it back and we dissect and say, "What's working, what's not working." For instructional leaders, I think they need that same thing, and probably it's good to have a range of experience. You need that combined knowledge to sit down and look at something because the only way you're going to really get better, is to bring multiple voices to the table to look at something.

In addition to the benefits described from engaging in the work of the System Support Team – the deepening of personal learning through: 1) access to multiple comparatives of instructional and assessment practices; 2) the development and refinement of multiple lenses; and 3) the development and refinement of multiple perspectives, the mechanism for supporting this growth in Instructional Leadership was explained, and was predicated upon, co-observing teaching and learning from the perspective of the student desk, in situ, combined with a protocol for sharing and clarifying observations with peers with a focus on description, not evaluation of practice. The intentional cultivation of a constructive and supportive learning culture for the principals on the System Support Team was described as essential for the

reflection, co-construction and refinement of complex principles and understandings which were deepened and clarified through an explicit model of co-learning.

Question 5: The Role of Paradigm in Instructional Leadership

The concept of paradigm has been consistently and intentionally infused throughout the rationale, methodology and reporting structures of this study. The implications of the empirical model have been described as shaping the form and structure of the research methods and findings in education, as they have in other disciplines. The adoption of Naturalistic Inquiry, ethnographic interview techniques, and case study as a method of analysis and reporting, were all intentional paradigmatic decisions made by this researcher. As such, the construct of paradigm has played a legitimate role in the outcomes and findings of this research. However, in addition to the research and researcher implications of adopting and applying an Interpretive framework to this study, a distinct question was also explored. Does, or how does, paradigm play a role in the broader construct of Instructional Leadership and the additional areas of study focus: how do principals grow and develop as instructional leaders; what are the supports that principals value in assisting this growth and development; and to what degree does the district's School Support Visit model serve to support principal growth?

Paradigm, and more specifically, the shift in core beliefs from an empirical, to an interpretive model, has implications for the concept of principal as instructional leader through two mechanisms: a general refining of personal and professional beliefs and understandings, with organizational structures and practices; and secondly, through

the development of specific new understandings, perspectives and models for leading.

The understandings being described by principals and the journeys they have outlined, parallel a broader shift in personal, district, and profession-based beliefs and understandings that clearly represent a move from empirical to interpretive frameworks. Most participants did not, although some did, reference the concept of paradigm or specific empirical or interpretive approaches by name, but rather discussed specific changes in beliefs and understandings that included key elements of paradigm, including: power, ownership, autonomy, compliance, co-learning, student and teacher voice, as just a few examples. Table 8 presents some examples of these participant identified shifts in belief and perspective.

Table 8: Examples of Shifts from an Empirical to Interpretive Approach

Context	Shift from Empirical	To Interpretive
Principal Approach	• Directive, autocratic • Lead Knower • Problem solver • Monitoring as surveillance for compliance • Classroom visits to 'check in' • Focus on managing operations • Emphasizing 'data-based decisions' and the quantification of learning	• Shared leadership • Lead (co) learner • Problem finder • Monitoring as co-engagement and reflection to support learning • Classroom visits to authentically engage • Focus on Instructional Leadership • Valuing qualitative evidence – the work & voice of students & teachers
Approach to Learning	• Prescriptive • Controlled by others • Expertise is outside of the group • Learning as a product to be mastered • Evidence is found in an examination of large scale assessment data (EQAO) • Common learning for all schools • Teacher learning as a discreet event • Student needs identified through examining scores	• Autonomous • Constructed from local needs • Expertise is developed and shared • Learning as a process to embrace • Evidence is found in the work and voice of students and teachers • Differentiation based on school needs • Adult learning embedded in daily work • Student needs supported by authentic student voice

	• Learning focus based on implementation of non-negotiables	• Learning focus based on the growth and development of staff
District Structure	• Focused on hierarchy • Superintendent as superior • Positional power describes leadership • Centralized decisions about professional learning for staff	• Based on networks and webs • Superintendent as co-learner • Influence & co-learning as leadership • De-centralized decisions about professional learning for staff

An implication of the construct of paradigm for school leaders appears to be a refinement and tuning of the 'interpretive lens' of participants, which serves to better enable them to see the unfolding landscape within their learning organization. Participants clearly shared a common pattern of deepening and honing their understanding about qualitative evidence, including the role of observations and conversations as data sources. Improving individual capacity and skill with respect to collecting and interpreting qualitative data, seeking and using peer feedback to monitor personal growth, and cultivating an authentic learning culture in their schools all represent highly 'interpretive' skills that developed through their Instructional Leadership work over time. The individual refinement of these skills is not only an indication of the influence of paradigm on their growth and development, but more importantly, better equips them to navigate, cultivate and disseminate the rich qualitative, naturalistic and interpretive reality of their learning community. Their capacity to effectively nurture, support, interpret and grow with and from this learning community has been significantly enhanced by the development and refinement of this 'interpretive lens'. Principals with differing experiences, beliefs and learning trajectories who are attempting to implement co-learning experiences, professional learning communities and principal network activities without the ability to understand

the interpretive culture emerging before them, may be far less equipped to learn from these experiences.

P: It is crucial to give control over to teachers and facilitate open discussions that can actually impact practice, reflection and change.

P: I've learned in my few years that it's okay to give yourself permission to decide what the right information is. When I came into the school, yes, I looked at EQAO and that kind of quantitative data, but what I personally learned is the voices of the people doing the work are the real knowledge that you need to know. You could be given reams of quantitative data, but it doesn't speak to the people and the people are the most important piece of it.

P: So I stopped looking so closely at test scores and assessments. Not that I don't; I do. I started looking more though, at the qualitative stuff. How do the kids perceive the program? What does the teacher's choice of words tell me about their belief system? That's a whole other analytical framework to look at things through.

P: So I think there's room for [explicitly studying paradigms], because that's ultimately what we're talking about is growth for principals and I think that it is important for principals to come to understand that there are different ways.

P: How do you describe a culture with numbers? What bar graph would show you the effectiveness of one over the other?

As quietly, and without notification, the work of the principal and the goals of the organization are evolving to focus on empowerment - not power, autonomy – not control, and learning as a process – not a product, the capacity for principals to understand this shift and the implications of this on their leadership is emerging as an important trend. Who, and how one understands this evolving shift is critical for the growth of principals as instructional leaders. The work of the principalship is clearly evolving along interpretive lines. Consistent patterns in this study across all data sets, reveal this reality. As the work of schools and school leaders naturally and inherently evolves to a focus on process, voice, co-learning, empowerment, differentiation and knowledge as a construction of the learner, how has the

profession, district, superintendent, professional organization and school-based structures and practices responded? As principals navigate the unique space of school leadership with the challenges noted in this study, including vulnerability, isolation, ambiguity of the work, and competing priorities as examples, these findings indicate a need to ensure for principals, that there is alignment and coherence of this new world view throughout the organization. Significant tension was described when a principal's move to a co-learning, shared leadership stance was not understood or valued by a superior. Similarly, one participant noted the concept of 'principal as rogue' as a reality of trying to support and nurture the clearly emerging learning needs of staff within a system structure that doesn't consistently match these espoused principles. If the work of Instructional Leadership is essentially rooted in the cultivation of a learning culture that supports and nurtures the authentic learning of all – as was clearly defined in this research study, then the question becomes, how well does a system and all of its component parts, work together to support, value and propagate this belief? Is engagement in this new work of principals endorsed, met with resistance or celebrated? Is this the reality across the organization? If paradigms are understood in the model articulated in Chapter 2, then it is clear that they don't function with interchangeable parts. The core, inherent and fundamental beliefs and values of opposing paradigms are, in fact, in competition with each other philosophically. To adopt some interpretive beliefs and structures, and some empirical beliefs and structures is not to adopt any interpretive beliefs – by definition, they don't lie as parallels. Autonomy for principal choice in school planning, based on school-specific learning needs lacks cogency in a culture where the direct supervisor

applies hierarchical and position-based power to force or make judgment upon the choice that the principal made. In this sense, the interpretive principle of empowerment was not only not authentic, but in fact, becomes harmful to the principal (with respect to the construct of growth and development) because of the incompatibility of paradigms throughout the broader learning organization.

A challenge that this study has revealed is the tension between what Instructional Leadership and support for Instructional Leadership looks like through interpretive or empirical lenses. Participants revealed that there is significant ambiguity about the stated goals and purposes of these constructs, and no formal organizational communication about paradigms. As such, these perspectives remain isolated and distinct beliefs and practices across the school and central office personnel. The challenge identified by participant principals is understanding the expectations that this broad collection of people have for them. This confusion was revealed in two distinct areas: the relationship between superintendent and principal; and the implications for principal learning within the organization. Principal concerns have previously been shared in this report about the need to ensure that system messages to principals about the nature and style of leadership that is encouraged, and the nature and style of leadership activities engaged in by staffs, are understood through similar lenses by both the principal and the superintendent. Additionally, differences in paradigmatic beliefs also present a challenge in defining and implementing learning approaches. Katz and Dack (2013) outline that the roles of principals and systems, as leaders of learning, look different depending upon the paradigm in question. The solution lies in agreeing, together on these models and

purposes. If a principal is expecting someone to be a consultant to them, then they are expecting to be told what to do. If a coach arrives who wants to co-plan learning experiences, frustration can ensue. Likewise, if a principal is expecting a peer or superintendent to engage with them as a co-learner, and a consultant or superior is who shows up, again, frustration may result. Since these relationships are complex, nuanced, and ambiguous, and when there is not formal communication and clarification about these paradigmatic perspectives, significant dissonance is often a reality. For the participants of this study, this disconnect was described in a variety of ways, including the role of the System Principal meetings, and the role of peers and the professional organization, to support itself.

A clear trend in the data sets analyzed was the participants' feelings of disconnect or efficacy with the monthly Principal Meeting structure as a tool to promote principal learning. As this construct was explored, it became apparent that those principals who felt that this was a particularly poor structure, also believed that the key goal of the monthly system gatherings should be to engage principals in learning. Participants who were not as negative towards this structure, including the very few who appreciated it, believed that the essential goal of these meetings was sharing organizational information. This conflict between principal and system goals and perceived effectiveness, is rooted in a disconnect in expectations amongst the players. Likewise, significant researcher-participant exchanges explored the apparent void of formal and organizational peer leadership. As a group, participants described their local administrators as a group that effectively shared and led each other on a wide variety of topics. With reference to past practice, participants described their

principal and vice principal learning organizations as effective at identifying and addressing the learning needs of their peers in such areas as the use of technology, budget and time management strategies, teacher appraisal models, among others. However, all participants identified a void in this type of learning and support with respect to Instructional Leadership. Following the analysis of all four case reports, there is evidence that this type of peer learning model was predicted on an empirical model of 'expert peers' teaching 'novice peers' about discreet, agreed-upon, permanent truths of the role. Does paradigm play a role in the significant absence of systemic peer support models and structures? Does Katz and Dack's (2013) notion of learner expectation play a role? This report has identified participant trends that describe Instructional Leadership as an emergent, interpretive construct that is rooted in the development and engagement in a learning culture. It is predicated on axiomatic beliefs and epistemological principles about knowledge construction and the role of context and culture. Is there a disconnect between the expectations of principals to be told what to do, either in the monthly meeting structure or in the former peer structure, and the reality of the work of Instructional Leadership, which is that it must be engaged in authentically and in context? In short, is principal frustration a result of empirical structures being applied to interpretive learning? Are some principals expecting a consultant, and are frustrated that a coach arrives, while others are expecting a coach and are frustrated when a consultant arrives? Furthermore, these findings suggest that an explanation for the apparent void described by participants in peer and professional organization leadership, may be that the empirical structures that they traditionally employed were based on models of

'expert', where what was needed to be known was clear, describable and 'teachable' – empirical. However, the new work of Instructional Leadership, with its emergent properties, constructivist nature, and grounding in the experiential model – interpretive, doesn't fit into these empirical designs. When the group says, "who's an 'expert' in Instructional Leadership," no hands go up, not even from the skilled, because they themselves don't describe their learning through the lens of 'exert and novice.'

P: I think part of it is that we are in a time of shift maybe and that you know not even just within education, but within organizations generally speaking. You know, gone are the hierarchical days, the rise of the middle class is something that has a role here too I think. So I think it's just this breaking out of that shell of hierarchy overall and I don't know what the future of that is. I sometimes wonder if that's more of a pendulum that's swings back and forth. So if I come to the table understanding the world as hierarchy and I'm waiting for the structure to tell me what to do, I don't get upset with people for wondering that because that's what they understand the structure is.

P: It's interesting because that is a cultural piece. And I think every organization, to some degree, is going to struggle with that because everybody comes to the table with some preconceived ideas about hierarchy. You certainly know it when you talk to people - to what degree are people comfortable really sharing what they think versus trying to tell you what they think you want to hear. That is something that you can pretty much detect, I think, pretty early on if you're perceptive.

P: As much as the organization may espouse a kind of a hierarchy-free zone or safe zone, really, it's something you have to feel. It's not something that you can just say. It has to exist based on relationships and conversations.

