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Early Career Principal Development: A qualitative case study of Principals' Perceptions of Participation in the Institute of Engaged Principal Leadership

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Early Career Principal Development: A qualitative case study of Principals' Perceptions of Participation in the Institute of Engaged Principal Leadership

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Abstract

This dissertation examines the perceptions of the participants in the Institute of Engaged Principal Leadership at the start and conclusion of their first year of sessions. The study used a single case study qualitative research approach incorporating semi-structured interviews questions, researcher observations, and review of documents throughout the 2012-2013 initial year of the Institute. The results indicate themes of growth within the participants' beliefs, confidence, focus on equity and student-centered school climate, and a need for networking within the educational leadership roles. Based upon these results, recommendations are provided for future Institutes as well as preparation programs for teachers and principals.

Keywords: Institute of Engaged Principal Leadership, equity, early career principal

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Background of the Problem

The roles and expectations of the K-12 principal position have shifted dramatically over the years. Recent reforms in education are intended to insure all students are achieving at high levels and instruction is aligned to academic standards with principals being held responsible for these improvements (Wallace Foundation, 2013). This is very different from Whyte's (1956) suggestion that the principal's position in the 1950's simply resembled a middle manager with a separate review by The Wallace Foundation (2012) describing the management during that timeframe as "an overseer of buses, boilers and books" (p. 4). In the last decades, education has experienced laws focused on accountability through No Child Left Behind (2002), standards based reforms, data tracking of student achievement for individual learners, and higher levels of necessary collaboration with professional learning communities. In response to these reforms and accountability, school improvement is dependent upon the quality of school leadership provided by principals (Hess & Kelly, 2005).

Principals now need to be continuous learners; along with inspiring and developing a highly effective staff. It isn't enough to insure that school logistics and policies are followed as society's expectations have increased for the principal (Wallace Foundation, 2013). Schools of the 21st and in preparation for our students' impact on the 22nd century require principals to be "well-versed in the art of instructional leadership, community leadership, and visionary leadership" (Institute for Educational Leadership brochure, 2012). This higher level of leadership is challenging enough for experienced

principals, let alone early career principals who are expected to demonstrate effectiveness; typically from day one of the job without formal support or mentoring.

This shift in leadership roles, combined with the increased accountability of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2002 and evidence of achievement gaps among student groups, calls for changes in the level of support provided to early career principals. Many in the field of education advocate that a major need is for "school leaders to primarily focus on improving instruction that provides equitable experiences to open up access for successful pathways for all students" (Braun, Gable, & Kite, 2008, p.4). Marzano (2003) analyzed 35 years of research and found "school leadership has a substantial effect on student achievement" (p. 12). A substantial improvement is needed when considering the level of achievement gap among students within the state of Minnesota.

State assessment results from 2012 as reported on the Minnesota Department of Education website show a proficiency achievement gap of 35.7% between White, not of Hispanic origin and Black, not of Hispanic origin students in math The proficiency achievement gap between White, not of Hispanic origin students and Hispanic students was slightly less, yet wide, at 30.1%. The 2012 reading Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment II results reported achievement gaps of 29.2% between White, not of Hispanic origin students compared with Black, not of Hispanic origin students and 28.1% when compared with Hispanic students. Furthermore, this achievement gap was nationally apparent in a graduation rate report conducted by the U.S. Department of Education (2012). The four year cohort graduation rate in 2011 for Hispanic/Latino

compared to White, not of Hispanic origin students showed the widest gap being in Minnesota when compared with all states in the nation at 33% along with the Hispanic/Latino graduation rate of 51% being the lowest in the nation.

The elimination of this level of achievement gap will call for new skills in our school leaders as problem solvers, change agents, and navigators of political processes (Foster, 2004; Cambron-McCabe & McCarthy, 2005). "Leaders within these roles need to engage in critical analysis of the conditions that have perpetuated historical inequities in schools and are willing to work to change institutional structures and culture" (Cambron-McCabe & McCarthy, 2005, p. 202). Shifting or changing the culture of an organization toward a mindset that truly believes that all students can and will learn, with no thoughts of "if only", takes a strong sense of moral purpose (Fullan, 2003). A moral purpose of this level begins with the belief system of the building leader, the principal, and can only be achieved when beliefs are demonstrated through behaviors.

Clearly articulating a leader's beliefs and consistently demonstrating these beliefs in behaviors requires confidence, knowledge, courage, and support. This level of confidence and courage can make the difference for today's principals. Bandura (1986) studied social cognitive theory and reported, "People who regard themselves as highly efficacious act, think, and feel differently from those who perceive themselves as inefficacious. They produce their own future, rather than simply foretell it" (p. 26). Developing a high level of efficacy in one's leadership abilities doesn't just happen. Levin and Fullan (2008) stated, "Strong leadership does not just emerge; it must be developed and cultivated" (p. 205). When one considers the high stakes for students'

learning and success for all learners, it is surprising how little support there is for new principals in their transition to these new roles and expectations (Watkins, 2003).

In response to the increased expectations of school principals, need to diminish the achievement gaps in learning, and transformational changes that must occur in our educational systems; a call for higher levels of professional development and support for early career principals is needed (Daresh, 2001; Hallinger & Murphy, 1985). Becoming an effective principal does not end with a degree or certification, yet a review of literature shows that early career principal support and induction programs are lacking in availability and content (Aycock, 2006; Villani, 2006; Wardlow, 2008).

The Institute for Engaged Principal Leadership was created in 2012 to address the increased demands of principals' leadership skills, improve student achievement for all, and to fill the void of support for early career principals beyond acquiring their administrative degree. The Institute brochure states, "The mission of the Institute is to advance student achievement in Minnesota through the development of courageous principal leaders who demonstrate a desire to lead with a moral imperative" (Minnesota State University Mankato, 2012).

A primary focus of this Institute is to develop leadership skills necessary to eliminate gaps in achievement, teaching, and participation; also referred to as equity and access. The participants of the initial Institutes were early career principals with five years or less experience and a desire to cultivate their ability to "create a school culture where every student is fully engaged, educated, and accepted" (Minnesota State University Mankato, 2012). This Institute addresses the limited supports currently in

place in education leadership development and enhances principals' approaches and habits based upon best practice and current research (Villani, 2006).

The development of this Institute is the first step in contributing to the research of the professional development of early career principal skills with the necessary next step being to understand how the participants perceived its value and applied the content. This study uncovered those perceptions and applications as well as serving as a contribution to the body of research in regards to early career principal professional development.

Purpose Statement

The purposes of this qualitative case study were to identify early career Principals' perceptions of the benefits of participating in the Institute of Engaged Principal Leadership, discover how the principals applied the components of this Institute in their work, and identify further support needed by early career Principals. The Institute of Engaged Principal Leadership was developed in 2012 by the Center for Engaged Leaders in partnership with Minnesota State University, Mankato. Participation in this Institute was over two years with this study conducted at the mid-point of one year to identify benefits, application of components, and provide insights into possible revisions for future Institutes.

Research Questions

1. What are the perceptions of early career Principals as the benefits of participation in the Institute of Engaged Principal Leadership?

2. How did early career Principals apply the components of the Institute of Engaged Principal Leadership to their work as a Principal?
3. What further support is identified by early career Principals as significant to their work as a Principal?

Research Methodology

The research methodology for this study was a qualitative case study examining the single activity of the Institute of Engaged Principal Leadership; a single case study (Creswell, 2013). A case study is designed as a "qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a real-life, contemporary bounded system over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information and reports" (p. 97). This study aligned with the definition of a case study in that the Institute is a real-life professional development activity taking place within a specified timeframe. Furthermore, the intent of this study was to identify the benefits and applications of the components of the Institute, illustrating a unique case with "unusual interest in and of itself" (Creswell, 2013, p. 98; Stake, 1995).

The sample size for this study was the 35 participants of the Institute for Engaged Principal Leadership. All of the participants fit the criteria as being early in their career as they were within the first five years in the role as principal, assistant principal, dean of students, director, or coordinator. These participants represented ten different school districts with a combination of urban, suburban, and outstate geographic locations.

The Institute for Engaged Principal Leadership was developed through the Center for Engaged Leadership in partnership with Minnesota State University, Mankato. The

mission of this institute is to advance student achievement in Minnesota through the development of courageous principal leaders who demonstrate a desire to lead with a moral imperative. Inclusion of a focus on leading with a moral imperative was in response to the call for the need to lead during unprecedented educational change and address the achievement gap occurring in the state of Minnesota as shown in Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment results of racial groups.

The facilitators created the Institute with the underpinnings of seven learning strands: a) developing self, b) developing others, c) change processes, d) equity and achievement, e) high leverage leadership, f) political leadership, and g) communication. Every activity, discussion, and presentation was aligned to one or more of these learning strands and were planned throughout the sessions in a cyclical structure to insure that experiences built upon one another.

Data collection for this study included multiple forms of information; pre and post individual interviews conducted with the participants of the Institute of Engaged Principal Leadership, observations in the natural setting of the Institute setting, collection of documents, and follow up interviews with individuals. The individually video-taped pre and post interviews were structured and included identical open-ended questions to discover possible changes in leadership behaviors and beliefs. Information from these individual interviews provided insights into the perceptions of the participants as to the benefits of participating in the Institute.

Observations during the Institute were documented through field notes recorded by the researcher in an unstructured manner (Creswell, 2003). Throughout the Institute

sessions, the researcher maintained the role of observer (Junker, 1960). A step taken to address researcher bias included reflection within the field notes to support the ability for reflexivity (Richards, 2009).

As a follow up to the pre and post individual interviews, additional in depth interviews were conducted with a sampling of the Institute participants. The purpose of the follow up interviews was to discover how participants applied the components of the Institute into their leadership behaviors and actions. These in depth interviews were conducted with four participants who were in the position of principal a year after the conclusion of the Institute and either still at the same school or within the same school district. The follow up interviews were conducted individually, video/audio-taped, and incorporated a semi-structured question format to allow for clarification and deeper reflection.

Finally, the researcher collected documents created as a part of the Institute of Engaged Leadership. Documents included communication with participants, public documents of instructional presentations for the participants and district leaders who facilitated these early career principals' participation, as well as articles, and artifacts used during Institute sessions.