P: When we go to Principals' Meetings and we get information, that's one thing. But if there's some of these other things that we should be learning, it should be the same kind of model [co-learning and doing the work], because that is what it is all about – trying to solve problems, trying to think our way through, and it's not easy.

P: I think that it [the Principal's organization] is a voice that's missing. Where are they in this piece and what role do they have to play? Why aren't they a player in that journey?

Implications and Future Directions for Study, and Researcher Reflections

Throughout the process of this research study, significant effort has been made to accurately represent the views of the participants with respect to their interactions with the researcher and their beliefs, values and understandings about the questions explored. Extensive use of digital audio recording, transcription, case report methodology and the inclusion of participant and researcher quotations, were all intentional methodological decisions employed to meet these ends. Additionally, Chapters 4 and 5 presented a reporting and analysis of these findings to determine how the collective data sets informed the research questions posed in this study. Again, the methodologies employed – domain, taxonomic and componential analysis techniques, and the use of extensive participant quotations served to promote an accurate representation of participant views about the key concepts of study – the skills and attributes that principals ascribe to Instructional Leadership; the mechanisms that principals and systems use to support the growth of Instructional Leadership skills and capacity; and the role and efficacy of the district's School Support Visit process as a tool for supporting leadership growth. All of these efforts were employed to meet the goals of ethnographic inquiry - a rich, detailed and accurate representation of the views and culture of the participants.

In this penultimate section, this researcher's voice will become more prevalent. As an addendum to the reporting and analysis, a description of personal researcher reflections is included. Possible implications of these findings will be explored for future study, lingering questions about the constructs being studied will be examined, and personal researcher reflections and reactions to the data will be shared. Having

engaged in this inquiry, and these questions of practice for a prolonged time, and having explored the data sets captured in this study, these personal reflections represents this researcher's response to the broader issues studied and to the questions and problems that were provoked through engagement in this work. This section is not a collection of deductions, nor a summary of participant beliefs, but rather represents the residual wonderings, the deeply personal responses to the questions explored and the data uncovered.

Instructional Leadership

This study served to highlight a current definition of the new work of principals. Instructional Leadership was used as an 'in vivo' term to represent and describe this broad and complex constellation of foci and skills. The term Instructional Leadership was described in this study as a title used to represent a wide range of similarly framed terms such as leading the instructional agenda, learning-based leadership, pedagogical leadership, as examples. A single term was identified to make consistent, the language used throughout the study. Although participants and this researcher actively used this nomenclature throughout the research, it should be clear that the complex definitions created by participants and the constitutive goals and attributes described, represent what these practising principals clearly articulate as new work - as emerging and evolving practice that is, in many and complex ways, significantly different than the work that they engaged in, and the profession espoused, previously. In this regard, the term Instructional Leadership as employed in this study should not be constrained or limited by earlier uses of this terminology in the literature, some of which date back thirty years.

The results of this study support the view of school leadership as a ‘practice’. Sergiovanni (2007) and Spillane, Halverson and Diamond (2001), also promote this perspective, recognizing the importance of investigating how the actual work of leadership unfolds with respect to the social context of schools. These models differentiate the doing of leadership, from the role of leadership. “Leadership involves the identification, acquisition, allocation, coordination, and use of the social, material, and cultural resources necessary to establish the conditions for the possibility of teaching and learning” (Spillane, Halverson & Diamond, 2001). The implications of this view of principal leadership for future research impact methodology. Understanding the complexity of principal leadership requires a research perspective that allows for prolonged exposure and exploration of principal leadership practices as they relate to the specific teachers they engage with, and the unique students whom they serve. Ethnographic methodologies would effectively serve this goal.

The term ‘shared leadership’ was similarly used as a compromise term in this study to represent a broad shift in leadership perspective from a model where leadership responsibilities and actions were concentrated at the position of the principal, to a leadership perspective that intentionally seeks to include others in these roles and responsibilities. The specific actions and intentions of participant principals in this study may be described as ‘distributed leadership’, or some other leadership adjective by some in the literature. This distinction is important for future research, as a focus on the actions and practices of leadership will serve to provide increasing clarity of this construct through additional studies. It is by understanding

these leadership practices and actions, not by labelling them, that a deeper and more refined understanding of leadership may evolve.

The emerging understanding of Instructional Leadership as a personal construction was examined in this study. If Instructional Leadership is accepted as a personal construction - highly context specific in the Dewian sense that my learning is mine, and your learning is yours, what are the implications for future study and support? In this model, can Instructional Leadership be taught, or only learned (developed or constructed)? If Instructional Leadership is a construction and represents each individual principal's developing understanding and capacity to engage in this work with others, rooted in his/her own personal meaning and experience – then how does growth in Instructional Leadership need to be supported? What are the experiences that principals need to engage in to connect their current understanding to their future understanding? What conditions are essential to support this construction? Who is positioned to nurture this growth? In this model, Instructional Leadership, as a construct, cannot be described as merely an understanding, a collection of ideas, facts and principles. It is in this reality, a constructed existence and way of operating that comes out of the 'doing' of the work. It represents intellectual, behavioural and socio-cultural responses or changes in the leader with respect to their unique social context. Therefore, one must ask of an instructional leader, "with whom do you do this work?" Does this imply that being an instructional leader in one setting (or one school) does not transfer to a new setting, since you have not engaged in this work with this staff?

What if the metaphor for Instructional Leadership is ‘long distance running’? The intended outcome – muscular growth, physiological change, musculoskeletal or cardiovascular adaption, is an outcome, a product of ‘doing the work’, of running long distances. The only mechanism to achieve these ends is engagement in the activity itself – in the ‘doing of the work’. No amount of reading about, reflecting on, or researching about distance running has any capacity to achieve these ends. Although it’s true that increasing knowledge about the activities will likely have a positive impact, that impact only comes in the application of this ‘thinking about the activity’ to the actual ‘doing of the activity’. Seminars, book talks and professional learning communities who choose to focus on these events, do so with no capacity, in and of themselves, to produce the changes they seek.

What if highly effective Instructional Leadership is an outcome, a product, a result? What if it is what one gets by engaging in shared problems of professional practice? What if Instructional Leadership is an adaptation within an organization or a leader as a result of collaboration, authentic inquiry, purposeful co-learning? What if reading about how to do it, what it means, and what the best instructional leaders do, is the same as reading about distance running? What if the only way to achieve actual growth and development of Instructional Leadership competencies is to engage in ‘the doing’ of Instructional Leadership work – trusting others, demonstrating vulnerability, learning with and from others while you genuinely inquire about teaching and learning? What would the implications be for professional learning, for time management, and for organizational structuring?

Supporting Principal Growth – A System's Role

An important discovery of this study was the degree to which the participating principals felt that their personal growth and development was unique and distinct from their peers. The sample for this study shared a range of experiences related to engagement in the System Support Team and the School Support Visit process – a model that this study identified as successful in supporting principal growth and development. Furthermore, inclusion in in the System Support Team process was through invitation only, a process that clearly differentiates for skill and perceived effectiveness. Participants identified that the emerging 'interpretive' nature of their work has led them to changes in practice and belief and structure. Their current work involves modifying existing models, rules and practices within their control, to better enable them to do the new work that they believe is essential. An important question becomes how does a system address and support the changing beliefs and understandings that are emerging in the profession for all school leaders? What are the tasks and activities that systems need to engage in to nurture this growth for all principals?

Kenneth Leithwood, studying the Ontario model, identified a similar focus for future study. In a published interview with the Ministry of Education (2010), Leithwood stated, "We are also looking at the question of how to manage leadership development on a large scale, within a district for example. How do you work across the district to manage the overall improvement of leadership district-wide?" (p. 12). With respect to providing capacity building models for districts to employ, Leithwood notes, "There is probably much more that needs to be done there. Under what

circumstances can we really ramp up the capacities of our new principals? What kind of experiences would be best for them?" (p. 12). Identifying districts who are engaged in this type of intentional, system-wide focus on principal Instructional Leadership skills, and engaging in ethnographic methodologies similar to the type employed in this study, would allow for such an exploration. Furthermore, identifying a population of principals with a wide variety of experiences, skill sets and track records for instructional change would be important to help understand how whole district strategies impact these varying samples within the profession.

As systems explore how to support principal growth in Instructional Leadership at scale from K to 12, the context of schools becomes important. This study focused on capturing the narrative of elementary school principals as they explored the construct of Instructional Leadership. Future research needs to use the methodologies and questions explored in this study to expand the population of principals being studied. How similar are the learning journeys of elementary and secondary school principals, even within the same district? How do secondary school principals define this term? What are the goals that they have, and attributes that they ascribe to Instructional Leadership? The findings of this study reveal the significance of the personal experiences and relations of each principal in their own growth and development. What is different about the experiences, structures, models and practices of high school leaders? Do secondary administrators interact with their peers, staff and superintendent in a different way than their elementary colleagues? What are the implications of this for principals, schools and systems?

Peer learning clearly emerged as a significant and essential structure for principal growth. Participants identified the critical, cultural conditions that they required from these peer-based relationships: trust, honest, vulnerability and risk-taking, as examples. What role can and should a district play in facilitating these connections? If choice, comfort and autonomy are identified as principal needs, what are the implications for a district? Who chooses to network with whom? Are these connections voluntary? How can one mandate trust and co-learning? Is a reality of a peer-led model that the most skilled, most collaborative and most trusting administrators continue to support each other? Is this acceptable? Is there a system or professional organizational structure that could be utilized to mitigate this? Who is responsible for nurturing, structuring and cultivating these critical professional learning relationships?

Supporting Principal Growth - Role of the Supervisory Officer

The significant role that superintendents and other senior educational leaders must play to cultivate an authentic, culture of learning for school administrators is becoming clear in the research, including this study. What role can principals and principal organizations play in calling for immediate and system wide adoption this new role of the supervisory officer? What mechanisms are required to engage district teams in committing to this new work, deeply? If teachers require a learning culture to grow and change, and principals require a learning culture to grow and change, what does the learning culture need to look like for district leaders? What subtle, and not so subtle shifts in beliefs, values and understandings about professional learning are required to allow systems to complete the transformation that started centuries

ago – mechanistic, hierarchical and reductionists designs which were built to divide learning, and all the of the other complexities of schooling, into separate parts for processing? Can this emerging learning culture and its implications for school and system leaders, be the catalysts that drives the restructuring of empirical systems into collaborative networks and hubs connected by shared learning experiences, common goals and collaborative solutions from the student desk to the central office?

Is it reasonable to conclude that systems (and supervisory officers) can no more leave principals to learn how to become instructional leaders on their own, than teachers can leave students to become competent writers and problem solvers on their own. Even in the most democratic, process-focused, inquiry-based classroom, the teacher explicitly manipulates or leverages the environment, and designs experiences that allow for the richest opportunities for discovery, investigation and wonder. Our best teachers are experts at knowing when, how and why to intervene with questions, prompts and conditions that will support and deepen learning. They design intentional tasks, challenges and environments, explicitly because they understand the potential of these experiences and settings to provoke rich questions and personal inquiry in the learner. Valuing discovery and constructivist learning doesn't lessen the role of the teacher, it simply changes it. Given the complexity of the skills involved in Instructional Leadership, why would we contend that the learners (principals) would not require the same supporting conditions from the system? A system's response cannot be that, "no one here has the expertise to lead this," any more than a teacher should say to a young learner, "you can't wonder about insects because I don't enough about them." Teachers of inquiry have expertise in leading

others to wonder. They are skilled at co-planning these experiences and authentically engaging with their students in a process of co-learning and co-discovery. They are expert at questioning and empowerment, and they get the benefit of all of the content discovery along the way. Isn't it this partnership, that systems (superintendents) need to become expert at?

Given the clear professional and moral arguments for a redefining of the superintendent role, Houston (2001) reminds us of the complexities and challenges inherent in district leadership. "There are really on four problems with the current leadership system: the job is impossible, the expectations are inappropriate, the training is inadequate, and the pipeline is inverted" (p. 432).

Supporting Principal Growth – Learning Culture

The vulnerability required for principals to authentically learn and grow – to accept an 'open to learning stance', to share what they do not know, what they are not yet able to deeply comprehend – can collide with the unique context in which they work. As one participant stated, "Who really knows what we do? We are alone in our buildings in this role, judged from both above and below." What are the system implications for this? If the culture of learning for principals, like the culture of learning for all others, is predicated upon the concepts of trust, safety and risk-taking, then the next questions become: What is the context for learning for principals? Where does the learning occur? What does this culture include? Is this context different within a school, as compared to within the broader system structures of principal networks, hubs and professional development models? How are these broader, professional learning cultures developed? Are there structures or conditions

that currently exist that do support the development of the personal, social and environmental conditions? What strategies do principals use to impact their learning culture?