Data analysis of the interviews conducted during this study were transcribed into word documents in order to review and analyze to gain a general sense of the information and reflect on the overall meaning of the participants' perceptions (Creswell, 2003). The information was organized and coded to discover the themes within the participants' perceptions. The themes of perceptions of benefits, application of components, and

further needs were represented by the researcher along with further possibilities for study.

Limitations of the Study

This study is limited to the first year of the Institute of Engaged Principal Leadership and the participants. As a single case study, the results may not be generalized to a broader realm of early career principal professional development programs. Albeit, the purpose of this study is to provide a context for future Institutes and the hope that these findings may guide the development of principal development supports and preparation programs.

Due to time schedules of conducting the pre-institute and after first year of institute interviews, five participants were interviewed at the pre-institute timeframe who were not able to be included at the conclusion of the first year. One additional participant was interviewed in the after first year of institute but was not able to be included at the start.

Definition of Key Terms

Achievement gap. Statistically significant disparity of performance between groups of students on the same assessment ("http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/studies/gaps/", 2014).

Equity. This study references educational equity. To eliminate educational barriers based on gender, race/ethnicity, national origin, color, disability, age, or other protected group status (Bitters, n.d.).

Instructional leadership. Leadership characterized by actions directly connected to curriculum, instruction, and student achievement. Utilizing skills in goal setting, constructive feedback, developing teachers' instructional strategies, and alignment of standards to curriculum to instruction in one's leadership. (Cotton, 2003; Murphy, 1998).

Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCA). State-wide standards-based accountability assessments for the state of Minnesota ("http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/SchSup/TestAdmin/MNTests/", 2015).

No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Federal legislation PL 107-110 approved on January 8, 2002 and legislates standards-based education reforms. NCLB focuses on reducing racial and class gaps in school performance. It further requires states to create assessments and test all students in state identified grade levels. (No Child Left Behind Act, 2002).

Professional learning communities. A continuous process of educators working collaboratively to share learning, analyze student data, and enhance teaching effectiveness to improve student achievement (Hord, 1997).

School climate. School environment characterized by physical, social, and academic dimensions (Loukas, 2007).

Student-centered. An instructional approach based on constructivist learning and shared responsibility between teacher and student. A humanistic orientation with the student engaged in problem solving, inquiry, and development of learning opportunities (Garrett 2008; Edwards, 2004; Willower 1975).

Teacher-centered. An instructional approach focused on the teacher delivering information in a one way transmission. The learning environment is custodial in nature with the teacher making the majority of the decisions (Garrett, 2008; Willower, 1975).

Summary

Improving student achievement is at the forefront of education now more than ever with the No Child Left Behind Legislation's (2002) overall emphasis on accountability and high levels of learning for all students. In order to achieve this goal, our educational organizations require highly effective teachers and principals. Initial studies identified the importance of teacher quality with recent studies recognizing the value of principal quality to lead our schools.

This study adds to the research on the increased responsibilities that are necessary in the role of the principal as well as the effectiveness of current principal preparation programs and professional development needed for principals early in their career.

Chapter II

Review of the Literature

Introduction

This chapter presents a review of literature on the issues, challenges, and necessary shifts in principal preparation and professional development practices for active sitting principals. The review of the literature began with the changing role of the principal from a building manager to a leader creating strong positive improvements in student achievement, a move to instructional leadership, the ability to serve as a change agent within the school and culture, and a sense of positive leadership efficacy grounded in core beliefs and behaviors.

Secondly, this chapter reviewed the current status of principal preparation programs. The literature review analyzed how principal preparation programs have evolved to meet the changing role of the principal as well as what research indicates is still missing. Finally, the literature review analyzed the types of professional development currently provided for principals early in their career and what research indicates is effective along with what needs to still be developed.

The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (2003) cited teacher quality as the greatest factor impacting student achievement. Further studies by Leithwood, Seashore-Louis, Anderson and Wahlstrom (2004) and Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, and Anderson (2010) validated the importance of teacher quality. Recently, an increasing body of research suggests that principal leadership is also a factor in impacting overall student success and improving student achievement (Cotton, 2003;

Hallinger & Heck, 1998; Marzano et al., 2005). An extensive report by the Wallace Foundation (2012) indicated that the school principal is the primary role to ensure that high-quality teaching takes place within the school.

With the evidence of the significance of the principal on student achievement, studies also cited that current principal preparation programs fall short in addressing the multitude of roles required to achieve this level of principal quality (Davis et al., 2005). A study by Darling-Hammond et al. (2009) agreed with this position and theorized that the problem with leadership preparation programs includes a "lack of knowledge on the best ways to prepare and develop highly qualified candidates and a lack of established methods for assessing the effectiveness of the program's impact on graduates" (p. 5). An earlier study by Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, Meyerson, Orr, & Cohen (2007) stated that many principal training and preparation programs focus on management rather than leadership roles and focus on "a collection of courses of general management principles, school laws, administrative requirements, and procedures with little emphasis on knowledge about student learning, effective teaching, professional development, curriculum, and organizational change" (p. 9-10).

By examining the literature of the changing role of the principal, the current status of principal preparation programs, and current practices of professional development of early career principals; this research adds to the discussion on effective preparation and ongoing professional development for principals.

Principal Impact on Student Achievement

Educators hold the belief that school leadership makes a difference for effective schools (Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2003). This thought was supported in the findings of studies in recent decades (Hallinger & Heck, 1996). Edmonds (1979) further supported this thought in a study, "Strong leadership from the principal is the single most important factor in schools that work" (p. 25).

The combination of the implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act (2002), student achievement data exposing wide academic achievement gaps between student demographic groups (Hemphill, Vanneman, & Rahman, 2011), and the resulting intense focus on standards and student accountability, has changed the education environment to one that is data-driven, accountability focused, and results oriented (Rammer, 2007). Changing education environments have led to the need for principals to serve as the leaders in accountability, student performance, and as a change agent.

Accountability. The No Child Left Behind Act (2002) instituted accountability and test driven decision making. Principals and teachers were recognized as most directly impacting students and responsible for proven increases in achievement for every student. (Gentilucci & Muto, 2007). In order to achieve these increases based upon test results; academic standards were created, instruction was to be aligned to state standards, and decisions regarding allocation of time for instruction in content areas became a necessity.

The mandates of NCLB (2002) to both produce high levels of student achievement for all, not just averaging whole groups of students' results, and to both hire and provide ongoing professional development for ensuring highly qualified and

effective teachers contributed to the necessity for the changing role of principals (Fullan, 2001). This view was supported by Wong and Nicotera (2007), "Educational leaders are critical to the process of improving student performance with educational accountability by preparing themselves to provide teachers with the necessary knowledge and skills to make significant improvements" (p. 39).

Student performance. The No Child Left Behind Act (2002) accountability standard of 100% of students meeting proficiency by 2014 also required state officials, superintendents and principals to communicate student achievement results with constituents and to develop improvement plans expected to attain that proficiency level (Kaplan, Owings, & Nunnery, 2005). Research from the 1960s and 1970s attributed school success to the family background of the student rather than the impact of educators and educational organizations (Coleman, 1966). Recent studies challenged that theory as researchers identified schools where students were achieving well beyond expectations based on socioeconomic levels as compared with students from other schools (Jansen, 1995).

Further studies by Edmonds in 1981 uncovered elements of effective schools that precluded students' family background or socioeconomic status. Edmonds' (1981) studies indicated that effective schools possess a climate of high expectations, clear goals related to student achievement, and structures that support student learning. Edmonds followed this study with an analysis of the characteristics of effective schools. Identified characteristics included, "principals' leadership and attention to the quality of instruction, clearly understood instructional focus, safe climate conducive to teaching and learning,

and behaviors that convey expectations that all students can and will obtain at least minimum mastery" (p. 269-272).

The characteristics identified by Edmonds (1981) are supported by Levine and Lezotte (1990) in their seven correlatives of effective schools:

- Safe and orderly environment – A welcoming, respectful atmosphere for students, staff, and parents that incorporates systematic processes focused on learning as well as physical and emotional safety.
- Climate of high expectations for success – All educators hold beliefs that every student can and will learn at high levels. Educators' actions and school structures match these beliefs throughout the school.
- Instructional leadership – The principal's focus is on teaching and learning; with ongoing support of teachers' growth and developing instructional strategies.
- Clear and focused mission – The mission and vision of the school is created through a collaborative process with staff and parents. Educator behaviors align with this mission in all they do.
- Opportunity to learn and student time on task – There is an agreed upon curriculum aligned to standards and is adhered to by all teachers. Students are engaged during instruction and take ownership of their learning.
- Frequent monitoring of student progress – Scheduled and periodic benchmark and progress monitoring assessments are conducted with students and the results guide teachers' decisions for instruction.

- Home-school relations – Educators and parents partner and collaborate in their support and commitment to students' learning.

Ultimately, characteristics of effective schools rest on the shoulders of school principals to insure that the tenets are clearly evident in their schools in order to improve student achievement.

Change agent. Schools are changing and need to continue to change. The need for this change and how it lies with principals was exemplified by Kaplan, Owings, and Nunnery (2005), "Never before has the U.S. public education system committed to ensuring that every child achieves at high levels and relied more heavily on the nations' nearly 84,000 principals to lead instructional improvements required to meet tough new state and federal mandates" (p. 28).

Implementing change is not simply an option; it is a necessity and this requires a progressive leader as principal who is skilled at developing teachers and shared responsibility along with the ability to involve staff and parents in effective approaches to reform (Henson, 2001). Hart (1995) suggested that change can only come when the faculty is included in the change plan. Effective change has more impact and personal relevance when it comes from the bottom up; leadership is interactive as opposed to a one dimensional process.

The principal is the key educator within a school in influencing and insuring the implementation of factors that can impact a school's instructional levels and teaching skills (Kaplan et al., 2005). These identified factors align with the previously stated correlates of effective schools (Edmonds, 1981; Levine & Lezotte, 1990) and include

"selecting and keeping outstanding teachers; working with the school community to establish a common mission, instructional vision, and goals; creating a school culture grounded in collaboration and high expectations; facilitating continuous instructional improvement; finding fair, effective ways to improve or remove low-performing teachers; and producing excellent academic results for all students" (Kaplan et al., 2005, p. 29). On top of all of these responsibilities, principals still need to develop and oversee budgets, address discipline, insure safety and security, and develop public relations systems (Kaplan et al., 2005).