The findings of this study suggest that the profession has adopted a learning model that recognizes the supporting conditions necessary for student growth (voice, choice, feedback, guided instruction, multiple opportunities to practice, authentic and relevant tasks, a safe learning environment, differentiated support, etc.) and, through the Instructional Leadership efforts of principals, has begun to effectively apply these conditions and principles to the learning cultures of schools, with a focus on supporting teacher growth in practice and understanding. This focus on creating a learning context supports: 1) improving the varied outcomes of students; 2) supporting pedagogical change – growth and refinement in instruction, including the cultivation of teacher mindset – becoming reflective practitioners who respond to the changing of needs of their students; and 3) the creation of a learning culture – developing a collaborative, safe, non-judgemental environment for support and feedback; is what principals are calling Instructional Leadership. However, principals articulate that this model for growth and these essential elements for learning are not extended to their own learning with respect to Instructional Leadership. The key elements necessary for principal growth in this complex construct of Instructional Leadership, do not appear to consistently be a component of the learning culture for administrators in all settings. What does a safe, non-judgmental, risk-taking learning environment look like for administrators? How is it built? Who is responsible for its construction and cultivation? What must the learning (and practicing) include to

develop deep, shared understanding by principals? Who organizes, engages and monitors this work? Is this a realistic expectation given the wide variety of tasks and roles that principals and superintendents assume? What models currently exist that do support the learning conditions for principals? What do they look like? Can they be replicated and/or brought to scale for all? Should they be? What should principals be practicing to refine the skills of Instructional Leadership?

The School Support Visit Process

The findings of this study related to the district's School Support Visit process are clear. Engaging in the process has significant impact on the growth and refinement of Instructional Leadership skills and capacities for principals. Since the model that was investigated was a district-specific and unique construct, those hoping to learn from this structure need to identify the constituent elements of this model, as full replication of the design is unlikely. Participant principals clearly spoke of the 'power of co'. Co-observing teaching and learning in situ, collaborating about observations with an intentional focus on questioning, clarifying and refining understanding with peers to establish shared perspectives, and engaging in this co-learning model within a an authentic learning community, were core elements of the design. Participants also spoke of the importance of multiple observations and opportunities to engage in this work, and the importance of an intentional structure, leader, or protocol for engaging in the dissonance that promoted growth. Exploring what these models could look like would be an important area of study. Can schools, families of schools, principal networks and districts construct and engage in models based on these principles? Does this model work effectively in all settings? What

would need to change to meet the principal learning context of secondary schools, or whole systems? What systemic leadership is required to sustain this work, and can principals design, lead and engage in these structures on their own?

Paradigm Implications

Is systemic and profession-based support for Instructional Leadership caught in a challenge of paradigm? Does the emergent, co-learning, process-focused nature of 'the new work' lead to a lack of confidence and a lack of perceived content expertise in principals? Does the traditional paradigm of systems and system administration rely on a hierarchical structure of 'empirical expertise' (or perceived expertise) to transfer knowledge? Are principals waiting to be 'told by the structure' to inquire and co-plan and explore? Is there a new void of 'expert other' or 'content expertise' in a model that was built to function hierarchically based on this currency? Has the ambiguity of 'the new work' caused a vacuum where there isn't the expertise to 'tell you what to do', and we haven't developed the professional culture within the administrative community to be comfortable with this? A culture where the new work must be engaged in to decipher, decode and understand, but where the old paradigm scares leaders in these roles from this approach?

The findings of this study have significant implications for future studies. With respect to understanding the work and role of principals, paradigm matters, because it fundamentally and comprehensively underpins culture – the beliefs, values, understandings, goals, principles and structures of a group. Since principals continue to describe the critical importance of developing authentic learning cultures in their

work as instructional leaders, then explicitly exploring the concept of paradigm as it relates to organizational, professional and school-based culture is not only germane, but essential to study. Not only exploring the impact of paradigm on professional learning, but importantly, adopting interpretive methodologies and frameworks is essential for future studies to capture the richness, subtlety and complexity of these essential human constructs.

The Intersection of Ideas

This study has been rooted in an interpretive framework which has impacted the design and method of study, the foci of the study, and the content explored. Although there is value and protocol in reporting specifically on the questions proposed, it is essential to remember that the nature of the ethnographic interview process was holistic and the narratives uncovered represented the authentic, interconnected work of principals. The administrators of this study did not report that they focus on shared leadership for one part of the day, and then move to discretely building relational trust for the next part of the day, and then engage in positively impacting student outcomes at the end of the day. Although describable as independent parts, the reality of the work, and the essential paradigmatic perspectives of this study require an understanding of these constituent parts as a connected system who interact seamlessly together and who have the capacity and function of resonating across their component parts to the larger whole. The implications for future study involve understanding that exploring the growth of leaders, for example, involves understanding the systems within which they work, and the network of social relationships that they develop. As the findings of this study reveal, changing

principal (or district) philosophy, has direct and often unintended consequences on a variety of other structures, including system support models, school learning culture and superintendent-principal relationships. This interpretive, naturalistic perspective of schooling needs to be understood, explicitly examined, and genuinely connected to the axiomatic and epistemological foundations of the research designs and methodologies.

Houston notes, “Education, however, is a humanistic enterprise. So the solution to its problems must be much more organic. It must recognize that all parts of the system are interwoven and that moving one affects all others (2001, p. 432). Houston describes that the implications of this understanding on the work of schools and school leaders, is significant. “Twenty-first-century superintendents will have to be leaders who focus on the organic and holistic qualities of learning and who structure learning that speaks to the hearts and minds of learners” (p. 432). This shift from empirical to interpretive, from power to empowerment, and from control to autonomy reflects the broader shift in the learning and work that is naturally emerging in the field. Houston warns that failing to adapt to this shift will leave systems continuing to engage in reform and improvement work that is doomed to failure because it is based on faulty assumptions, external power as the source for change, and a misunderstanding of the ecological, interconnected nature of systems that, “are built on a mechanistic world view that stresses fixing parts to create a better whole” (P. 431).

Conclusion

In this final chapter, the five research questions proposed in this study were examined individually. Analysis of all research methodologies and data sets were applied to uncovering the dominant themes with respect to these specific questions. Participant trends and patterns about to the nature of Instructional Leadership – the intended outcomes and goals for engaging in these actions, as well as principal-generated description of the key elements and attributes of Instructional Leadership, were explored. The experiences and activities that participants engaged in to develop and refine Instructional Leadership capacity, as well as the socio-cultural supporting conditions necessary to support principal growth, were shared. Additionally, the specific district School Support Visit Process was interrogated and examined to uncover why and how it serves as a structure that supports the growth of principals. Finally, the construct of paradigm was examined to understand the unique role that world view plays in the structures, tasks and relationships of schools and school leaders.

A brief discussion of the potential implications of these findings on school leaders, school districts and educational researchers was provided, as were personal researcher reflections and questions about the findings uncovered.

APPENDIX A: FOCUS GROUP ACTIVITIES, TASK 1 AND 2

1. Focus Group: Group Activity (Task 1)

Guiding questions:

1. Instructional Leadership: What is instructional leadership? What does it look like and sound like when you do it? What are the key elements of highly effective instructional leadership? How do you know if you're on the right track?

2a. Growth and Support – How does the growth of administrators need to be supported?

2b. Structures – What is the context (structures and tasks) that supports capacity building (growth) of principals as instructional leaders? What are the tasks/events/activities that you engage in that help you grow as an instructional leader? "Next year, I'll be sure to …"

2. Focus Group: Individual Activities (Task 2)

1. Participants were then given an independent task with responses recorded on individual tracking sheets (Data Set #1). With respect to their growth and development as instructional leaders, participants were prompted with:

   "I used to think … but now I know …."; and, "I've learned that …"

   Participant responses were submitted on the August (Group Activity) date and then analyzed for emerging themes that would inform the ethnographic component of the study.

APPENDIX B: FOCUS GROUP – INDIVIDUAL OPEN RESPONSE SURVEY, TASK 3

Survey Questions:

1. Describe the actions that you take as a principal that constitute instructional leadership to you. " I am being an instructional leader when I …" ; "I am most effective as an instructional leader when …"

2. What do these actions look like/sound like when you do them?

3. Do you/what do you – reference as a model or guide for instructional leadership? Are there sources/resources for instructional leadership that you refer to, follow or try to emulate?

4. How do you monitor your growth and development in these areas?

5. What components of the School Support Visit process (formally and informally; when you were visited, or when you visit) have contributed to your growth in these areas?

6. How have you grown and developed as an instructional leader over time? Describe your journey through this process. What were the challenges that you faced, the key questions that you addressed, and the understandings that you developed?

7. What is different about your current understanding of instructional leadership from your earlier understanding?

8. What supports do you need (actions do you need to undertake) to continue to grow and develop as an instructional leader?

APPENDIX C: GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR WRITTEN REFLECTION

Participant #1

- We ended our most recent interview by examining a sport (track and field) metaphor. We discussed, that if one wants to get better at high jump, for example, one would need to practice.
- What are the elements of effective practice? What would one do? When would one do it? Who would one do it with?
- What is the role of the coach with respect to practice? Where is the coach situated in the practice? What are the elements of effective coaching?
- How does this high jumping analogy apply to the construct of instructional leadership? If instructional leadership is the 'skill' you wish to grow/develop/refine, what are the connections to practice and coaching?
- Can you please explore this relationship.

Participant #2

- We ended our most recent interview by discussing your personal 'new understandings' about instructional leadership – beliefs, perspectives and views that you have refined as you have done the work of being a principal. You mentioned that in the process of working through the Visible Learning process with staff, the School Support Visit model with colleagues, and some of the professional learning activities you engaged in with teachers, that you had come to some "aha's". Are there any commonalities in these "aha's"? Are there common conditions that have supported your new learning? Have you found that there are essential elements to those experiences that you have valued in supporting your growth in instructional leadership?
- Are there underlying principles about who is at the table, what tasks you engage in, or how you frame the work, that you have found are critical for effective instructional leadership?

Participant #3

- In our last interview, we discussed the supporting conditions (culture/context) that you try to develop/create/maintain to support the growth and professional learning of your staff. In our interview, you described a disconnect between the supportive conditions (culture/context) necessary for effective teacher learning/growth/development, and the learning conditions (culture/context) that exist for principals.
- Please explain your perspective on this. What do believe are the supporting conditions necessary for growth? Why do you believe they are the critical? Do you believe they are the same conditions for teachers and principals? Should they be? Why or why not? What should these conditions include? Why?

Participant #4

- In our last interview, you discussed the learning environment that you try to develop/maintain to support the growth and professional learning of your staff. You discussed the importance of instructional leadership being rooted in this type of culture.

- In addition to the cultural (environmental) components of instructional leadership ("relationships first" as you described), what do you believe are the essential elements (practical things you do) of instructional leadership? What do you think are the important things you do as an instructional leader (how do you describe your instructional leadership actions)? In other words, which actions do you engage in that you believe demonstrate effective instructional leadership?

APPENDIX D: SUMMARY OF DOMAIN ANALYSIS - FOCUS GROUP ACTIVITIES

1a) Attribution: X is an attribute of Y – Instructional Leadership

Domain:	Subcategory	Examples
Is an attribute / element of instructional leadership	Leadership style – shared leadership model	• facilitation; facilitator; encourager; • move to shared leadership model; shared leadership; • let go of 'owning the learning'; letting go of control; allow others to choose their path for learning; • facilitating the leadership in others; provoking the change; • relationship building
	Co-Learning relationship with staff	• co-learner with staff; co-learner; • principal and teachers own learning together; • we are no longer the fountain of knowledge;
	Monitoring implementation and progress	• connecting to and monitoring progress; • examine the evidence critically; • connecting to improvement planning; • continual focus on data/evidence and in-depth discussions regularly; • clarify; demystify learning; key questions are clarified
	Visioning and goal setting	• visioning for optimal situations; • common goals; create a common language; • solidifies our vision/direction; • aligning the vision; alignment (forward focus, resources, time); • believe all kids can learn and state this vision boldly.
	Supporting professional learning for staff	• support each other in the core understandings; • supports our learning as we move forward; • principal needs to be the connector between roles (teacher, coach, SWST); • every staff meeting has a professional development/SIPSA component; professional development as priority focus of SIPSA; embedded PLC; • coaching –situation and individual specific; differentiation for staff; • principal at the table; engaged in the work; • student voice – listening to what kids are saying; student feedback is the element that leads to teacher/instructional change.

1b) Cause – Effect: X is a result of Y – Instructional Leadership

Domain	Subcategory	Examples
Is evidence that effective instructional leadership is happening	Positive impact on students	• students are articulating the school pathway; students can openly discuss their learning; parents can also articulate the learning; • a problem solving model is in place; • learning is differentiated; • the strategies are being utilized (visible – kids know it and use it)

		across the school; • teachers and student are excited about the growth they are experiencing together.
	Positive impact on staff	• teachers & student are excited about the growth they are experiencing together; • staff are open and willing to reflect on practice through conversations/ discussions/ seeking out information through questioning; the quality of teacher discussions – problem solving – action; action orientation towards problem solving; teachers challenging and supporting each other; staff are supporting each other through partnerships, open doors, collaboration; staffroom and hallway conversations around 'problem solving' and not 'problem describing'; • others seek to lead; • I am responsive (know where we are at, know where we need to go); responsive/reflective

2a) Means-End: X is a way to do Y – Support for Instructional Leaders

Domain	Subcategory	Examples
Is a kind of strategy/ mechanism to support principal growth in instructional leadership	Support of peers	• small groups of principals (triads) to talk about school's needs; helping principals address 'struggles'; • witness the frustrations/ growth plans/ strategies of others; • opportunities to dialogue at system meetings; Share – learn by visiting other schools; • descriptive feedback for principals; mentor/coach. • need Principal Teams to be allowed
	Supports for principals are comprehensive and ongoing	• support needs to be ongoing, not a one-shot deal - a learning process; • can't be piecemeal, needs to be specific and in-depth, based on their need. Going deeper for mastery; • separate administrator support during Visible Learning sessions to allow us to talk/ grow/ discuss in small groups while our teams grow; seeking triad; dialogue with colleagues – time to ask the burning question based on our own personal need as we identify it;
	Creating a learning culture for principals	• trusting environments in which administrators feel comfortable speaking up as we want our staff to engage in those conversations which challenge current thought. We need to feel safe taking risks with our own colleagues and senior administration; • making it safe – okay not to know; • celebrate risk-taking; Trust: some of us have been burned by untrustworthy colleagues – culture of gossip. This is an obstacle – sometimes inaccurate, judgmental commentary reaches the ears of other Principals & even the senior team; • admission - Safe to say we don't have all the answers. We have

		the collective knowledge to answer our questions. • self-determination; authenticity; • ownership/ autonomy; self-awareness; • accountability – structure that keeps principals accountable to their focus; • safe, supportive environment - common focus; • trust is enormous in this process;
	Empowering the principal – autonomy for personal and school learning	• listen to the suggestions of those asking for it-an authentic voice; • by honouring the learner and what they want / need to learn – self direction, self-determination – value of our voice; • making the system responsive to learning needs of schools instead of the other way around – on our way!! • ownership– principals & teachers own the learning together • how do we determine [our own] needs?

2b) Strict Inclusion: X is a kind of Y – Support for Instructional Leaders

Domain	Subcategory	Examples
Is a kind of existing system structure that supports principal learning and growth	System supports – formal structures	• SWST; SWI and CIL-M for those who have it; • SSV is huge; • carousels at System Meetings; • Visible Learning – this year's model; alignment of board provided PLCs with Visible Learning dates; • Principal Performance Appraisal model; • more effective model for instructional coaches; • separate administrator support during Visible Learning sessions to allow us to talk/ grow/ discuss in small groups while our teams grow; seeking triad; dialogue with colleagues – time to ask the burning question based on our own personal need as we identify it; • need Principal Teams to be allowed/ facilitated for us. Facilitator needed? Peer Coaching Model?
	informal structures	• Collaborative Inquiry; • PLCs; • some kind of walkthrough; objective outside view.

2c) Strict Inclusion: X is a kind of Y – Support for Instructional Leaders

Domain	Subcategory	Examples
Is a kind of supportive condition necessary to create a principal	The importance value of sharing and learning with peers (co-	• I've learned that … I am not alone. • There are many interesting colleagues whom I need to talk to for my personal growth. • There are some leaders whose opinion I value more than others as they challenge my thinking in "safe" ways which

learning culture	learning)	enrich me vs. belittle me. • I've learned that … Our strength will be learning with and from others. • Most of my colleagues are interested in help me, but some are motivated towards taking me down. • I've learned that … We are our own best supports; We're all in this together. • I've learned that …. Nobody can do this job in isolation – you have to have a network of support.
	Collaborative culture and "critical friendship"	• I've learned that … I must seek 'critical friendship' to practice and hone my coaching/ facilitative/ transformational skills. • I've learned that … Visiting other schools and going into other teachers' classrooms (as opposed to those of the teachers' in my own school) was necessary for me to become a better leader and better at my walk-throughs that I do (or try to do) daily; • I used to think … That I could look within my 4 walls for all the knowledge I need to affect change., but now I know … I need the support of my colleagues and their help to clean my lenses so I can see more clearly. • I`ve learned that … I cannot do this alone – I rely on my colleagues and support to assist in this process. • I now know … That I need to find many of the answers to "What is effective instructional leadership?" in the support, dialogue and collaboration with my colleagues in both like and unlike school settings AND colleagues who are not just like me.

3a) Strict Inclusion: X is a kind of Y – Changes in principal belief and understanding about Instructional Leadership

Domain	Subcategory	Examples
Is a kind of statement about participants' new or current beliefs about leadership style/role	Shift from lead knower to lead learner (co-learner)	• I used to think …We needed to know everything and leading meant being able to find the solution for them. But now I think … No, now I know, that none of us knows everything and just when we figure it out, it changes. • I used to think … the principal had all the answers. That I should know all the answers, but now I know …That I consider myself the lead learner in the school and that I don't know all the answers. • I've learned that … I am an integral part of the learning team at my school. • I've learned that … There are no experts (principals or teachers); it is important to be a good listener; to lead from behind. • I used to think … I had to have all the answers.

		• I've learned that reflection is also necessary. • I've learned to always be reflective.
	Shift in leadership style – shared leadership model	• Fostering the leadership differently in others has greater impact. They direct the learning based on their need. I support the learning with time, resources, questions etc. • I've learned … [Instructional Leadership] is about shared leadership – connecting and using the resources within your building. • I used to think … Some teachers were the problem, now I know they are the solution.
	Shift in beliefs about the role/ responsibilities of the principal	• I used to think we had to solve all of the problems. • I used to think … That there were "right" and "wrong" ways of leading. I now understand the leadership is highly contextual and success comes from impact, not acting. Are students learning better as a result? • I've learned that … professional development must be school-based, and based on the student needs. • Being a good leader is helping staff to sort and clarify their observations and develop an authentic focus and appropriate strategies that really impact student learning. • I know ongoing learning is my responsibility. • I've learned that .. I am often the facilitator / leader and the skills required of me don't come from Principal meetings or books or networked colleagues. These skills come from all those places simultaneously & are repeated only when intended results are realized & connected to the action. • I used to think … Instructional Leadership would happen if a leader communicated the need for change and put the supports in place to have it happen. But now I know that the process is much more complicated, and not as easy as that! • Now I know…Teachers must have the will to make change & they need to determine their own learning; much of my job is to inspire, support and learn alongside them.

3b) Strict Inclusion: X is a kind of Y – Changes in principal belief and understanding about Instructional Leadership

Domain	Subcategory	Examples
Is a kind of statement about participants' new or current beliefs about power and control over the learning of others	Empowering teachers/ others	• It is crucial to give control over to teachers and facilitate open discussions that can actually impact practice, reflection and change. • I used to think … I needed to direct the learning of others. • I used to think …It was my job to tell the teachers what they needed to know, but now I know …That teachers need to be self-aware and to self-determine their own learning. It is about choice – teachers let me know how I can best support them in the best interest of our learners.
	Providing for teacher voice in	• Now I know …I need to survey teachers more, collaborate more, consult more than ever before. • I've learned that … Teacher voice must be valued. • Now I think that we need open, reflective dialogue that flexes with

	learning	the need of teachers and students (and Principals). • I used to think …I had to talk – now I know I need to listen.
	Cultivating teacher mindset - 'buy in'/ ownership and responsibility	• I've learned that Instructional Leadership is about collective ownership and responsibility. People need to buy in and take ownership for all students. • I used to think … Just articulating a clear vision would shape student learning, but now I know …Teachers need to help shape that vision so that they are invested in the change. • I've learned that … By listening and then planning, results and 'buy in' are stronger.
	Moving from product to process orientation	• Now I see that we're all on the journey. • I used to think that learning could be measured. • I've learned that … Learning is dirty work, tense work, [it's about] "doing" work and is led by a skilled facilitator. • Mistakes are okay – they can guide change. • I've learned that … It's not about a finite process, it is a cyclical process and people join in at many different entry points. • I've learned that … Our role is complex, there are no easy answers; there are no experts; flexibility is important.

3c) Strict Inclusion: X is a kind of Y – Changes in principal belief & understanding about Instructional Leadership

Domain	Subcategory	Examples
Is a kind of statement about participants' new or current beliefs about the attributes of a learning culture - supportive conditions necessary for learning	Risk-taking, non-threatening environment	• Now I think that … only with honest and open dialogue / conversations / meetings that build on trust, can people feel they can take risks, experiment with practices and give over control to those who can make a I've learned of • I've learned that … There is power in vulnerability; There is strength in humility; I can survive a disaster by owning a problem and trying to make it better. • I've learned that Showing your own vulnerabilities helps others to show theirs. • I've learned that … We are more accepting of suggestions from people who we know are not judging us. • Providing opportunities for Principals to dialogue and work together in a non-threatening, trusting environment is the key to our needs/ growth.
	Positive culture of caring and support	• Resistance comes when people feel that you don't "know" them or care about what they do. • I now understand that successful changes in teacher practice require multi-levels of support which include emotional, motivational support accompanied by multiple opportunities for guided practice. • I've learned that … This is a relationship business. Instructional leadership is not about delivering the "goods" – it's about finding out where people are and where they need to go. • I've learned that … Teachers need to be recognized for trying something new and what their experiences have taught them.

APPENDIX E: CASE REPORT 1 – SAMPLE OF PARTICIPANT-RESERACHER INTERVIEW (GOALS OF INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP)

R: You've talked a couple times that you need to help them make sure it all fits together…

P: The puzzle master.

R: You used that earlier in our conversation, too, about synchronizing. Is that a different piece to this role than maybe it was in the past? To what degree is an instructional leader in the role of, as Fullan would say, "alignment and coherence?" Is that what you're trying to consciously do and is that different or new?

P: I always believed in alignment and I found it astonishing that for some people that was a revelation that we had to have alignment, right? … When we heard and learned about coherence, I think it's really, really getting to the core of what we were really trying to do. I really do.

P: Talking about concrete children instead of a global … we live in a poverty area so all of our kids, now we are just talking specifically about 'little Jeff', right, and what he needs. I think it has really developed our precision, and I really, really believe that it's developed a sense of ownership for staff. I don't think you're going to get true Instructional Leadership unless you have ownership from the staff.

R: What does that ownership; or the new model allow you to do that the other model didn't? What is it about this leading instruction piece that is easier for you or more impactful because of that?

P: I've discovered that the need for learning, we have need for learning across the whole curriculum, obviously, that needs to always be going on, but the specific need of what the students need in that one school that you're in, it is different from school to school. There may be a real strong emphasis on something that isn't necessarily an emphasis on another school. That in itself allows for the administrator to listen to teacher voice, honour their voice and knowing what their student population is about.

P: I believe that our goal is to get to what the kids need to help them get better at their general learning. I'll be honest with you. The first time I did it, it was more to see when we were first starting out with learning goals and success criteria and I knew that I could walk into any classroom in my school and see that up on the walls, but I couldn't find out if it was really being used unless I talked to the kids. So it was really me monitoring whether the teachers were implementing it.

P: I'm kind of working as a – I don't know if researcher is the best word – but a researcher for the staff.

P: The one thing that I'm missing since I've come here and it's probably just a transition for everybody and for them getting to know me, too, is I like school to be fun and right now it's very ... the word, very institutional, yes. I would like this place to be fun. I want it to be orderly. I want it to be safe, but I would like it to be a place where we all like to come. We enjoy our time here with each other. We see the value in each other and that drives us forward, right. Nobody's wrong or right. We're all here together. How can we help each other? It's that helpfulness.

P: They know that we're not expecting them to do anything we wouldn't want to do ourselves. Now instead of just having compliance and a few people being on board, how do I push everybody with the agenda? That's what I'm studying right now.

R: We've been using the language around 'open to learning' stance, inquiry. Does any of that language fit in here?

P: Definitely, the attitude of being open to learning, a number of the staff that I'm in charge of still have that sense that they've accomplished Teacher's College and they know all they need to know. They don't see teaching as an evolving profession. They see it as I've gone. I know. This is what I shall always do.

P: It looks very different for different teachers. I have a teacher who is really struggling, so it's working with myself and the teacher and the coach in alignment to see, for her to take the risk and say, "This is what I'm really struggling with. This is what I need help with," and then the coach and I deciding how we can support her with that. It's that partnership of personnel supports.

R: Talk to me about the culture that exists and the culture you want to exist. Why you think changing this culture is important to do what you want to do? What's not here that you need to have here?

P: I think the first thing I really want to see is a seamlessness that we all own the kids and I mean that from every aspect, from their social, emotional, right, through to their academic that it's not oh, they're done in Grade 1, I'm done with them or they're done Grade 7, I'm done with them. It's that we come to the table and we know the kids and we can all talk about what the kids need to learn, that piece. I would love to have everybody at the same table, to have the same thirst for the change and the knowledge instead of just an isolated few. I think it's then past the point of ... (laughs) it's hard to articulate. It's just a feeling I'm going on that they come to the table as students instead of professionals. They come thinking they already have all the answers and not willing to look at alternate possibilities. They think that education has one view. It's a classroom setup. I'm the teacher. I'm the leader. I will deliver the information. It's very old school. I need them to be more nurturing of everyone. I need them to be more helpful of everyone. I guess the only word I can come up with that describes it is, I would like the school to be more of a family and that learning is just a natural part of being part of that family. It's very cell blocked right now. I need to move away from that.