Changing demographics requires principals to understand and demonstrate diversity leadership with a core belief and ability to create a school environment respectful of individual differences with all staff working together with and for students (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2004). Effective diversity leadership guides staff toward the understanding and belief that every child, regardless of "gender, ethnicity, nationality, race, culture, language, social class, religion, exceptionality, literacy background, or language should experience educational equality" (Banks & McGee Banks, 2004, p. 25). Education for all students needs to be comprehensive to address social emotional needs so that this standard of equality isn't singularly focused on basic skills that are tested as per NCLB (2002) requirements (Banks & McGee Banks, 2004).

According to Lunenburg and Ornstein (2004), "the school principal has been cited as the most influential person in promoting school reform, change, and innovation" (p. 375). Davis (1997, 1998) supports this statement with further studies describing that the principal position is the critical initiator of change, develops the school's culture, and

leads the shifts necessary for improvements in student learning. Within the school, the principal is the educator responsible for the entire organization, observes every aspect of the learning environment, and influences every staff member.

Principals must mobilize people, resources, and sentiment in order to institute change. How principals conceptualize the needed change, involve and organize constituencies, implement innovations, monitor progress, provide resources, and evaluate outcomes will determine the success of change (Ubben, Hughes, & Norris, 2001).

Principals must lead through their personal, interpersonal, and professional competencies. They need to establish an environment built upon collegiality, cooperation, and shared commitment (Conley & Goldman, 1994).

Cotton's (2003) review of 81 leadership studies, completed between 1979 and 2000, identified 26 principal behaviors that contribute substantially to higher levels of student achievement. Gentilucci & Muto's (2007) analysis categorized these behaviors into five themes, "establishing a clear focus on student learning, establishing and maintaining quality interactions and relationships, shaping school culture, serving as an instructional leader, and ensuring accountability" (p. 221).

Elmore (2000) noted the importance of a shift from principal roles as building manager to those of educational leadership. The principal as building manager is a more traditional view with primary roles of discipline, schedules, and day to day operations. Elmore defined "educational leadership as the guidance and direction of instructional improvement" (p. 13). A follow up study stated that the impact of skillful leadership includes, "Knowing the right thing to do is the central problem of school improvement.

Holding schools accountable for their performance depends on having people in schools with the knowledge, skill, and judgment to make the improvements that will increase student performance" (2003, p. 9). Improvements in student achievement are not about working harder, but principals and teachers knowing and doing the 'right work' (Marzano, 2003)

Ellsworth's research (2000) along with the study of Fullan and Stiegelbauer (1991) outlined 10 principles for leaders to keep in mind when engaging change: (a) engage in brainstorming possibilities, (b) think big but start small, (c) focus on something tangible, (d) work on fundamentals such as the professional culture of your school, (e) practice responsible risk taking, (f) empower your staff by supporting and encouraging them, (g) establish and communicate a clear vision, (h) develop a sense of priorities and follow them, (i) build alliances with those who can help you, and (j) encourage and solicit feedback. Educational change involves changing the culture and structure of a school and requires a vision and resolute effort for implementing the vision (Ellsworth, 2000).

Mendez-Morse's study (1992) in conjunction with the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory provided a six-part framework for facilitating successful change in schools with the first component as creating a context for change and further described the range of cultural factors that must be considered such as attitudes and beliefs, norms, and relationships. Attitudes and beliefs are defined as value statements that are positive, negative, or neutral. Norms are the actual representation of these beliefs, or what usually happens in practice.

Mulford and Silins (2003) described leadership that is transformational and

creates changes within school organizations as one that develops a vision and mission, supports staff growth, and creates a positive culture inclusive of all students. Transformational leadership needs to navigate in the real world context of school, which is described by Notman and Henry (2011) as, "[real world context] student background, community type, organization structure, school culture, teacher experience and competence, both human and financial resources, school size, and bureaucratic and labor organization" (p. 376). Principals who can navigate and lead within all of these areas are the ones who are highly effective as change agents.

Instructional Leadership

One of the components of the shift from a traditional to educational leadership role with principals is the importance of instructional leadership. Research from the effective schools movement identifies instructional leadership as a key aspect of successful schools (Levine & Lezotte, 1990; Miller, 2003; Leithwood, Lewis, Anderson, & Wahlstom, 2004; Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005). Instructional leadership is generally considered to include actions directly connected to instruction in the classroom and student achievement (Murphy, 1988). Glickman (1995) describes instructional leadership in four areas; improvement of instruction by teachers, organization development and processes, alignment of curriculum to standards, and data analysis to know what structures are having a positive impact on student learning. Administrators with strong instructional leadership qualities develop positive relationships with all school constituents including staff, parents, and students in order for the school

environment to be conducive for all to learn at high levels and a culture of excellence (Hallinger & Heck, 2000; Andres, Basom, & Basom, 1991; Dwyer, 1984).

Strong instructional leaders possess skills that are directly tied to goal setting, constructive feedback, curriculum alignment, and development of teachers' effective instructional strategies (Cotton, 2003). Key elements of effective instructional leaders identified by the National Association of Elementary School Principals (2001) and Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (1995) included prioritization and alignment of standards to curriculum to scientifically-based instructional practices to assessment results; which leads to a culture of continuous improvement (Chase & Kane, 1983).

A study by the Wallace Foundation (2012) reported that instructional leadership has shifted beyond a focus on classroom instruction to one described as a strong organizational manager who develops structures for improved instruction (Louis et al., 2010). Adding this to original thoughts about instructional leadership causes today's principals to not only be knowledgeable and experts in curriculum, instruction, and assessment, but to also have the ability to develop structures for organizational success and provide professional development to improve the skills of those who are teaching within the organization.

Murphy's (1990) review of literature on instructional leadership supported The Wallace Study (2012) noting that schools with high quality teaching and learning are led by principals who possess instructional leadership qualities in continuous development and improvement of teachers' instructional abilities and an ability to create effective

organizational structures. Marks and Printy (2003) added to this research with their reference to direct and indirect instructional leadership.

A definition of direct instructional leadership provided by Bendikson, Robinson, and Hattie (2012) states, "Direct instructional leadership is focused on the quality of teacher practice, including the quality of the curriculum, teaching and assessment, and the quality of teacher inquiry and teacher learning" (p. 5). Their study continues with a definition of indirect instructional leadership as one that, "creates the conditions for good teaching and teacher learning by ensuring that school policies, routines, resourcing and other management decisions support and require high-quality learning, teaching and teacher learning" (p. 5).

Principals practicing direct instructional leadership interact with learning in the classroom on a personal level (Gentilucci, 2004). Behaviors include instructional rounds or walk-throughs of the school to observe learning, conversing with students, and developing systems to acknowledge improvements and academic interventions when needed. They are visible, interactive with students and staff, and provide constructive ongoing feedback (Waters et al., 2004).

A possible consideration by some principals in regards to these direct instructional behaviors is the amount of time needed for this level of personal interaction; something that could be challenging in schools with larger student enrollment and number of staff. Gentilucci and Muto (2007) maintained the importance of prioritizing time and the positive impacts of engaging in "what students identify as high influence behaviors." (p. 222).

Cotton's review of leadership studies (2003) identified a direct connection of improved student achievement and principals conducting classroom observations. Further indicators of direct classroom observation and impacts on student learning success were validated by Heck (1992) and Larsen (1987). Gentilucci and Muto's study (2007) with students from three schools reported, "principals who not only visited classrooms regularly for an extended period of time but also did so interactively were perceived as being more influential instructional leaders than those whose visits were few, short, and passive" (p. 230). It's not enough to simply be visible in classrooms. Principals must be active and participative when present. Student responses to a questionnaire mentioned how their perceptions of interactive principals were those who knew what they were learning and genuinely cared about them as people.

Gentilucci and Muto's study (2007) included a student questionnaire to gain their perceptions of previous principals. Students' responses indicated that "interactive principals who 'got to know them', 'checked on their work', and 'helped them with assignments' had more powerful influence on their learning than principals who simply sat in the back of the classroom and observed passively" (p. 231). These perceptions by students are important as principals consider aligning time, tasks, and impact on the mission of student learning beyond management responsibilities (Archer, 2004).

A combination of direct and indirect instructional leadership by building principals is necessary for high levels of learning. Indirect instructional leadership includes the ability to lead pedagogical change, a knowledge of how to promote learning, and building instructional skills with teachers. Research by Robinson (2006) emphasizes the need to

"put education back into educational leadership" (p. 1) correlating indirect instructional leadership and pedagogical change as,

> . . . knowing how teachers understand the subjects they are teaching and the extent to which those understandings are consistent with the school's vision for the subject. …This information should then be used to design learning experiences for groups of teachers that create a bridge between their current conceptions and those that are required to meet an agreed curriculum (p. 70).

This may cause questions about the abilities of secondary principals to attain this level of leadership realizing that they would not have direct experience teaching all of the content areas. Principals at other grade span schools, such as K-5 or K-8, may not have direct classroom instruction experience in core contents such as math or reading. Even in those situations, possessing a deep understanding of any specific content area provides stronger skills in hiring, developing staff, and evaluating teachers (Stein & Nelson, 2003).

The use of data and ability to analyze student results is both an art and a skill that adds to a principal's ability to guide instructional improvements. Earl and Katz (2006) refer to this expertise as assessment literacy, the knowledge of how to best assess student learning within a specific content area, interpret the data, determine next instructional steps, and incorporate formal and informal processes. Robinson's study states, (2006), "Educational leadership is deeply embedded in subject-specific knowledge and leaders who have such knowledge will be more confident in and capable of leading instructional improvement" (p. 70).

The National Association for Secondary School Leaders (NASSP, 2010) conducted a 30 year study of the characteristics of the principalship, in which they analyzed the required skills to be school leaders. Through NASSP's review, research, and study, ten skills of an effective 21st century school leader were outlined. These skills included: "(a) setting instructional direction, (b) teamwork, (c) sensitivity, (d) judgment, (e) results orientation, (f) organizational ability, (g) oral communication, (h) written communication, (i) developing others, and (j) understanding your own strengths and weaknesses" (p. 1). The ten skills are clustered into four main themes; educational leadership, resolving complex problems, communication, and developing self and others. A graphic of the connection between the ten skills to the four themes is outlined in Figure 1.