APPENDIX F: CASE REPORT 1 – SAMPLE OF PARTICIPANT-RESERACHER INTERVIEW (CHANGING ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL)

P: My first year as principal that's when the Ministry came in with OPIP-1 and did the walkthrough. Probably the best thing that happened there though … as opposed to how we see it now with the school support visits, it was the Ministry of Education coming in, and maybe it was the way I dealt with it but it was … I just did. It's kind of them against us, so we'll show them all the good things we are doing, we'll listen to what they've got to say and then we'll act on it.

P: It was almost a thou shalt, this is an audit from your Ministry, about how you're doing. Now we don't get that, it's now more of, "What are you doing well, what do you want to improve on?" It's that whole collective … we did a whole collective before with the OFIP, but it was a feud, it was us against them. That was the shift for me.

P: I need to talk to small groups of people and that may be my personal way of learning. I'm probably not the best with large groups, but if I can sit down with some people who have a true interest and it becomes that true shared learning so if I select a few people from each division, then I utilize them to bring the learning to the rest of their group, that's worked for me.

R: Is there something about precision and personalization, and relevance that you can get at when there's three of us talking about our classes versus ...

P: Yes, yes, most definitely the precision becomes much more evident when you have a few number of people at the table and you can ... the dialogue is just richer when you have a few.

P: I was always a believer in voice, at least I thought I was, with staff and students, but that's become the things that's even stronger, and it's not just sitting and listening to staff and then deciding I have my own agenda anyway so this is where I'm going. It's about really truly listening to what they have to say and then making them part of the action. I guess I'm just the one that's there to sit and ask the questions, to say, "What do you notice? What does that tell us? How are we going to use that?" It's just what we want the teachers to do, ask those high-yield questions. That's what we have to do as administrators. It's not that thou shalt do the following. It's why are we doing it? Why are you saying we need to do it? And once we do it, what are we going to do with it?

P: I can sit and have teachers tell me, "This is what we're working on. This is the strategy we've walked away and worked on." I might get my throat cut for this one. I truly feel to get a deep understanding of what I'm wanting the teachers to do and know what they're talking about I need to sit and plan at least with one teacher. I need to go into the learning environment with the teacher and the kids. I need to just get in there until my fingers are all 'pruney' too and experience all that.

R: When you think of Instructional Leadership and what you now understand about it … [shared leadership] is something you would say is critical?

P: To the point I think it can't just be one teacher, too. If I ... you know how we used to have division heads, while we may have ... I try to share the wealth in different things that we have happening. It's not always the same Grade 4 teacher or the same kindergarten teacher. We need to see the value in everybody's voice so everybody becomes a leader at the table. It may just be from different facets. It's important that everybody there is valued.

R: Why is it important that you're better at shared leadership?

P: It's important because teachers will listen to other teachers because they know that they're the practitioners, right. They're the ones in the classroom doing the work. I pop in and note ... I need to know what they're doing. I need to be connected to what their learning is. I say it over and over again, the longer you are out of the classroom, the more disconnected you become with the learning. It's important that we're at the table and we're learning with them, but in the end they have to go back and do the work, right, and they have to have buy-in.

R: Are you suggesting that even if I'm willing to do all of the work, it doesn't work as well if there's not shared leadership?

P: It doesn't, yes, it doesn't work as well.

P: Now, with the job changing so much I find … and I've always been a person who thought every job that came across my plate was my job and I had to personally handle it. I'm finding, much more I have to count on other people and their support.

R: Is that because you can't do it by yourself? Is it because the work gets done differently when you do that?

P: I think it's two-fold. One, I can't do it all by myself. There's a reason we have an instructional coach, the coach is there to support me … I need those people to help because you get better answers with it, wherein days gone by, especially at the school improvement plan, I've done it myself. You sit down, you create it, you print it out, you give everybody a copy and tell them what they're doing. Now it doesn't work that any way anymore, it really doesn't.

APPENDIX G: CASE REPORT 1 – SAMPLE OF PARTICIPANT-RESERACHER INTERVIEW (SUPPORT FOR INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP)

*P: I truly believe it'll work with the PLT with ***, myself, VP and ** because it'll be our problem of practice that we're constantly coming together. Our teachers keep us accountable for that because their teachers come here. They're going to do the walkthroughs here. Our teachers go there. The dialogue is around the same topic. Even when VP and I are not together, those teachers that are back at their school are constantly going to be haranguing her with information and questions, right, which will make us more accountable about getting our whole team together to talk. Will we be able to talk about frustrations? Yes, but I think the core purpose of the PLT about talking around the problem of practice will come through this time.*

P: I guess what I'm proposing is when we come together as administrators, teachers, in a network, it's kind of the same idea. We talked about having different eyes on the work. If we can capture the work somehow and then dissect it together, I think we're going to get better at what the work is because I as an administrator am going to come in with a totally different perspective maybe than the other administrator and those two teachers.

P: Sometimes it's just having somebody to listen and to talk through the problem. It's like the teachers with problems in their classrooms. Lots of times they can come up with the answer just because they voiced it, brought it out loud instead of just a voice in their head.

R: How valuable was it or important was it that you had people you could trust to make you comfortable that this is a model you could use? Can we just randomly select other people and have them replicate what you're hoping to do now as principal learning teams?

*P: I don't think it can be random because the difference is the first PLT I had was more of an emotional support. I really feel I had two PLTs because we had ***, *** and I who traveled up and back in the car and that became our private conference room, right, where we could talk really about everything. Then the second PLT, which I'm going to take ownership for did not take off because of circumstances. We kept saying I was supposed to get together with them today. I cancelled because secretarial changes here at the school. It never took off. You need to have something common at the heart of the conversation.*

P: The other piece that comes with it, is even though I feel more confident speaking to my superiors, them coming in also puts in place a little bit of dissonance so that you're not getting into a flow and just letting things ride. [SO] will come in and drop you with a question that was right out of the blue that you weren't even expecting, and then he'll let you ponder it. He and I, our debate was I was against rotary for intermediate.

P: There's a shift in the way downtown's thinking now too, our superiors. When I first started this role, if your superior left you alone and you didn't need to call them, you were doing a good job. Now there's a shift where there wants to be an understanding of what you are doing in your school, talking to them about what you're doing, the ability to be questioned on why you're doing it, kind of the same concept that we're doing with teachers. Tell me why you're doing it. What's the purpose of it? If we're going to put the time into it, why are we doing it?

P: You know what, you asked me about what I needed from the team too, it is wonderful to see the SOs at the Visible Leaning, so that they have a sense of what's going on, their time is really valuable, I get that, and bless their hearts for wanting to be there and understand. Two things happened. I also sat down a and asked the able to share where we were going and it was amazing to have the rest of the table, not just my voice, but them articulate what they thought we were going to be doing.

P: Because ultimately, I think what you want [from superintendents] is a deeper ownership of, "these are my schools and I understand my schools and I belong to my schools and I'm just a natural element within the school." I think that's what … I think that would be the intent of doing that. Is it practical? Probably not, but we always live in utopia because we might get closer, right?

R: So we're talking about one of the supportive conditions being how peers interact with each other - safety, trust… my question is why. What is it that you can do in a trust-based relationship that you can't do …?

P: I think the first thing is probably you're more willing to take risks, to go outside the expected norm.

P: Because you are comfortable with a person, you can talk straight. Then when you talk straight to the person as opposed to being politically correct and hedging it and making sure that you're not injuring any party so that the true reality of the statement gets on the table … more to the heart of it

P: That kind of conversation is what I call the "away from the collective agreement." You don't have to worry about how it's going to be interpreted or shot back at you or a newspaper kind of thing where they twist your words. It's just exactly what it is.

R: How do we provide for principals that same learning condition we just said was critical to teachers?

P: I think we have to have… I don't know if it's a confidence too, a piece of the confidence, or I wish we could have a level playing field where the competition was taken away, because I often feel that it's difficult to share with all of my colleagues because there is a competition out there, an unsaid competition. I think it comes from the process of going through teaching and then trying to get into the whole administrative role. There's that element of competition. Can I get in before this person? Am I more worthy? That has a lingering effect, I think, that is detrimental to us. If we can get our minds past, and maybe that's what the age thing is where you get past the fact where "You know what? Jeff's not in competition with me. Jackie's not in competition with me. We're all trying to do this together and we're trying to get better at doing what we're doing," until you can get rid of that competition the true learning won't happen.

P: There's got to be safety and a small number of people that you trust to get together and talk through a problem and to know that problem that's put on the table you're not being judged because you see it as a problem. There's that lack of judgment. You're truly listening to the frustration that's coming out in them. "I'm really struggling with this," yet the other people who are truly listening are saying, "I've heard you say you're frustrated about this, but what it sounds like to me is this." So it expands on the problem to really get to the heart of the problem.

P: That was a strong part of the conversation for our launch for the instructional rounds here is that the team that came in identified that we've got to be open to that vulnerability and open to the fact that people are taking risks and that it's about moving forward. It's not about knocking that person down, right.

P: You've got to know your personalities that are at the table, right, because some people will never admit that they're vulnerable. They think they have to put that exterior out there, but somebody from the outside just acknowledging it and bringing it forward, I don't know, it relaxes the atmosphere a bit.

APPENDIX H: CASE REPORT 1 – SAMPLE OF PARTICIPANT-RESERACHER INTERVIEW (THE SCHOOL SUPPORT VISIT PROCESS)

P: The thing that I appreciated most I think for me is that with the school support visits the team that sat and did the dialogue afterwards did the most learning. I don't know if it was, and it's not a putdown of any kind, but I don't think it was the staff. I don't think it was the teachers. I think it was the people who were in the room with you having the conversations that learned the most.

P: We're the ones walking away and sitting at the table saying, "I really liked how this worked," asking the principal, "What are they doing around those strategies, and how's that working for you?" We were the ones that were actually moderating the task that we were seeing.

R: To me, what's interesting is that these visits are producing opportunities for individual clarification, lots of different examples.

R: So he's bringing a different focus, a different perspective?

P: Yes.

R: So in a sense you're not even looking at the same things.

P: No, we're not, but he makes me look at things differently. I'm not disagreeing with him, but the first things I'm doing is thinking, "Okay, where's he coming from? What kind of background?" because to me as an elementary administrator I'm hearing a secondary voice.

R: They're providing access to different lenses, and by that I think we're agreeing on the words that different people are coming to the same room but are looking at different things. Because of your interest in literacy, you're bringing a literacy lens to this classroom …

P: Then the second question was why? Why are you thinking that? What is it that you see through your lens? What are you seeing that makes you say that? I think it creates the question.

R: Then I'm wondering if there's a third piece, which is that we're seeing the same thing - we're both focusing on libraries, or we're both focusing on problem-solving and math.

P: What you and I would've called the look-fors.

R: But we're bringing different perspectives to those, and I'm thinking of times when we've debated the same observation. "I was in room 12. I saw the problem-solving strategy, and I think it's good because…" Followed by, "I was in room 12. I saw the problem-solving strategy, and I think it's bad because…" So it's not a lens. We're looking at the same thing, but in a sense we're bringing a different perspective or different belief to that.

P: That's all the refinement.

APPENDIX I: TAXONOMIC ANALYSIS – PARTICIPANT 1

Taxonomic Analysis: Participant 1

1. **Semantic Relationship/Cover Term: Instructional Leadership**

   a. Goals of Instructional Leadership
      vi. Creating a learning culture in the school
      vii. Improving student outcomes
      viii. Improving/ changing teacher practice – cultivating mindset
   b. Attributes of Instructional Leadership
      i. Alignment, coherence and coordination
      ii. Monitoring implementation and progress
   c. Change in the role of the principal
      i. Shift from a focus on operations/management to Instructional Leadership
      ii. Shift in leadership style – shared leadership model
      iii. Shift from lead knower to lead (co) learner
      iv. Empowerment of principals - autonomy for personal and school learning
   d. Challenges to the role of principal as instructional leader
      i. Overload – competing priorities
      ii. Increased accessibility

2. **Semantic Relationship/ Cover Term: Support for Instructional Leaders**

   a. Strategies to support growth and development
      i. Support of peers
      ii. System supports – structures
      iii. System support – Role of the Superintendent
      iv. Creating a learning culture for principals

3. **Semantic Relationship/ Cover Term: Culture of the Principalship**

   a. Learning culture of principals
      i. Nature of a formal learning culture
      ii. Trust and vulnerability
      iii. Confidence - expertise

4. **Semantic Relationship/ Cover Term: School Support Visit Process**

   a. Results of engaging in the School support Visit process
      i. Deepening personal understanding
      ii. School Support Visit process
      iii. Access to multiple examples/ “comparatives”
      iv. Understanding/ developing multiple “lenses”
      v. Understanding/ developing multiple “perspectives”

APPENDIX J: CASE REPORT 2 – SAMPLE OF PARTICIPANT-RESERACHER INTERVIEW (INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP GOALS)

P: It's kind of interesting. Coming here to the ….. I almost feel like I'm back at square one. The part that I feel confident about on now is that I've been through the process where as a principal I've had to build those relations, gain trust, make connections, all that sort of thing. I feel really good about that part. I think I can do that here. I set it as a goal here. This is what we're going to do this year. I've set it for the school. We're going to become a team. That's what I'm going to use. We're going to be a team.

P: I think just it being about the student work. I think when the work's on the table and they have it in front of them I think that makes it very clear rather than saying it's about your instruction, it's about you. It's not about you, it's about the work that's in front of you. It's about making sure kids are improving.

P: When I come in and say to them, I want you to try maybe something different. I want you to try it this way or I think we should be moving this way. I find I'm met with a lot of resistance at first.

P: Change is difficult for people and I accept that and realize that. I think what I've been able to do is, okay, let's hear your arguments. I hear them out and then I say, "okay," and now we're moving forward, right.

P: We're doing this because it's in the best interest of the kids. It's meeting the needs of our kids. I want [teachers] to be able to come to me and say, 'you know what? My group is still struggling with this topic or this concept. Can you help me? Can you have [the instructional coach] come in? Can we do some PD around this? I'm getting pockets of that, but I'm not getting ... I want it to be more.

P: Having those hard discussions with the staff, they're difficult discussions I think to have at first. Those uncomfortable pauses where you don't talk and they talk, that's important because you do get the buy-in because they're the ones that have come up with the direction for the school, so it's like they own it.

P: One of the things I think that's really helpful with the Visible Learning is the makeup of the team. One of the things that I try to do is include each area of the school so that we have someone from kindergarten, we have someone from early years, we have someone from primary, junior, intermediate … What ends up happening is you get the different perspectives from all the staff talking to each other. "I didn't know you guys did that. I didn't know you did that. Geez, why aren't we doing stuff together here? Why aren't we talking about this? Why aren't we doing it this way?" I think that was really powerful when you're sitting at a table with a bunch of professionals and all of them are saying the same thing about the needs of the student.

P: Quickly early on in the year, though, we have to identify those goals because you can't waste time. I have some class data. We're going to be doing that early in September. Like I said, I met with the instructional coach this morning. Our plan when we set out is going to be getting those classes right away, find out about the kids, find out what their needs, establish our goal very quickly.

APPENDIX K: CASE REPORT 2 – SAMPLE OF PARTICIPANT-RESERACHER INTERVIEW (MONITORING TEACHING AND LEARNING GOALS)

P: One of the things that we talked about was making our learning more visible, making sure that people knew what our goals were, making sure that the kids knew, the parents knew, that the teachers knew we could articulate what their goals were.

P: One of the things I think I did too at the beginning was I tried to do too much, and so I think once we set out on what our goals are we want to try to keep that the focus as best we can so that we're not taking things that are way off out in centerfield. 'The work' is the work and we make that the focus. I don't know if that's part of me being a new principal and just trying, "we'll volunteer to do that; no, I'll take that on; yes, we'll do that." Sometimes you have to say no to make sure that what's on the table is the kid's work and what your school focus is.

P: I know I say that a lot, with the relationship building, the buy-in, but there does have to be those non-negotiables that you just expect. That comes with a little bit of time though.

R: Can you see a time when it's just support, or is part of the role of the principal always pressure and support?

P: I think it's unique to the building that you're in and the circumstances that you're in. You're never going to have 100% where you're going to say, okay, I'm here to support you. You know that they're always going to be those people that are going to need that bit of pressure.

P: When we first had these conversations, like I said, I let people vent, but that didn't mean we weren't going to do it, right. It's because it's what the students needed. When we looked at the data and we talked about their needs, we looked at their observations, their comments. Many times that's what I would say to the staff, "Well, this is what you've told us. This is what you're telling us that you're students can or cannot do at this point." This is directly coming from what our conversations were. The pressure piece was big.

P: I think over time, jaded is not the right word, but I think you come to a point where you realize, no, this is my role. My role is the principal. My first concern is the student's success and I do that by supporting my teachers. They've got a great profession. They get paid very well and it's their responsibility to do it. Before I would have went up and said to them, "here is the rationale." Now I think I'm more direct in my approach. It's more, "Hey, dude, what's going on? Why don't I have that? Why isn't' that on my desk? Why are we talking?" Not to say that I'm not empathetic if there are reasons and all that sort of thing. I'm much more direct in my dealings with the staff. I think that's because I know the role a little bit better and I think that's part of knowing the role is that it is my job. It is my job to ensure that these things are happening in my building.

APPENDIX L: CASE REPORT 2 – SAMPLE OF PARTICIPANT-RESERACHER INTERVIEW (CHANGES IN LEADERSHIP STYLE)

P: My first year, I looked at the data, I interpreted the data, and I said, "This is where we need to go."

R: I wonder if there's times when we do know the answer, yet, being a co-learner and not the expert is probably still the right thing to do because there's something about that stance that's important to Instructional Leadership?

P: Yes, I think that would be a very wise thing to do, because like we said, when you're down in the trenches with them it's more powerful. That's why, even with our school's PLCs, I always try to make sure that, unless somebody was on fire, you get down there. You're part of that learning next to them. It's valued. They know that the principal is a very busy person. To take time out of the day to go down and do some learning with them, I think the teachers really appreciate that. That gives you some street cred right?

P: I've had a lot of experience with it over the last few years, but to come in and say well, just look to me. I will tell you everything you need to know. That's not a good model in the classroom, so why would it be a good model for the professional learning in the building?

P: I want to be able to go up to a child and say, "hey, you know what, we're working on 'connections' right now and what connection did you make with this piece of ... here or tell me a little bit about how you understand this piece of writing based on 'dat-da-da …" Being able to go into classrooms and hear kid talking about it, seeing teachers talking about it in the hallways.

P: When I walk into a classroom when I hear the way kids are talking to each other, I know if some of the things that we've put in place are working based on those conversations.

P: Friday night at 5:30, myself, an LST, and two teachers examining the bulletin boards outside their classroom and discussing how this could be clustered with this answer and how this answer differs from there and how this teacher didn't get some of the answers they had but their kids approached it a different way, to me that was invaluable. Friday night, 5:30, geez Louise!

P: One of the things that I think I changed though, rather than having that expert from the ministry there, I talked to the staff as me being a learner too. I'm learning with you because right now, I don't know what the needs of the school are. I don't know what your needs as teachers are. I don't know what our professional learning goals need to be. I don't know what the students' goals need to be, so we're going to learn a lot. From Day 1 as a principal, that's been my philosophy. We're learning together and I've seen that now, coming to this new school, that's been a very similar philosophy. This is a unique situation where we're bringing two schools together. We've got to learn about each other first before any other professional learning can take place.

P: I think the journey that we've been on as a board follows the journey that I've done with the PLCs as well. A few years ago, everything was prescribed. PD was pretty prescribed. …. Having some autonomy around that I think is fantastic so that the work in your school is not the same as the work at the school down the road, but it may be similar to the school two doors down the road, and having the opportunity to work with those people is invaluable too. Having some autonomy.

APPENDIX M: CASE REPORT 2 – SAMPLE OF PARTICIPANT-RESERACHER INTERVIEW (SUPPORTING THE GROWTH OF INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERS)

Case Report 2: Sample of Participant-Research Interview – Supporting the Growth of Instructional Leaders

P: Network of colleagues. Some of my discussions trying not to just pick the friends or people that I think like you but calling other people and saying, "What are you doing in the … PLC with this, or how do you get the staff to buy-in to this?" There was definitely some learning around there, talking to some …principals who've done it, learning a little bit more that way.

P: Working with like-minded individuals so that you're not recreating the wheel, but you're working together on your focus and getting multiple perspectives, not just the perspectives at your school but from other places.

P: It's almost like a circle here. We're going to go back to that networking piece. I had an opportunity earlier this year to go to a PLC at a different school, and I was doing some personal learning to bring back to my own school. I had an opportunity then, I said to the principal, "hey, can we take a walk around your building?" He said, "Sure," and the next thing I know we're walking through classrooms, and I'm just asking questions, firing questions left and right.

P: That's what I said earlier when we were talking about the group of the four of us [research participants] that met. It was nice to hear that there was some insecurities on the other people, because I'm relatively new to this and so knowing that, you know what sometimes there is bad things that you're feeling about 'Well my PLC or what I'm doing' or that sort of thing and I know if that's just inherent to the job because of being kind of like that lone person and going back that lone person at the top, that hierarchy part, that lone person at the top because not too many people come and say, hey, you're doing a bang up job.

P: The other thing I think is really important is to make sure that there's a network of colleagues that you can call upon and our board has been really good with that, especially for new leaders.

R: You said that you've had the opportunity to go into classrooms. Are there other pieces of that puzzle? Is it simply about saying to principals, you can go to your neighbour's school on PLC time? Are there other parts of that context?

P: My former superintendent at the last building came in and one of the things that I appreciated the most about her was that when she came in, she said, "You know what, I don't know this. When we're talking today, you're going to be teaching me." There was certainly pressure and support from that individual. I was very comfortable having these discussions because I knew she was learning right alongside me. If I didn't know the answers, I didn't feel ... I had to know because she's telling me right there … so being that role model, being that I'm hoping that when I go in and I say, "I'm a lifelong learner. I'm going to be the lead learner." I want the staff to believe me. I want them to know that I am learning alongside with them. When I have that coming from the superintendent, I think that helps with the relationship piece there.

P: Absolutely because if that person were to come in and pretended to know everything, then our conversation wouldn't have been authentic. That question in the back of my mind well do they know what they're talking about, that sort of thing, and I really did appreciate that when that happened. It put me at ease because it's not this person that knows everything is coming in to grill me and ask me all these questions. I'm not going to know my answers and geez what's going to happen and they'll maybe make a vice-principal again. That's the support that I want to see from our superintendents as well.

APPENDIX N: CASE REPORT 2 – SAMPLE OF PARTICIPANT-RESERACHER INTERVIEW (PRINCIPAL LEARNING CULTURE)

*P: When I went into the role as principal at [*PS], it was a lot different because I was the guy now. I felt like I almost went back to square one again with the confidence level. With, hey, do I really know what I'm talking about? Now I'm the one that's leading it, not the one that's just helping to support it.*

R: One of my questions earlier was how do principals learn? Does it need to look the same? Is there any reason why those great learning principles don't apply to us? If they don't apply, should they? … do we [as principals] need to work on relationships, develop trust, co-learn, co-plan. If so, what are the implications for systems to do that?

P: Yes, it's not an easy fix. I even think of, as a parallel, my own staff meetings because to me the vehicle right now would be those principal meetings. Maybe it's the principal learning sessions, we talked about that.

R: You've talked in great detail about the content, but also the conditions in the environment, the culture, that you create … If my question is, how do you support principals' growth in Instructional Leadership, what are those supportive conditions? What does that learning need to look like? Is there any reason why that learning shouldn't look like the learning you just described?

P: There have been opportunities for learning and I think those opportunities have gotten better. We've done some things like the carousels, so that I'm not sitting through a presentation that, you know, my school has already mastered this or this has nothing to do with what's going on in my building right now. You get an opportunity to go to what interests you and where you're learning.

R: So choice, as a piece of that?

P: Choice is in there, I think. A lot of my learning too happened with the instructional coach, especially when we talk about that content subject, the subject matter. Oh, I've got a great piece on this. Here's some professional reading that I want to pass on to you, those sorts of things.

P: As we're talking, I envision the next principal learning session where I've got 15 of my colleagues meeting here and there's 15 colleagues meeting at [one school], and there's 15 meeting at [a different school], and there's 15 meeting somewhere else. That's based on what's important to them. We're going through the schools and we're talking context. My school has a math-focus so I've got some math principals that have that same focus. Maybe [one school site] is working on some comprehension things. Maybe that's the way that we look at it in the real world.

APPENDIX O: TAXONOMIC ANALYSIS – PARTICIPANT 2

Taxonomic Analysis – Participant 2

1. **Semantic Relationship/Cover Term: Instructional Leadership**
    a. Goals of Instructional Leadership
        i. Creating a learning culture in the school
        ii. Improving student outcomes
        iii. Improving/ changing teacher practice - mindset
    b. Attributes of Instructional Leadership
        i. Building relationships - Creating a learning culture
        ii. Identifying student and staff learning needs
        iii. Monitoring implementation – pressure and support
    c. Change in the role of the principal
        i. Shift from a focus on operations/management to Instructional Leadership
        ii. Shift in leadership style – shared leadership model
        iii. Shift from lead knower to lead (co) learner
        iv. Empowerment of principals – autonomy for personal and school learning
    d. Challenge to the role of principal as Instructional Leader
        i. Time/ competing priorities
        ii. Ambiguity of the 'new work'

2. **Semantic Relationship/Cover Term: Monitoring growth and development of Instructional Leaders**
    a. Monitoring strategies
        i. Evidence in student work/ understanding/ communication
        ii. Evidence in staff understanding/ communication
        iii. Feedback from others

3. **Semantic Relationship/ Cover Term: Support for Instructional Leaders**
    a. Strategies to support growth and development
        i. Support from peers – informal/ formal
        ii. System supports – Instructional Coach
        iii. System supports – formal/informal structures – Principal meetings
        iv. System supports – Role of the Superintendent
        v. Creating a learning culture for principals
        vi. Role of the professional organization

4. **Semantic Relationship/ Cover Term: School Support Visit Process**
    a. Results of engaging in the School support Visit process
        i. Deepening personal understanding
        ii. Access to multiple examples/ "comparatives"
        iii. Developing/ understanding multiple "perspectives"
        iv. Development/ modelling of a learning culture

APPENDIX P: CASE REPORT 2 – SAMPLE OF PARTICIPANT-RESERACHER INTERVIEW (GOALS OF INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP)

R: So what do we call that? Is that student achievement?