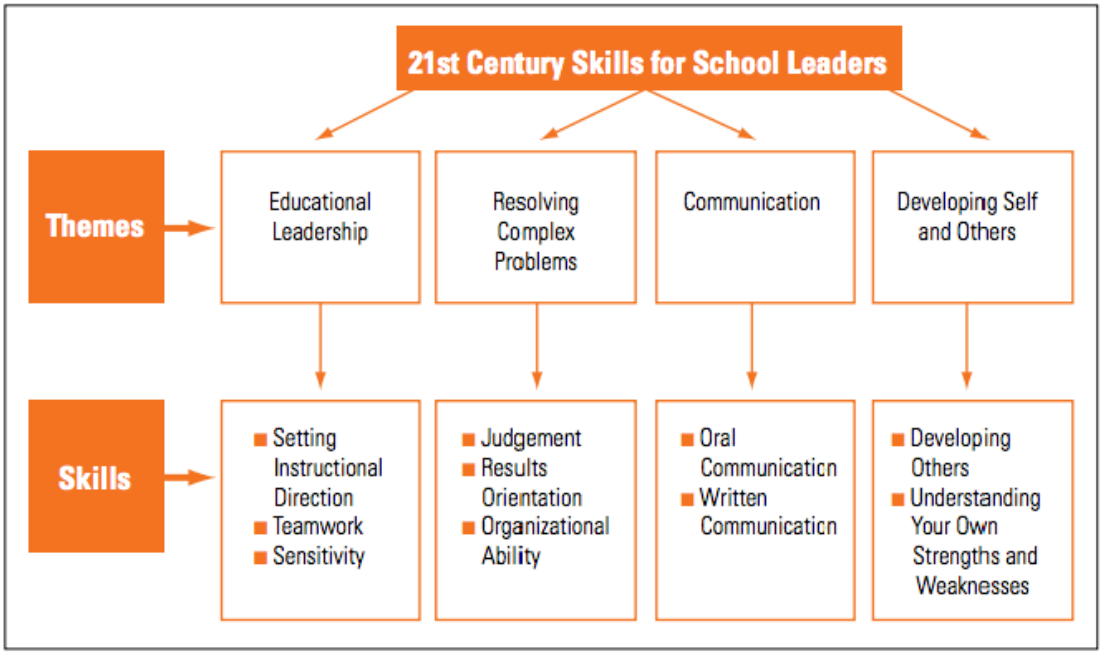

Figure 1. Themes and Skills of 21st Century School Leaders. National Association of Secondary School Principals. *NASSP, Executive Summary, 2010*, p. 1.

In summary, research from the effective schools movement reinforces the notion that instructional leadership with a combination of direct and indirect behaviors does have a positive impact on student achievement (Andrews, Basom, & Basom, 1991; Elmore, 2000; Gentilucci & Muto, 2007; Murphy, 1990). Striving to serve as an instructional leader incorporates knowledge and skills in curriculum, standards alignment, assessment strategies and analysis; all while collaborating with stakeholders and creating a collective commitment to the school's mission and vision (Sergiovanni, 1998). All of these finding point to the complexity and changes necessary in the role of principal.

Principal Preparation Programs

As the role of principal has transformed from manager to instructional leader, change agent, accountable for the teaching and learning that takes place in the school; questions arise if there will be enough candidates for the positions (Archer, 2003); Mitgang, 2003). The larger question may be in regards to the quality of the candidates throughout our nation rather than the quantity of candidates (Kaplan et al., 2005).

The complexities and amount of roles that come with the principal position are vast and at an entirely new level than in the past with curriculum, budgets, facilities, specialized instruction and support programs, shifting cultures within a school, and ultimately high levels of learning for all students (Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, & Meyerson, 2005). Copland (2001) goes so far as to state, "Now, two decades into the current age of school reform, one can argue that we have reached the point where aggregate expectations for the principalship are so exorbitant that they exceed the limits

of what might reasonably be expected from one person" (p. 529). All of these roles make it imperative for school districts to hire quality and qualified candidates, insure that they have the preparation and skills to lead effectively, and provide continuous support to be successful leaders (Winter, Rinehart, & Munoz, 2002).

Historically, early principal preparation programs matched the expectations of the position; manage structures, follow policies, and handle the day to day operations. The idea of instructional leadership, standards-based reform, and accountability for student learning were not at the forefront or viewed as needed for school principals (Copland, 2001; Elmore, 2000; Lumsden, 1992). After analyzing multiple preparation programs, Peterson's study (2002) stated, "The design of professional development [preparation] is complex and requires careful attention to both structural and cultural features" (p. 229). Initial principal preparation programs kept a structural focus, singularity of coursework, and little authentic clinical training opportunities (Copland, 2001; Elmore, 2000; Peterson, 2002).

A historical analysis by Donmoyer, Yennie-Donmoyer, and Galloway (2012) summarizes a confusion from the early years regarding the real focus of principal preparation programs. Levine (2005) provides further details of this confusion depicting two differing views for preparation programs, "James Earl Russell, dean of Teachers College, favored a practitioner-based program for experienced school administrators who would attend part-time and study a curriculum focusing on the practical subjects they would need to do their jobs" (p. 15). Levine also describes the opposing view from Henry Homes, dean of Harvard's education school,

> He [Holmes] called for a preparation model like those of law and medical schools. He [Holmes] advocated a master's program with an academic curriculum that would educate very able, young students without experience who would attend full-time for two years. . . common one-year general core . . . teaching, administration, and other specialties (p. 16).

Both deans continued with their philosophies, eventually leading to differing goals and creations of principal preparation programs (Levin, 2005). In essence, there was

> no consensus on whom these programs should enroll, what they should prepare their students to do, what they should teach, whom they should hire to teach [within the programs], what degrees they should offer, and how educational administration relates to teaching and research (p. 16).

These differing views of principal preparation continue into recent history and current preparation programs, while the accountability and standards-based reform have caused all areas of education to be scrutinized. Examples of elements that are inconsistent across preparation programs include school improvement theories, clearly developed curriculum to support development of instructional leadership skills, and high quality hands-on internships (Orr & Barber, 2006).

The challenges of short term practicums are illustrated in the study by Davis et al. (2005)

> Efforts to provide field-based practicum experiences do not consistently provide candidates with a sustained hands-on internship in which they grapple with the real demands of school leadership under the supervision of a well-qualified

> mentor. Instead, many program require little more than a set of ad hoc projects conducted while a candidate is still working as a teacher. Often these projects are written papers disconnected from the hands-on challenges and daily requirement of the principal's job (p. 6).

This becomes apparent as teachers are typically working on advancing their degree toward principal licensure while continuing full-time employment in their teaching position.

Further identified concerns include coursework within the program and actual skills needed by principals, inclusion of current school and district missions reflective of reform efforts, on the job learning, and lack of 21st century instructional technology integration (Coffin, 1997). Coffin (2007) also found traditional preparation programs have left the principals' opportunities to learn highly variable and dependent upon the location or district where the principal works in order to gain experiences to adequately prepare for the pivotal position.

Higher levels of knowledge and abilities are needed for principals and educational leaders in order to achieve the necessary reforms. The increased accountability for schools to educate more diverse learners and continue to improve achievement results will only occur through transformations and redesigns of our educational system (Davis et al., 2005).

The National Staff Development Council (Sparks & Hirsch, 2000) recommends the following content in order to help principals in the change process:

- learn strategies that can be used to foster continuous school improvement;

- understand how to build supportive school cultures that promote and support adult and student learning;
- develop knowledge about individual and organizational change processes;
- develop knowledge of effective staff development strategies;
- understand important sources of data about their schools and students and how to use data to guide instructional improvement efforts; and
- learn public engagement strategies, including interpersonal relationship skills. (p. 6-8).

Further research suggests that the following principles of adult learning are reflected in effective leadership development programs (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007):

- clear focus and values about leadership and learning around which the program is coherently organized;
- standards-based curriculum emphasizing instructional leadership, organizational development, and change management;
- field-based internships with skilled supervision;
- cohort groups that create opportunities for collaboration and teamwork in practice-oriented situations;
- active instructional strategies that link theory and practice, such as problem-based learning;
- rigorous recruitment and selection of both candidates and faculty; and
- strong partnerships with schools and districts to support quality, field-based learning. (p. 12)

Incorporation of partnership-based principal preparation programs, where the principal's preparation is jointly supported by the school district and the university, have demonstrated increased skills and abilities with principal graduates and their confidence to move into the actual position of principal (Orr & Barber, 2005).

The Wallace Foundation (2007) supported a study by Darling-Hammond et al. (2007) in its examination of exemplary pre- and in-service principal development programs. The study found that these principal preparation programs included content that was aligned with professional standards to address federal and state requirements for learning, change agent skills, transformational and instructional leadership, and closely linked to on-site learning opportunities (Sanders & Simpson, 2005). These exemplary programs also emphasized the situational and authentic learning that connect with core educational theories and research-based practices (Hallinger & McCary, 1992; Davis et al., 2005; Bridges & Hallinger, 1993; Knapp, Copland, & Talbert, 2003; Daresh, 2001).

Furthermore, the Wallace Foundation study (2007) indicates,

> . . . consistent cross-program characteristics at the core of these exemplary programs. Recruitment and admission practices are rigorous, admitting strong candidates and diverse cohorts into the programs. Programs are aligned with state and professional standards. Programs have formed collaborative relationships, working with institutions in their region to provide comprehensive and integrated experiences for program participants (p. 97).

The likelihood of graduating principals of these programs to apply for actual principal positions, remain within the principal field, and to work and serve in schools with

increased racial and socio-economic diversity was at a higher level than those graduating from a more conventional program (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007). They [principals from exemplary programs] also indicated, "spending more time than comparison principals on instructionally focused activities that are associated with stronger school performance, including tasks like building a professional learning community among staff, evaluating and providing feedback to teachers, and using data to monitor school progress" (p. 144).

Another study conducted by Brazer and Bauer (2013) found several common features of effective pre-service programs. Each [effective program] is driven by a theory of action that holds instructional leadership at the heart of school reform and maintains effective school leadership is "best developed through the integration of practical and problem-based experiences and research-based knowledge" (p. 41).