P: I'm reluctant to use that term, too. That's why I didn't use it deliberately.

P: Critical thinking. I think critical thinking for me is a piece of an even bigger puzzle which drives me. It sounds ridiculous but the big goal for me is you want to make the world better than when you walked into it and I really believe that we're in a bit of a mess in so many ways and this next generation's going to be taking care of my kids. I think it's critical that we have people that are graduating to become good citizens and good stewards of the earth and aren't going to be fooled by the sales pitches that are thrown at them all the time. So it's a global goal for me.

R: My wondering is where that fits in your work as an instructional leader?

P: That's all about leveraging change and I actually like to be able to look at the scores and find something that I think is going to make people's jaw drop. When I look at the EQAO scores, that's really what I'm looking for. I'm looking for affirmation, something I can say to people as a success. I'm looking for something that says, "Oh my gosh, do you realize that if you're a boy and you're in grade three, only one out of of every three of you will get the chance to go to a university". That's a call to action.

R: You said scores are used to leverage, and they lead to a call to action. Can I follow, then, that Instructional Leadership has as its outcome, this call to action … This call to action is about what?

P: Culture

P: Whole school. Wow we really need to do something about this, this is really serious and everybody needs to help us. That could be really powerful.

P: The power of everyone doing that in on individual basis is when we get together and talk, we're going to have fascinating conversations about how we implement that and what's working or what isn't working. That to me is the Holy Grail … that's what you're after.

P: The degree to which teachers feel comfortable sharing outside of their circle I think would be a really good sign.

P: In the same way that you can leverage policy, you can leverage time and structure. You've got staff meetings, we all do that; you've got future performance appraisals, we all do that, but is there a way you can leverage those structures to meet those goals to improve student achievement and improve teaching? So that's the skill.

P: I'm coming to understand that, that's probably one of the biggest things I do is professional development for staff, and what that looks like, and where it takes place, and in what structures it occurs.

P: They are more comfortable getting in each other's classrooms and being a participant in the co-planning and the feedback. As I look ahead to the next year, my goal would be to streamline that in such a way that we have more consistency of sharing practice.

APPENDIX Q: CASE REPORT 1 – SAMPLE OF PARTICIPANT-RESERACHER INTERVIEW (CHANGING ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL)

P: I think the art of the leader is knowing which approach is required and when, given the context. I keep operating in the framework that I've studied, which is those four styles of leadership. Always moving towards the non-directive leadership but using the other styles when required.

P: You can't just bring about change just because you said so. I mean, you have to have credibility. You have to have trust. All those precursors to change have to be present and that I certainly didn't know.

P: My own journey was, you know, for first year principal, really not having a handle on, or the confidence to direct instruction in any way. And that's what I would've seen it as at that time. I would've seen it as directing instruction.

P: That's a philosophy that I'm coming back to in terms of my own learning - that I can't learn on my own, and maybe that's just me, I don't know. The best learning for me occurs in teams, or partners, or triads, or whatever. There has to be a conversation.

APPENDIX R: CASE REPORT 3 – SAMPLE OF PARTICIPANT-RESERACHER INTERVIEW (SUPPORT FOR INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERS)

P: I've also continued with the PLT model and I've taken a different direction with that this year in that I've tried to acknowledge that Dual Track is new to me. And I don't know anything about French Immersion, but I know some experts who are really good at it. We've looked at that specifically as an instructional challenge this year.

R: Who is your PLT?

P: It's the other principals in dual track schools. That was chosen on purpose because I think we have some unique things that occur in dual track schools that we need to tackle.

P: One of the challenges in the PLT has been kind of this idea that it's not a sanctioned activity. The people that are in my PLT think that's pretty neat. They actually like the idea that it's not sanctioned. There's a little bit of a thrill there in some way. But I think if this was something we were trying to bring to scale, there would need to be, not controlled by that sanctioning, but a public sanctioning of, "Yes. It's okay to do this and here are some ways you can make it happen."

P: So I've been able to connect with people that have been dealing with that kind of a problem for a longer period of time. I have some insight in terms of why those things happen and that's been better able to help me inform in terms of what I do at the building. But it's also built for me credibility among the immersion staff because you can't bring about change without credibility.

P: I had the superintendents join us at Visible Learning. It made the conversations that we had when the school visits happened more real. They knew the staff; they had watched me interact with the staff, so they had a handle on our style and our approach.

P: And yet I still think the formal has value because the formal insures that we are getting outside of our social sphere, you know? And we need to have opportunities to speak to people that we wouldn't normally choose to speak with, or having been selected to be a part of a team with. Because otherwise those voices never come to the table.

P: I think one reason that it was valuable for me was the efficacy to know that I have something to offer. It kind of gives me a little more confidence in my own practice to know that any of the things that people think are pretty good ideas and that feels good when you hear that. But also being with people who will challenge you and won't say "Oh that's great" to everything you say, who will prompt your own thinking around the problems.

P: I don't even want to talk about System Principal's Meetings. I've just given up, but that stuff has to happen. I think it would be easy to be in that system and think that a good job meant I was following the policies the way they were articulated and I knew where to look to have the work orders done. I think it would be easy to think that that is the job based on what the system teaches us and what ... it's totally rouge based on conversations and my own research and wonderings that this is where it needs to go, and opportunities from the system that I've had, which lots of other people did not have.

P: I wonder if we even have a professional learning culture among principals. I would struggle to define that. We have a group of people that get together once a month. There are probably lots of informal things that go on, but I don't know if we even have a formal learning culture, per se. It's interesting to hear peoples' responses to the things that we go to that are set up for us to learn. And, you know, I liken it to a class. I said to the people before that presenting in front of principals is one of the worst groups because they're just not engaged at all. And I think that that's true to some extent. You know, when we go to so called formal learning sessions I don't

know how much learning is really going on. Lots of people are on their devices, you know, people happy to see each other and engaging in conversations in there that may not be related. But I don't know if we have a formal learning culture.

R: What are the implications of that … Can we ask principals to grow as instructional leaders in the absence of those conditions?

P: I think the short answer is, no. I don't think we can. I think it's a tall order though because to some degree you're doing the habitual things that people are used to. You do have a pretty homogeneous group I think for the most part, and that makes it challenging because one of the things that makes collaboration valuable is having different people at the table. So if you don't have different people to draw from it could be tough. So there are significant barriers to making it happen, but I do think it has to happen.

P: I think a huge part of our challenge is who really knows what we d?. I mean, that's a huge challenge. We are alone in the building and who really knows what we do? I mean, the superintendent is in the office downtown and they might get the occasional call from a parent to complain but other than that, who really knows what we do?

P: Part of it is the lack of opportunity, I think, both in terms of just day to day work. I mean, we're not into building with another person, so it's not convenient or easy to have any kind of informal discussion. I don't know that we encourage… I mean, I think it gets said, but I don't know that we encourage it in meaningful ways where people have a chance to experience it and see the value. If someone wants to be on an island and they don't want to interact, they are able to do that within the structure.

R: So there's an autonomy that allows them to opt out?

P: That's right. I know in working with teachers, that the teachers who are most insecure of their practice tend to isolate themselves. They're not the ones that will readily jump in and contribute to professional learning conversations because of their insecurity and I would wonder if the same is true of people in the administrative role.

P: I think that acknowledgement that principals have different skillsets and have different developmental levels with respect to Instructional Leadership is important because the reality is, like any child who learns, you don't want to be under-challenged and be sitting through something that's really simplistic. At the same time, I don't know that everybody can sit and listen to some of the experts that are out there and fully grasp what their concepts are either, so I think sort of a differentiated approach.

P: But also, to some degree, an element of choice for principals to be able to engage in the type of model that works best for them. Because I think what I've learned is, it's not a one-size-fits-all kind of concept. And if you introduce the idea of choice, I think you increase people's motivation and that's an important component too. Somebody has to want to learn how to be a good instructional leader. Otherwise, they're not going to.

P: You still own the learner, so whether it's a student, or a teacher or administrator, we all want to own learning. We'll buy in more if we feel it's ours.

P: I think a voice that's missing is ... oh, you mentioned OPC and I thought, Yeah, you recall it. Like where are they in this piece and what role do they have? Why aren't they a player in that journey?

APPENDIX S: CASE REPORT 3 – SAMPLE OF PARTICIPANT-RESERACHER INTERVIEW (ROLE OF PARADIGM)

P: I think part of it is that we are in a time of shift maybe and that you know not even just within education, but within organizations generally speaking. You know, gone are the hierarchical days, the rise of the middle class is something that has a role here too I think. So I think it's just this breaking out of that shell of hierarchy overall and I don't know what the future of that is. I sometimes wonder if that's more of a pendulum that swings back & forth. So if I come to the table understanding the world as hierarchy and I'm waiting for the structure to tell me what to do, I don't get upset with people for wondering that because that's what they understand the structure is.

P: It's interesting because that is a cultural piece. And I think every organization, to some degree, is going to struggle with that because everybody comes to the table with some preconceived ideas about hierarchy. You certainly know it when you talk to people - to what degree are people comfortable really sharing what they think versus trying to tell you what they think you want to hear. That is something that you can pretty much detect, I think,early on if you're perceptive.

P: One of the great things that I think about is how an action on the part of the administrator can be good or bad completely based on its context. So the empirical model just doesn't work. I mean, so if a principal comes in and says, "All right. I think we need to become a 'Tribes school' and that's going to fix all of our problems." In one school, it may. In another school, it may not. It really is dependent on the needs of the kids and of the staff, of the trust that exists between those people and the relationships and the climate and the culture. Empirical doesn't work. And I think I used to feel really badly that I didn't ... because I think I have more of an empirical mindset. I used to always feel really badly that I couldn't quite grasp why it was that things would work or not work. As I've come to better understand adaptive thinking and then adaptive mindset, all of a sudden, it makes a lot more sense to me that you really need to decide what the actions are based on the context of the many variables that exist. And that requires a lot of thought.

P: I stopped looking as closely at test scores and assessments. Not that I don't. I do. I started looking a lot more though at the qualitative stuff. How do the kids perceive the program while thinking of the demographics or if they articulate all? What can I ask kids when I go in the classrooms and what do they tell me and what does that mean? What does the teacher's choice of words tell me about their belief system? That's a whole other analytical framework to look at things through.

P: I think there is room for [explicitly studying paradigms and perspectives] because that's ultimately what we're talking about, is growth for principals and I think it is important that principals come to understand that there are different ways. Because it not only impacts on their view of the system and the relationship they have with the system, but it would also impact on their view of their staff and the culture that they build among their staff. To be able to go across the hall and say "Well that teacher is a constructivist," and "This one believes in the empirical model." I would think it would be very helpful in terms of how I help them grow because if I know what their world view is, I'm going to have a much better understanding on why they do what they do and then I can relate to them in a better way.

P: I think it looks like more time spent collaborating and working together on the task at hand. So if it's a principal-superintendent relationship, then it probably means the superintendent is in the school more often and no disrespect. It's a hard thing to balance because they're in a similar situation. They have pressures from the ministry and from the director and from the trustees. They have to address those too. But if that's something that is a desirable outcome - to build that, then the time has to be spent.

APPENDIX T: TAXONOMIC ANALYSIS – PARTICIPANT 3

Taxonomic Analysis – Participant 3

1. **Semantic Relationship/Cover Term: Instructional Leadership**

    a Goals of Instructional Leadership
        vi. Creating a learning culture in the school
        vii. Improving student outcomes
        viii. Improving/ changing teacher practice
    b. Attributes of Instructional Leadership
        i. Leveraging change
        ii. Supporting professional learning for staff
    c. Change in the role of the principal
        i. Shift from a focus on operations/management to Instructional Leadership
        ii. Shift in leadership style – shared leadership model
        iii. Shift from lead knower to lead (co) learner
    d. Challenges to the role of principal as Instructional Leader
        i. Ambiguity of the 'new work' – learning implications

2. **Semantic Relationship/ Cover Term: Support for Instructional Leaders**

    a. Strategies to support growth and development
        i. Support of peers – formal/informal
        ii. System supports – "Monthly Principal Meetings"/ structures
        iii. System support – Role of the Superintendent
        iv. Creating a learning culture for principals
        v. Role of the professional organization

3. **Semantic Relationship/ Cover Term: Culture of the Principalship**

    a. Learning culture of principals
        i. Characteristics of principals
        ii. Nature of a formal learning culture
        iii. Collaborative culture
        iv. Isolation/ trust/ vulnerability

4. **Semantic Relationship/ Cover Term: School Support Visit Process**

    a. Results of engaging in the School support Visit process
        i. Deepening personal understanding of the SSV team
        ii. Leadership
        iii. Access to multiple examples/ iterations/ comparatives
        iv. Understanding/ developing multiple "lenses"
        v. Understanding/ developing multiple "perspectives"

5. **Semantic Relationship/ Cover Term: Paradigm**

    a. Principal statements about paradigm
        i. Qualitative approach
        ii. Explicitly studying paradigms
        iii. System structure/ 'hierarchy'

APPENDIX U: CASE REPORT 4 – SAMPLE OF PARTICIPANT-RESERACHER INTERVIEW (INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP GOALS)

R: When I talk about Instructional Leadership with a variety of people, this notion of the conditions, the context, the environment, the culture continually comes up. Are those intentional things we do? Are they completely separate issues? Or does Instructional Leadership in your definition really include this stuff too?