Each program is also highly selective, under the theory that exemplary leadership best emerges from the cultivation of highly experienced, dedicated, and instructionally competent teacher leaders with strong motivations to become school administrators. (Brazer et al., 2013). Finally, each program provides either full time or part time mentored internships at schools or district office sites other than the candidate's school of employment.

Research findings suggest effective principal preparation programs have moved the field forward in learning how to train administrative leaders successfully. For example, across the programs included in the Brazer and Bauer study (2013), survey results from the Stanford research project, and more recently, anecdotal testimonials

from graduates and faculty directors uniformly point to high levels of student satisfaction with their programs. Furthermore, graduates report high levels of confidence and efficacy relating to administrative tasks and working with teachers to promote powerful teaching and learning.

Graduates of these programs appear to be significantly more successful than those from other programs in finding and keeping administrative positions. These principal graduates also reported that the skills acquired through their licensure programs "prepared them well for the complexities of organizational management in schools, and particularly for their roles as instructional leaders" (Darling-Hammond et al., 2012, p. 41).

Professional Development for Early Career Principals

Principals' roles are diverse; spanning across managerial, instructional, transformational, and political domains with each area demanding attention (Spillane & Lee, 2013; Cuban, 1988). The day of a principal shifts back and forth from reacting to situations while still needing to proactively lead the school with professional development, staff evaluations, and student learning improvements (Duke, 1988; Spillane et al., 2013; Burkhart, Hough, & McDonald, 2007; Peterson, 1982). All of these competing interests and demands on a principal's time can lead to stress, lack of confidence, burnout, and often times with the principal leaving the position early in the career (Burkhart et al., 2007; Friedman, 2002; Whitaker, 1996).

New principals often experience feelings of fatigue, reality shock of what the position truly entails, isolation, and frustration once they are actually expected to be the

educational leader of a school (Duke, 1987). Not only are they dealing with their current skills, educational visions, and anticipated improvements they planned for this new role; they are being compared to previous leaders and cultures embedded in the organization (Duke, 1987; Hart, 1993). These embedded cultures and past norms make new initiatives challenging and questioned by the staff who may also undermine the new principal's effectiveness. Spillane and Lee (2013) confirmed previous studies stating, "new principals frequently have difficulty managing and prioritizing the multiple tasks expected of them including the more technical challenges such as managing the budget and maintaining the school building" (p. 3).

Induction programs can serve to support new principals in navigating these diverging pulls on their attention and help focus on the broader scope of the principalship of instructional leadership, change agent roles, and organizational culture. Aiken (2002) suggested that induction programs "support principals through paradox, help to demystify leadership practice, and provide opportunities for collaborative and reflective learning" (p. 36).

Duke (1987) stated that "the first days and months of the principalship are critical to the process of shaping school leaders" (p. 49), and the individual's first year as principal becomes a "major influence on her or his future performance" (p. 49). These experiences shape the attitudes, beliefs, actions, and skill acquisition of new principals.

Researchers have found that improved principal leadership quality begins with states and districts developing comprehensive leadership systems that provide a continuum of learning for aspiring education leaders. This includes induction, year-long

internships, context specific professional development during their first three years as principal, and effective coaching and mentoring to promote school with gains (Cheney, Davis, Garrett, & Holleran, 2010; Darling-Hammond et al., 2007; Orr, King, & LaPointe, 2010).

Improving principal leadership goes beyond the preparation program and into the professional development and support in the early years of their career. Induction, which is typically provided to principals entering their first leadership position, is thought to be a critical support for novice principals (Daresh, 2004; Daresh & Playko, 1992). Leadership coaching has been suggested as one induction strategy that supports principals in acquiring the skills, knowledge, and confidence they need to be successful as instructional leaders (Killeavy, 2006; Rhodes, 2012; Wise & Hammack, 2011).

Drago-Severson (2012) indicates that providing principals with recurring opportunities to develop their skills as leaders is essential to improving teaching and learning. Induction should be non-evaluative, sustained over time, and integrated with other types of support needed for school improvement. Several recent studies of induction programs suggest that these factors continue to shape the approach to principal induction adopted by the district, university, and regional level (Villani, 2005).

There appears to be little research on principals' professional development, in particular for early career principals or any linkage to student achievement. Rodriquez-Campos, Rincones-Gomez, and Shen (2005) conducted a report on principals' professional development. They reported,

> Percentages ranged from 97% for principals who had attended a workshop or conference in the previous 12 months to 38% for principals who had participated in mentoring, peer observation, or coaching. . . indicated a positive trend in participation in professional development but concluded there was a need for more innovative professional development activities (p. 318).

Nicholson, Harris-John, & Schimmel (2005) reviewed and summarized professional development opportunities and supports for principals. They found, "most states had similar requirements for the amount of professional development required of principals; 18 hours per year" (p. 30). Nicholson et al. also noted that the professional development was driven by No Child Left Behind Act of 2002 requirements. Further observations included,

> Delivery of professional development was generally found to follow the traditional model of expert led, centralized, short term workshops. Regarding evaluation of professional development . . . rarely, if ever, is there any follow-up to determine whether the activities had any discernible effect on practice (p. 30).

Summary

According to the National Center for Educational Leadership (2003), current principal preparation programs possess wide differences in admission requirements; program goals, structure, and length; as well as internships or demonstrations of competencies. As principals continue to face increased levels of student achievement requirements, additional responsibilities, and expectations from parents, community, and staff, preparation programs must prepare future school leaders for high standards. School districts

cannot afford to hire candidates who have not been trained to lead in a time of change or wait for the next highly trained principals to graduate from a licensure program. This leads to the need for highly effective professional development, support, and induction of principals early in their career.

Becoming an effective leader is an ongoing learning and development process (Maxwell, 2005). Schools in the 21st century require principals who are able to serve as instructional leaders, possess diversity and equity mindsets, and possess capabilities as community and visionary leaders (Institute for Educational Leadership, 2000; Tracy & Weaver, 2000) as well as being able to create a positive atmosphere (Whitaker, 2003). Hale and Moorman (2003) proclaimed that today's leaders need to incorporate three types of leadership instructional, community, and visionary; with instructional leadership as the priority.

This literature review outlined the traits of an effective school leader including the principal's impact on student achievement, a shift from a traditional managerial role to instructional leadership and abilities to serve as a change agent within the school. This review also provided an overview of principal preparation programs including areas that research indicate need to be improved and current professional development practices provided for early career principals.

Chapter III

Methodology

The purpose of this study was to identify early career Principals' perceptions of the benefits of participating in the Institute of Engaged Principal Leadership, discover how they applied the components of this Institute in their work, and identify further support needed by early career Principals. This study can be described as a qualitative case study examining the interviews of participants and content of the Institute of Engaged Principal Leadership program. According to Creswell (2004), the research problem drove the choice of the methodology.

This chapter restates the research problem and outlines the qualitative research design single case study methodology. Furthermore, this chapter provides the rationale for a single case study, the theories guiding the study, the research questions, site and participation of the sample group including my involvement in the study, data collection and analysis methods, trustworthiness, significance of the study, and finally a chapter summary.

Problem Statement

In response to the dramatic changes in roles and responsibilities of the principal position described in this study's literature review, the level and type of support and professional development for principals needs to be an area of educational research. The mandates of No Child Left Behind (2002) and national focus on accountability principals' roles and responsibilities include a shift from managers to instructional, community, and visionary leaders in order to improve student achievement for all

students while accelerating learning to eliminate achievement gaps. Principals' skills and leadership qualities to successfully address these challenging issues does not just happen; it is developed and cultivated (Levin & Fullan, 2008).

Currently, limited supports are in place for education leadership development beyond preparatory coursework for an administrative degree (Villani, 2006). Even though preparatory programs are vital, equally important is the training and support school principals receive after they are hired (Mitgang, 2012). A statement by a novice elementary school principal in New York City provides a valuable insight, "No matter what preparation anyone has, being the principal is not the same. Nothing prepares you for the job" (Wallace Foundation, 2007, p. 6).

It is because of this continued need for training and support of principals early in their career that the Institute for Engaged Principal Leadership was created in 2012. Creating this Institute was only the beginning; conducting a research study to gain an understanding of the perceptions and applications in principals' practices of those involved in the Institute will contribute to the body of research surrounding early career principal professional development.

Qualitative Research

"Qualitative research is used when a problem or issue needs to be explored and requires detailed understanding" (Creswell, 2013, p. 49). In this study, the issue needing to be explored is the Institute for Engaged Principal Leadership with the details being the perceptions of the principals involved and application in their leadership roles. Creswell

(2013) provides common characteristics of qualitative research, described in Table 1, along with how this study aligns with the qualitative research characteristics.

Table 1

Characteristics of Qualitative Research

Characteristics	Alignment within study
Data collected in the natural setting.	Data collection will take place at the location of the Institute for Engaged Principal Leadership sessions.
Researcher is key instrument in data collection.	Researcher is a participant and observer in study. Open-ended questions are developed by the researcher.
Involves multiple methods.	Study will include multiple forms of data including interviews, observations, and documents.
Complex reasoning through inductive and deductive logic.	Researcher will develop patterns from the interview responses to open-ended questions and combine with observation information as well as conduct follow up interviews to check the data for comprehensive themes of perceptions if necessary for clarification.
Focuses on participants' perspectives, their meanings, and multiple subjective views.	The focus for this study is the participants' perceptions, which will be collected from multiple individual interviews.
The research process has an emergent design.	Data collection for study begins with individual interviews but allows for follow up interviews as new information may emerge.
Researcher conveys reflexivity.	The researcher is a participant and observer of the phenomenon as well as having served as a K-12 Principal.
Presents holistic, multiple perspectives, and factors involved in the phenomenon.	Multiple viewpoints of the phenomenon will be gained through the individual interviews of the participants along with observations of multiple sessions occurring throughout the Institute.

Note. Creswell, J. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches, 3rd ed.* Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, p.46.

Qualitative research seeks answers to questions that emphasize how experiences are created and given meaning, along with relying on participants' views or perceptions of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2013; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). For these reasons, qualitative research was chosen as the means for identifying and understanding participants' perceptions and application of components of the Institute for Engaged Principal Leadership.

Case Study

Once qualitative research is determined for a study, there are multiple choices of approaches or methodologies researchers need to determine to utilize (Creswell, 2013). The decision about which approach to employ should "connect the empirical data to the study's research questions and eventually to the conclusions" (Yin, 2009, p. 29). A case study approach was selected based on its appropriateness to meet the objectives of this study, as it "emphasizes collecting descriptive data, using inductive thinking, and emphasizes understanding of subjects' point of view" (Bodgan & Biklen, 2007, p. 274).

Yin (2009) described case study research as involving the study of a "contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context. . ." (p. 18) and outlined four rationales for choosing case study methodology: explanation, description, illustrative, and enlightenment. This study aligns with all of these case study methodology descriptions as the participants' perceptions of involvement in the Institute was not yet known and the purpose was to discover and describe what the perceptions are after involvement in the Institute for Engaged Principal Leadership. Furthermore, this study investigated participants' perceptions of a contemporary real-life phenomenon that

was in progress in a bounded system of time and place (Creswell, 2013; Stake, 2005) as the Institute took place during the 2012-2013 school year and at a single location for each session.

Additional distinguishing factors making case study the preferred methodology were "when 'how' or 'why' questions are posed and when the researcher has little control over events" (Yin, 2009, p. 2). In this study, the "how" question was investigated through how participants applied what they experienced in the Institute in their leadership practices and the researcher was an observer and was not in control of the events.

Single Case Study

A single-case study is appropriate when it "represents a critical case, when it is an extreme or unique case, or when it is a revelatory case" (Yin, 1994, p. 38-40). Yin (2009) further states that "a single-case study is analogous to a single experiment" (p. 47).

The purpose of this study was to discover the participants' perceptions of involvement in the single professional development provided through the Institute of Engaged Principal Leadership sessions. The timeframe of this study was throughout the first year the Institute's existence, the 2012-2013 school year, which fits Yin's (1994) reference to a unique case and allowed the researcher an in-depth investigation in order to provide a rich description and understanding of participants' perceptions of the benefits of involvement in the Institute (Merriam, 1998; Walsham, 1995).

Yin (2009) further divides the single-case study into two types; holistic and embedded case studies. The holistic case study has "one unit of analysis while the

embedded case study includes different levels or units within the study" (p. 50). This study fits the holistic design as there were no logical subunits.

In summary, this research study fit criteria and was determined to be a qualitative holistic single-case study with the purpose being to discover participants' perceptions of their involvement in the Institute of Engaged Principal Leadership.

Research Questions

1. What are the perceptions of early career Principals as the benefits of participation in the Institute of Engaged Principal Leadership?
2. How did early career Principals apply the components of the Institute of Engaged Principal Leadership to their work as a Principal?
3. What further support is identified by early career Principals as significant to their work as a Principal?

Case and Participants

The Institute of Engaged Principal Leadership was developed in 2012 by the Center for Engaged Leaders in partnership with Minnesota State University, Mankato. Participation in this Institute was over two years with this study conducted during the first year to identify perceptions of benefits of participating, application of components, and possible revisions for future Institutes. The target participants for this Institute were early career principals; those who were less than five years into their career. The definition of principal in the Institute was expanded to include assistant principals, directors, deans, and principal interns. Each participant submitted an application to be

accepted into the Institute of Engaged Principal Leadership and needed to write a Statement of Interest and have the signed support of the School District Superintendent.

The mission of the Institute for Engaged Principal Leadership is to establish a program that allows exemplary leaders to intensify their leadership capacity. The Institute's goals (2012) are to:

> 1. strengthen the collective educational leadership of Minnesota school leaders while also providing individual leaders with a powerful professional growth experience;
>
> 2. establish a unified, responsive group of respected educational leaders who are recognized statewide and nationwide for their expertise and who are sought out by legislators, business leaders, and others for insight and direction on educational issues. (Minnesota State University Mankato, 2012, (http://ed.mnsu.edu/cel/principalinstitute.html)

The conceptual model of the Institute outlines how principals as leaders will "deepen and extend their capacity through a reflective learning cycle in which they identify challenges they face, establish goals and strategies for learning new leadership skills and competencies, invest in these strategies and new leadership behaviors and competencies, and assess their effectiveness through feedback, evidence of impacts, and reflection. [The Institute provides] opportunity to refine their existing leadership knowledge and skills to stretch their leadership capabilities" (Minnesota State University Mankato, 2012). Leading strands that guide the components of the Institute are equity and

achievement, developing others, change processes, developing self, high leverage leadership practices, political leadership, and communication (2012).

The creators and facilitators of the Institute are two Professors at Minnesota State University, Mankato with extensive backgrounds as K-12 educators and administrators. Both teach educational leadership courses at the University as well as one of the Professors serving as the Director of Center for Engaged Leadership and both providing consultant work with K-12 educational systems.

Full day sessions for the Institute were conducted on the following dates throughout the 2012-2013 school year; August 7 and 8, October 3, November 7, December 6, January 17, February 21, April 18, and June 25 and 26. A minimum of 20 sessions occurred over the two year timeframe of the Institute with this study being conducted at the conclusion of the first year. The location of the Institute was the Minnesota State University, Mankato at Edina.

In qualitative research, the sample of individuals included in a study are likely to be chosen in a "deliberate manner known as purposive sampling" with the purpose being to have those individuals involved who will yield the most relevant and plentiful data (Yin, 2011, p. 88). Furthermore, case study analyses tend to have small samples with a focus on flexibility and depth rather than a set number used for probabilities (Padgett, 2008). Padgett's recommendations regarding size of sample include: (a) the smaller the sample size, the more intense and deep are the data being collected; (b) larger sample sizes are needed for heterogeneity, smaller sizes for homogeneity; (c) avoid sacrificing "depth for breadth" (p. 56).

The participants for this study were early career principals who participated in the Institute of Engaged Principal Leadership and voluntarily agreed to contribute to this research. The 35 participants in this Institute serve in the educational positions of principal, assistant principal, dean, or director. The sample size for this study was dependent upon the number of individuals willing to participate and able to be interviewed by video-tape during sessions of the Institute. Participation in this study included a mix of females and males, all within their first five years as an administrator as well as multiple racial and ethnic backgrounds inclusive of Asian, Black non-Hispanic, and White non-Hispanic.

Researcher's Role in the Institute

According to Creswell (2013), "Qualitative research involves the study of a research site(s) and gaining permission to study the site in a way that will enable the easy collection of data" (p. 151). Gaining access and building rapport for this study was deeper as the researcher observed all of the sessions and activities of the Institute of Engaged Principal Leadership. Having served as a building principal along with leading principal preparation coursework and mentorship allowed the researcher to build rapport with the participants quickly and with authenticity.

Data Collections Methods

Qualitative research studies typically rely on four methods for gathering information: (a) observation, (b) interviews, (c) documents, and (d) audiovisual materials (Creswell, 2013, p. 159). Yin (2003) recommends two additional data collection strategies by including direct observation and archival records (p. 66). This study

incorporated four methods for data collection; observation, interviews, observation notes and documents created by presenters in the Institute, and archival records of the units and actual presentations.

Observations. "Observation is one of the key tools for collecting data in qualitative research" (Creswell, 2013, p. 166). When preparing for data collection through observation, researchers need to consider several important questions: "(a) Will the observation be covert or overt, (b) Will the researcher be participating in the setting or only observing, (c) Where and when will the observations occur, (d) Will observations be structured or unstructured, and (e) What will be observed" (Flick, 2002, p. 137-149; Bailey, 2007, p. 79-80).

The first three questions were determined by the fact that I observed every session of the Institute and gathered field notes by conducting observations as a nonparticipant. (Creswell, 2013). Creswell describes one of the types of observation as "The researcher is an outsider of the group under study, watching and taking field notes. . ." (p. 167). I maintained the role of researcher by annotating field notes of actual events and actions, along with reflecting on the data. Qualitative researchers refer to this reflection of their own data-making role as "reflexivity and remind the researcher to not forget the 'you' in his/her study" (Richards, 2009, p. 49).

The fourth question decided in conducting this study's observations was which method to use; structured, unstructured, or a combination of both (Bailey, 2007). Structured observations have a well-defined guide, specific times, and predetermined focus (2007). Unstructured observations are more flexible and "concentrate on what is

relevant" as the events develop (2007, p. 83). This study incorporated an unstructured observation method to collect data.

Finally, the question of what to observe followed Spradley's (1980) nine recommendations including space, objects, people involved, single actions, activity or related acts of people, events, time, goals, and feelings (Bailey, 2007). This level of data collection required descriptive and reflective notes as a part of the observational protocol accompanying the observational field notes (Creswell, 2013).

Collecting data for this study through observation during the Institute for Engaged Principal Leadership provided deeper insights for the second and third research questions of how participants applied the components of the Institute and the further support they perceived as significant to their work as a principal.

Interviews. Interviews involve direct interaction between the researcher and participants in a study, providing a rich source of information (Mills, Eurepos, & Wiebe, 2010). Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) describe that an interview goes beyond a conversation and includes careful questioning and listening to obtain information and discover meaning. The use of interviews as a research method for this study served the purpose of discovering participants' perceptions, how participants applied Institute components, and participants' needs for further support with the researcher controlling the questioning content (Creswell, 2009; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

Face-to-face one on one interviews were conducted with participants in the Institute for Engaged Principal Leadership who gave consent to be included in this study. All Institute participants were informed of the purpose of this study, how the findings

will contribute to the research of early career principal development, and were required to sign a consent form in order to participate.

The three types of interviews most frequently used by researchers are structured, unstructured, or semi-structured (Bailey, 2007; Creswell, 2013). Structured interviews include specific questions that are asked in a specific order (Bailey, 2007). These interviews allow for the researcher to determine not only the questions but also the pace, amount of time, and location. Unstructured interviews are more similar to a conversation even though the researcher still targets questions that align with the study (2007). In an unstructured interview, the questions posed to different participants will vary in content and number. Semi-structured interviews allow for "flexibility in how the interview is administered while maintaining some structure and parameters" (p. 100).

For this study, I conducted structured interviews with open-ended questions directly related to the research questions to discover participants' perceptions of participation in the Institute, how they applied the components, and the further support they perceived as significant to their work as a principal. As indicated by Creswell (2009), interview questions were few in number and open ended in order for participants to provide information and insights. The following questions were asked of participants who consented to involvement in this study after the first year of the Institute:

- What were the top three goals for your staff or organization this past school year?
- How do you know you have attained these goals?