P: I think it's all about people. If you respect people and if people feel respected, you can do anything. People will do anything. If people feel that ... You know, I know that everybody that comes into this building does truly want to make a difference with kids. They spend countless hours and they have the best of intentions. If you validate that and you make them feel like they have good ideas and that you are going to listen, anything is possible … as far as I'm concerned.

R: I'm wondering now as we struggle with what we mean when we say, "Instruction leader," and we say, some of its culture and some of its content." If it really is …

P: To me, it's more like it's getting the conditions right so that you can all sit down. People have to be committed. This is serious business here. You're trying to make a positive change. You're trying to look at these kids and say, "Okay, this is what I'm faced with. How am I going to make it better for those kids?" To me, every day, how can we set them up for success? How can we make it better for them? How can we enable them to reach their potential? Those are the things. That's what we have to always have at the back of our head. There are all kinds of great ideas that people have but we have to … In a school, people have to commit that they're going to value trying those things not supporting each other but it's a commitment and accountability, too, that you're expecting everybody to buy in, like everybody. If you don't want to buy in, why are you here? Go somewhere else where they're looking at something else. That's the other thing, too. I think that people care. They care about each other. They'll try stuff . They learn from each other. There's a lot of learning that's going on from each other. I'm always encouraging people. "Do you see what 'so and so' is been on?"

P: We have to adapt with them or else we're not preparing them for the work world. I often talk about the work world, what's happening out there when kids get jobs, where are they going, what does it look like for them?

P: We have to make people take responsibility. They're a team. They are responsible for those kids. I think that's another thing that's changing. People used to think, the kids can't do the work so it wouldn't matter what I do, or it's your problem, it's the French teachers' problem. The vice principal is going to take care of that because that's a discipline problem. We don't operate like that.

P: That's empowering them now to me, that's empowerment. Some people may see that as downloading onto teachers and some teachers may think that's a download. Some principals might think that they're losing their own power, but I don't see that as my role.

R: Is that Instructional Leadership? When you're being an instructional leader does it include that stuff?

P: I think it does, because I think a lot of times people get caught up in what they're doing day to day and they don't reflect on what they're doing. If they've gotten into a rut and they'll look at kids and they'll say, "He can't do that," or "We won't be able to do that," or "That would be too much.." Other people on the staff are saying, "Well yes, they can do that." "Yes, let's try. Have you thought of this? Maybe we could do that." That's that can-do attitude that we can make it

work and we support each other. It may sound corny, but we talk about it as if we're a family. We're going to support each other.

R: The kind of work that we're talking about, I'm wondering, is it not doable under that mindset?

P: I don't think it is either because you can't get people to try stuff.

R: Much of what I hear you saying is more about the culture of the school in terms of openness and willingness of teachers to work … Is that intentional?

P: I think it's intentional because I keep saying and I've been saying this for a long time, we are trying to teach our children. We're trying to prepare our children for the workforce in this world that we're living in. We have to change the way we're thinking because all these things that they need to have, we have to be modeling that. We have to be able to think outside the box. We have to be able to come up with a solution. This is what these kids are going to have to do. If we're not doing that ourselves, what are we doing?

P: That's what we do here. I don't do it by myself. We do it together.

P: I just feel that the whole mindset of people… if they can't be open to different things, they're not living in 2012.

P: I think you have to be a person really, the personality part of it, I think is a big thing because if you don't have an open mindset, you're going to have problems. You're going to have problems with people. You're going to have problems with parents. You're going to have problems with kids. You're going to have lots of problems all the time.

APPENDIX V: CASE REPORT 4 – SAMPLE OF PARTICIPANT-RESERACHER INTERVIEW (MONITORING INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP)

P: I think because we are all trying to be in the classrooms more, we can maybe do more of it … some of it, anyway, incidentally, instead of formally sitting down at a meeting, whether it be like a division meeting or a few people at a same-grade level meeting. You can do some of that and get people thinking about things more incidentally when you're walking around more, and trying to be in the classrooms more, and trying to be more mindful of really what are the kids doing. I think we're all better able to see what's actually going on in rooms because we see the stuff that's in the room, we see the kind of work that the kids are doing, we're looking at the way they're improving. We're looking at all those things. We're much better at doing that now than we used to be. At least, I think I am.

R: What are you better at?

P: I think we're more focused on specifics. Just like when we look at our data now we can look at very specific things too as well as the global things. But I think that our conversations with our staff, they're more precise because we can comment; we can talk because we're co-learning with them.

P: Yes, we keep coming back to it. Because to me that's like a working document. Everything that you're doing … They may have to say the collaborative inquiry questions. When we were doing those, we changed those questions a little bit. Then we would do some work on it and then we would come back. That's aside from your PLC time or other times like that, but to bring that, to remind everybody that, "You know what? That's the center of what we're doing is that we're talking and we're looking at improving our student achievement all the time."

R: Is there something different about how you lead that or with whom you lead that than in the past?

P: I am very hands on. I know people tell me that, people who've come from other places. People will say, "You're very hands on. You know everything. You know what's going on." Or "People come to you. You're approachable." If somebody has a problem I want to know about it and they feel that they can tell me. If there's something going wrong or whatever it might be, they will tell me about it because I'm not going to judge them. I'm not going to say that "You're being a problem. It's your problem." I think that's important, that's an important part of growing.

APPENDIX W: CASE REPORT 4 – SAMPLE OF PARTICIPANT-RESERACHER INTERVIEW (CHANGES IN THE ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL)

P: I've always told people that I'm just like everybody else, I'm learning every day of my life, and that we have to get past that notion that ... I guess this goes back to my idea of it being more like a family and that we support each other. We're here to do a job together. We help each other and personally … like we've had people in crisis or whatever it might be … that we do support each other. Emotionally we put that out there for people so that when we do come together we are solving a problem. They will help each other. They will rise to the occasion.

R: Is that a necessary condition for the kind of work you …

P: I think it is. In my experience, people don't like to be told to do something, especially if they have nothing to say about it and then they don't feel like they're … they have any autonomy, I guess. I think it's important for people to feel that they're valued and their ideas are valued, that you trust them, that you value their experiences. I think that if people feel that, you're going to get more from them, because they feel … I think they'll be more productive. I think that they will, I don't know, I think it is a condition.

P: I think it is because it trickles right down to the kids. We're teaching the children differently. We're challenging people to think. We're challenging them to come up with ideas. We're challenging them to collaborate as a team, come up with an answer. We're not giving people answers.

P: I think people also know that you're not a dictator. When you say something, it's because you believe it and you're sincere. These people have children, we talk about their children. This is what we want for our children

P: In this role as opposed to a teacher, I am looking at the people, the staff. Yes, I'm looking at the kids too but I'm very focused on the people and how they are coming along and how they are trying different things. You're trying to grow them, too, as individuals and as groups of people because they are the leaders. They're the coming leaders.

P: If people feel content that they're valued, and that they have something to offer, and that they can open up and say when they don't know stuff, you're going to get a better result, because you're allowing all those ideas to come forward.

R: What's required for a principal to be able to make the observations you made and the assessment you made?

P: You have to be a part of it. You have to be the one. You, the principal, the vice principal have to really be knowledgeable to me, to make it authentic, so that your staff is going to buy in and be on board. Otherwise, you don't know what they're doing. If you have a great bunch of staff people doing things, that's fine, but what if you don't?

APPENDIX X: CASE REPORT 4 – SAMPLE OF PARTICIPANT-RESERACHER INTERVIEW (SCHOOL SUPPORT VISIT PROCESS)

R: Can you talk to me about the role that the SSV has played in the development of your understanding as an instructional leader? How are you different as an instructional leader because that's an experience that you've had?

P: That was a good model for me, too. I thought that was very helpful. I certainly realized that it is really true that what would work in one school might not work in another, and that really every school has its challenges, and every school is going to operate differently. There is no right way. I think that's another thing, that people have to feel the confidence that if somebody in another school might be doing something and it might be really fantastic, but that might not be right for you. You wouldn't feel comfortable doing it. You can still get good results and have good things happening without cloning yourself to be somebody else.

P: I think it also helps you to realize that every school is unique.

P: I just think that seeing different situations, seeing the ways different people approach it.

P: I think what I've seen is that there has been a real process of change across the system, and everybody is at a different stage whether it be an administrator, whether it be the teachers. And that's okay. We have to just accept the fact that we are at different stages.

APPENDIX Y: TAXONOMIC ANALYSIS – PARTICIPANT 4

Taxonomic Analysis – Participant 4

1. **Semantic Relationship/Cover Term: Instructional Leadership**

    a Goals of Instructional Leadership
        iv. Creating a learning culture in the school
        v. Improving/ changing teacher practice - mindset
        vi. Supporting student outcomes
        vii. Supporting the leadership development of others
    b. Attributes of Instructional Leadership
        i. Nurturing positive relationships with staff
        ii. Knowing your building – understanding the teaching/ learning context of your school
        iii. Monitoring implementation and improvement practices
    c. Change in the role of the principal
        i. Shift from a focus on operations/management to Instructional Leadership
        ii. Shift in leadership style – shared leadership model
        iii. Shift from lead knower to lead (co) learner

2. **Semantic Relationship/Cover Term: Monitoring growth and development of Instructional Leaders**

    a. Monitoring strategies
        i. Evidence in teacher practice
        ii. Evidence in student work
        iii. Feedback from others

3. **Semantic Relationship/ Cover Term: Support for Instructional Leaders**

    a. Strategies to support growth and development
        i. Support of peers
        ii. System supports – Instructional Coach
        iii. System supports - formal and informal structures
        iv. System supports – Role of the Superintendent
        v. Role of the professional organization

4. **Semantic Relationship/ Cover Term: School Support Visit Process**

    a. Results of engaging in the School support Visit process
        i. Leadership
        ii. Access to multiple examples/ “comparatives”
        iii. Development of a system perspective/ understanding

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ABSTRACT

EXPLORING THE GROWTH OF PRINCIPALS AS INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERS: AN INTERPRETIVE STUDY ABOUT THE NEW WORK OF SCHOOL LEADERS

by

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This study explored the emerging context of elementary school principals as they engage in the work of Instructional Leadership. Naturalistic Inquiry was adopted as a methodological framework to explore the unique perspectives and understandings of participants. Focus Group activities, surveys, small group interviews, and deep, recursive ethnographic interviews were used to capture rich and descriptive representations of principal understandings. Research questions explored the experiences and conditions that participants identified as essential for their growth as Instructional Leaders. The concept of paradigm and the implications of system structures and hierarchies was investigated as it relates to the supporting conditions necessary for principal growth with clear trends emerging about the shifting nature of school leadership to an Interpretive model. The findings of this study highlight an emerging description of the goals and attributes that elementary school principals ascribe to Instructional Leadership. Participating principals

identified that the intended outcomes of their work as instructional leaders included: 1) positively impacting broad measures of student outcomes; 2) positively impacting pedagogical change and growth for teachers; and 3) the creation of a learning culture within their schools. Additionally, principals identified that the key attributes of Instructional Leadership could be classified under four broad categories: 1) actions related to leadership style and approach; 2) actions which serve to facilitate the 'Improvement Planning Cycle' of schools; 3) establishing and maintaining a focus on the tasks of teaching and learning; and 4) engaging in actions that intentionally cultivate the learning culture of the school.

An analysis of the structures and conditions that principals identified as significant in supporting their growth emerged. These reside in: 1) support for self; 2) support from peers; 3) support from the system; and 4) support from the professional organization. A key finding of this study was a disconnect between the learning culture that principals cultivate in their buildings to foster collaboration, trust, co-learning and an inquiry mindset, and the learning culture that exists for principals. The role of the district, and particularly, the superintendent, was identified as essential to creating the supportive conditions – the culture of learning that principals identify as critical.

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL STATEMENT

Jeff Hillman received an Honours Bachelor of Human Kinetics (Applied Kinesiology) degree in 1991 and then completed a Bachelor of Education degree with a teaching specialty in Senior Biology in 1992, from the University of Windsor in Ontario, Canada. Mr. Hillman received a Master's Degree in Education from the University of Windsor with a program focus on Curriculum and Instruction. The culminating thesis was entitled: Barometric Stability of Self Esteem – Age Group, Gender and Locus of Control Effects.

Currently, Dr. Hillman is working as a Field Team Leader for the Ontario Ministry of Education's Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat. In this role, Dr. Hillman and his Field Team support the capacity building and professional learning of eight district school boards and their leaders. These school districts collectively serve more than 200,000 students in 500 schools across Southwestern Ontario. Prior to this secondment, Dr. Hillman served in the position of Superintendent of Education: K-12 School Effectiveness and Operations, with the Greater Essex County District School Board in Windsor, Ontario. His previous roles within the district include Supervising Principal – School Effectiveness Lead, Principal, Vice Principal and teacher.

Jeff Hillman resides in Windsor, Ontario, Canada.