- What actions did you take to help attain these goals with your staff or organization?
- In what ways did this Institute support you in these actions and goals?
- What further support do you believe is necessary for your work as a Principal?

The individual interviews took place at the location of the Institute for Engaged Principal Leadership sessions and were digitally video-taped using a hand-held video camera. The interviews were transcribed by a private transcription company with secure transfer of data and confidentiality agreements provided by the company. The recordings were stored in a locked secure location along with corresponding transcriptions.

Follow up interview questions were developed based upon the themes discovered from the initial five questions as well as open ended descriptions by the participants of how they applied the concepts of the Institute to their work as a principal. The purpose of the possible follow up interviews were to gain deeper understanding and clarification of the emerging themes and followed a semi-structured format.

Documents. The collection of documents in case study research helps to "enrich the context and contribute to analysis" (Simons, 2009, p. 63). Documents include reports, vision statements, pamphlets, memos, presentations, charts, journals, and other materials used in the researched case study (Simons, 2009; Creswell, 2013).

The types of documents collected and analyzed in this study included the information brochure that informed possible participants of the Institute, archived vision and belief statements, facilitator presentations, written observer field notes, and other

related communications. The purpose of this type of document collection was to gain understanding of the components of the Institute and provide connections to the participants' applications of those components in their principal role.

Archival records. Case study research includes evidence from multiple sources including the previously mentioned observations, interviews, documents, and archival records (Yin, 2003). Any previous interviews conducted and documents created for the Institute for Engaged Principal Leadership were collected and reviewed, in particular any questions that related to the research question of discovering participants' perceptions of participating in the Institute. Archived responses to questions of this nature were used for the analysis of changes in perceptions over the course of involvement in the Institute.

Data Analysis

Data analysis in qualitative research involves organizing the data, "conducting a preliminary read-through, coding and organizing themes, representing the data, and forming interpretations" (Creswell, 2013, p. 179). Organizing the data for this study began with the individual interviews transcribed into documents that were able to be read, reviewed, and analyzed seven times. Due to the large amount of interview information, the digitally recorded individual interviews were transcribed by a private transcription company.

Once the transcriptions were completed, I read through the documents holistically. As with anything new, a researcher has only one chance to see data for the first time. This exploration of the entire document or database allowed me to immerse in the details and get a sense of the interviews in entirety before breaking into parts (Agar,

1980, p. 103; Creswell, 2013, p. 183). After seven readings and gaining a solid grounding of the participants' statements, I recorded thoughts and reflections, referred to as "memo-ing" in qualitative research (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Richards (2009) recommends the documentation of these early reflections no matter how tentative.

In qualitative research data analysis, this breaking into parts is referred to as "reducing data into meaningful segments and assigning names or labels for those segments", known as coding (Creswell, 2013, p. 180). Coding is one part of the core elements of qualitative data analysis with other elements including the combination of "the codes into broader categories or themes and finally displaying and making comparisons in graphs, tables or charts" (p. 180).

Strauss and Corbin (1990) outline three major types of coding: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. Even though there is a distinct procedure for each, researchers often utilize more than one when conducting a study, which is what I included within this study. Open coding is a process of breaking down and categorizing the data and developing the coding categories or themes based upon the terms that emerge as most important (Strauss & Corbin, 1990; Maxwell, 2013, p. 107). These categories or themes were differentiated through axial coding, the process of relating subcategories to broader categories (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The broader categories or themes were used to discover relationships across the multiple individual interviews and served as the learning and interpretive phase of the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Trustworthiness

Creswell (2013) describes how qualitative researchers "strive for understanding within their studies through personal visits with participants, spending time in the study site, and probing for detailed meanings"(p. 243). This commitment to understanding and detailed meanings created a need to include processes to address trustworthiness, validation, and reliability.

A trustworthy study is conducted ethically with the findings "represented as closely as possible to the actual experiences of the participants" (Padgett, 2008, p. 184). In order to accomplish this, I utilized multiple validity checks including triangulation, member checking, and prolonged engagement.

Researchers use multiple sources of information and corroborate evidence from these sources as a part of the triangulation of data (Creswell, 2013). The multiple sources of information in this study were interviews, observations, and documents. Another form of triangulation involved the use of a wide range of informants (Shenton, 2004), which for this study referred to the multiple individual interviews conducted. Interviewing each Institute participant who gave consent to participate in the study provided an opportunity to compare the data collected along with creating a rich picture of individual's perceptions, while providing the opportunity to analyze as an entire group. As I conducted this study in the observer role, prolonged engagement served as a validation strategy. I attended every session, including any site visits, and recorded statements, activities, physical environment, and interactions. Creswell (1998) states that prolonged engagement and persistent observations are two ways of "building trust with participants, learning the culture, and checking for misinformation" (p. 201). This study transpired

over 11 months of time with multiple sessions and interactions, providing prolonged engagement to build trust and check for understanding.

Along with the validity checks of triangulation and prolonged engagement, I checked for accuracy in the interview transcriptions and confirmed that the case study methodology was followed in the data gathering, analysis, and data presentation. The follow up interviews with four participants after the second round of interviews provided another validity check of the themes and verified if the data was on track with their personal experiences.

Significance and Rationale

The roles and responsibilities for principals have changed dramatically due to No Child Left Behind reforms (2002), higher levels of accountability, and the need to address achievement gaps between White students and students of color. Addressing these challenges requires current and future principals to be instructional and transformational leadership who are willing to change institutional structures and previously established school culture (Marzano et al., 2003; Louis et al., 2010). This level of principal responsibility goes beyond the current preparatory coursework, thus in need of support as principals are actually in the positions in order to be successful (Davis et al., 2005; Orr et al., 2006).

The Institute of Engaged Principal Leadership was created to provide early career support for principals. The purpose of this study was to identify the perceptions of the participants including the benefits of participating in this Institute, discover how participants applied the components of the Institute, and identify further support needed

by early career principals. Finally, based upon the follow up interviews of participants after completing the entire Institute and serving as building principals, this study begins to point to the capacity that these leaders have impacted student achievement within their schools.

Summary

In summary, this qualitative single case research study served to discover early career principals' perceptions of the benefits of participating in the Institute of Engaged Principal Leadership. It identified which components of the Institute were applied by the early career principals into their work as a principal and what they perceived as further necessary supports.

The sample for this study was the Institute participants who agreed to be involved in this research as indicated by their signed consent form. Data collection included observations, individual interviews, documents, and archival data. Open coding methods were used with the interview data followed by axial coding to clearly identify themes common throughout the multiple interviews.

The findings of this study will add to the current research on early career principal induction programs as well as identify strengths and areas for improvement for future Institute of Engaged Principal Leadership programming.

Chapter IV

Results

The purpose of this study was to identify early career Principals' perceptions of the benefits of participating in the Institute of Engaged Principal Leadership, discover how they applied the components of this Institute in their work, and identify further support needed by early career Principals. The following research questions informed this study's findings;

1. What are the perceptions of early career Principals as the benefits of participation in the Institute of Engaged Principal Leadership?
2. How did early career Principals apply the components of the Institute of Engaged Principal Leadership to their work as a Principal?
3. What further support is identified by early career Principals as significant to their work as a Principal?

The results included the interview questions and rich description of the interview process, themes that emerged from the pre-institute interviews, the focus and observations for each institute session, themes that emerged from the after the first year of institute interviews, and the shifts in thinking and behaviors that appeared to occur when comparing the two sets of interviews. The themes and shifts are supported with the observational notes, session agendas, and follow up interviews conducted with four principal participates who completed the Institute of Engaged Principal Leadership.

Demographic Characteristics

The population for this study consisted of the participants of the 2012-2013 Institute of Engaged Principal Leadership. There was a total of 35 participants at the start of the Institute and they served in educational roles of principal, assistant principal, dean of students, early childhood coordinator, and special education coordinator for five years or less and represented 11 different school districts; two urban districts, six suburban districts, two outstate district, and one charter school. Of the 35 participants, 21 were female and 14 were male. The racial and ethnicity demographic breakdown was one Asian, three Black, one Multi-racial, and 30 White.

Pre-institute interviews were conducted with 27 participants, after first year institute interviews were conducted with 23 participants, and follow up interviews were conducted with four participants. The demographic characteristics and school district descriptions of the participants interviewed in this study are presented in Appendices E and F and a summarized breakdown is included in the following sections.

Interviews

Individual videotaped interviews were conducted with participants during the first days of the Institute (August, 2012) followed by aligned questions posed in interviews after the first year of the Institute (June, 2013). I conducted each of the interviews with the individuals on site of the Institute in a classroom near the large group meeting room. The questions were written on a whiteboard or large easel paper with the participants being interviewed able to clearly see the questions and the researcher video-taping and facing directly to the participant. Having the questions written with the participants

reading the exact wording kept the interviews structured and reduced possible bias of the researcher for voice tone or paraphrasing.

The structured questions posed at the start of the Institute were: a) What are the top three goals for your staff or organization this upcoming school year?; b) How will you know you've reached these goals?; c) What actions will you take as a leader to attain these goals?; d) How do you envision this Institute supporting you to attain these goals? I chose these questions as a baseline to gain an understanding of the Institute participants' views of their roles and responsibilities as early career principals and how they envisioned the Institute of Engaged Principal Leadership to support them.

Questions posed at the end of the first year of the institute were: a) What were the top three goals for your staff or organization this past school year?; b) How do you know you've attained these goals?; c) What actions did you take to help attain these goals with your staff or organization?; d) In what ways did this institute support you in these actions and goals?; e) What further support do you believe is necessary for your work as a principal?; f) Are there any specific areas or any of the learning strands that would provide further support?

The end of first year of the institute questions were chosen to align with the initial interview questions and to discover emerging themes, shifts in thinking and behaviors, and gain insights into further support the participants perceived as needed for their role as principal.

Phase I: Pre-Institute Interviews and Themes

The Institute of Engaged Principal Leadership's first sessions were August 7 and 8, 2012 at Minnesota State University, Mankato at 7700 France Avenue in Edina, Minnesota. The institute sessions were conducted from 9:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. with both breakfast and lunch provided for the participants. In order to allow participants to engage in the grounding activities at the initial day of Institute and begin to develop rapport with other participants, the individual interviews began during the afternoon of the first day. The participants did not see the interview questions until they were actually being interviewed so that the responses were unrehearsed and unprepared.

Pre-institute interviews were conducted and recorded with twenty-seven participants. The demographic characteristics of these interviewed participants are represented in Table 2.

Table 2.

Demographic characteristics of pre-institute interviewees.

Gender		Race		Location of School		
Female	Male	Black	White	Urban	Suburban	Outstate
15	12	3	24	10	13	4

Note. Actual number of participants within each demographic category.

After seven readings of the pre-institute interview transcriptions, the researcher identified statements with common themes with the initial coding totaling 20 categories. The initial 20 categories were further combined and led to the emergence of code labels in this study. The code labels were in vivo codes meaning that the names were exactly from words stated by the participants (Creswell, 2013, p. 185). The following eight codes were used to code the institute interviews:

- Achievement

- Collaboration
- Equity
- Networking
- Professional Development
- Reflection
- School Climate
- Vision

Each Institute session's agenda aligned with the learning strands initially created by the facilitators. This section provides an overview of learning strands and examples of aligned activities.

Learning strands and activities. The curriculum for Institute of Engaged Principal Leadership was based upon nine learning strands: (a) developing self, (b) developing others, (c) change process, (d) equity and achievement, (e) high leverage leadership, (f) political leadership, (g) communicating it right, (h) data, and (i) confidence. These strands were developed by the creators of the Institute and were embedded into the sessions' modules or activities.

Right from the start, the message in the Institute was exemplified by a quote by Gloria Anzaldua, "I change myself, I change the world." As the Principal of a school, the leader creates the climate and focus as well as impacts student achievement (Marzano et al., 2005). The introduction of the Institute laid the groundwork for the next two years. This included the 'why' behind the creation of this institute and the moral imperative for educators to address equity, the achievement gap, and create a stronger educational future

for students in our nation but in particular in the state of Minnesota. The participants' mission, vision, beliefs, and behaviors are what will lead to the results that are needed in education and learning today and for the future. The following vision was emphasized,

> In an era of unprecedented educational challenge the Institute is committed to continuous development of principals to lead with fearlessness, skill self-knowledge and racial competence so that under their leadership, every child fully achieves (Krull & Raskin, 2012).

Institute participants began to get to know one another and build relationships through a 'Leader Interview Using a Cognitive Frame". These one to one interviews provided insights into each participant's 'why' of becoming a principal, inspirations, and participant's identification of barriers to achieving high levels of student learning. These relationship-building activities were valuable for the deep discussions and trustworthiness that eventually became imperative for the success of the Institute.

The strand of developing self was examined through individual strengths finder surveys based upon the research of Marcus Buckingham (2001). Not only did participants gain insights into their signature strengths, they also discovered how strengths can be misunderstood by others.

Developing others was a focus message in speakers' presentations, modeling and role-playing challenging situations, and following up on how participants were applying what they learned. Guest speakers included practicing principals from both elementary and secondary levels. Participants went on site visits to three different schools with

follow up discussions about how the leader of that particular school aligned beliefs with school systems and structures.

One of the session's focus was on "retaining for results", which guided the participants through Boyle's Matrix of behaviors aligned with four quadrants of unwilling but able, willing and able, unwilling and unable, and finally willing but unable. Once participants identified behaviors for each quadrant, they discussed and developed individualized supports or interventions that could be provided for educators. This was followed by activities that aligned with the strand of communication; having the difficult conversation. The facilitators role-played a difficult conversation with future sessions including opportunities for participants to share their experiences with conversations.

Often times, the strands were interwoven and participants were gaining skills in multiple areas with singular experiences. For example, the change process connected with equity, achievement, and data through the data dashboards that participants developed. Communicating it right aligned with political leadership. A session on Immunity to Change (Sanderson, 2012) challenged participants to identify, "What is it in your experience so far that seems to make change so hard?" Site visits included interviews with the principal and teachers, touring the building to gain insights into the underlying school culture, and always how beliefs translated into behaviors.

The power of the reflection and discussion at the conclusion of each session grew with each session. Closing questions such as, "Today, I was hopeful when . . ." and "Where does the subject of change come out and grab you?" or "What resonated with you? What do you plan to do with it?" brought out the participants thoughts, feelings,

and perspectives. Key field observation notes that exemplified this growth and shift that occurred in discussions included, "The stories shared were personal, honest, conflicting with their beliefs" and "My takeaways: the depth of the sharing has become so rich – these discussions about standing up for their beliefs have increased – what used to be one or two being "pulled" to share now has shifted to 4 – 5 wanting to share right away with others joining in."

Phase II: After First Year Institute Interviews and Themes

The after the first year of institute individual interviews were conducted during the June 25 and 26 Institute sessions. These interviews were all conducted in a classroom next to the whole group meeting session and questions were written on the whiteboard. All participants interviewed indicated they remembered the essence of the interview questions, but none remembered the wording of the questions.

After first year of institute interviews were conducted and recorded with 23 participants. In order to have these interviews completed within a two-day time period, five participants who were interviewed at the pre-institute were not able to be interviewed at this time. In addition, one participant was not able to be interviewed during the pre-institute timeframe but did attend all sessions and was included in the after first year of institute interviews. The demographic characteristics of these interviewed participants are represented in Table 3.

Table 3.

Demographic characteristics of after first year interviewees.

Gender		Race				Location of School		
Female	Male	Black	Mixed Race	Asian	White	Urban	Suburban	Outstate
15	8	2	1	1	19	9	13	1

Note. Actual number of participants within each demographic category.

Video-taped interviews were transcribed and just as with the initial interviews; read seven times followed by an analysis for themes. The initial interview codes were used for these second interviews and even though statements aligned with the codes; new codes or categories emerged. The new emerging codes included:

- Beliefs
- Mindset
- Confidence

After further analysis of the transcripts, beliefs and mindset were combined into one code and confidence emerged as a code all on its own. The final codes for both sets of interviews materialized into a total of ten:

- Achievement
- Collaboration
- Equity
- Networking
- Professional Development
- Reflection
- School Climate

- Vision
- Beliefs
- Confidence

Pre-Institute and After First Year Institute Themes Consistent in Frequency. The frequency of participant's statements creating these codes remained consistent from pre-institute to after first year of institute within the themes of achievement, collaboration, reflection, and vision. The theme of achievement was referenced 55 times in the pre-institute interviews and 54 times in the after first year of institute interviews. The theme of collaboration was referenced 29 times in the pre-institute interviews and 25 times in the after first year interviews. References of the theme of reflection were 9 time at pre-institute and 11 after first year; and finally vision was referenced 10 times in the pre-institute and 6 times in the after first year of institute interviews. The amount of consistency of each theme is represented in Figure 2.

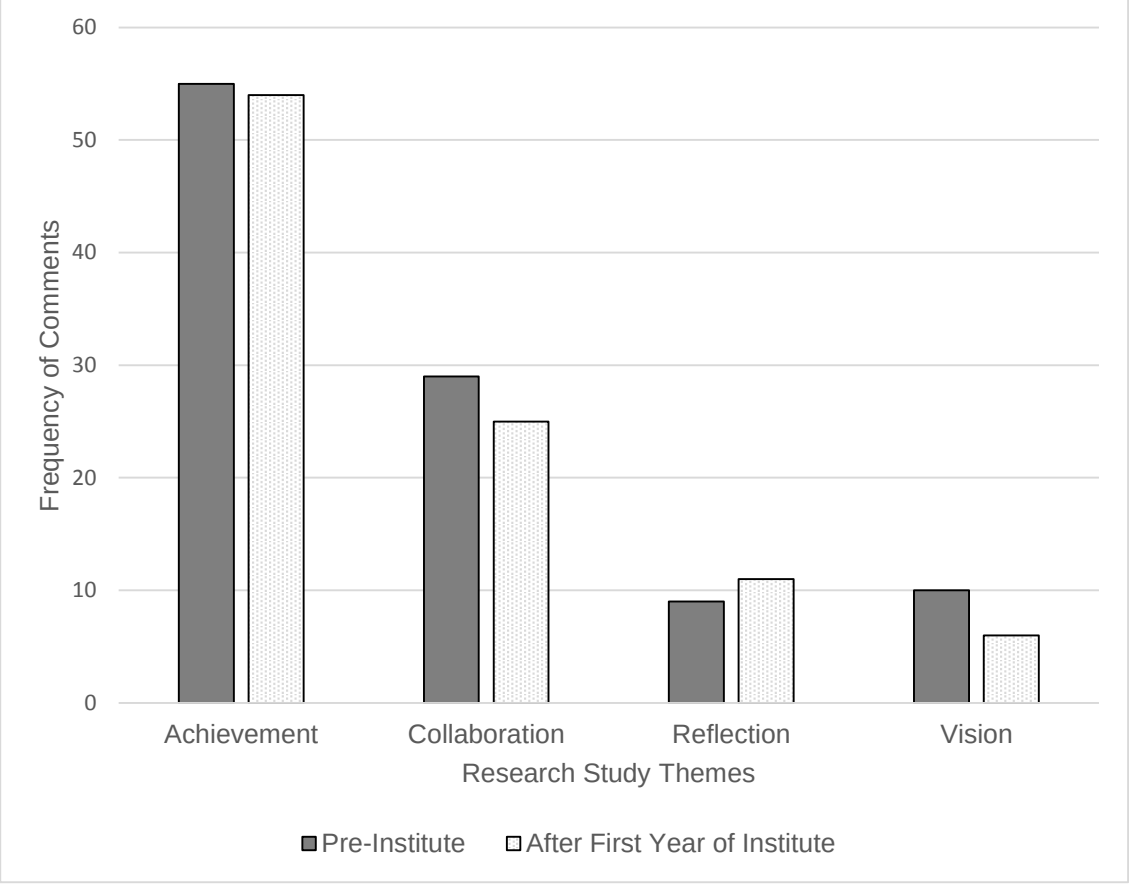

Figure 2. Consistent themes from pre-institute to after first year institute. This figure illustrates which themes had similar frequency of comments from the pre-institute and after first year institute interviews.

Achievement. Participants referenced achievement most frequently when answering questions about goals for the organization. In particular, achievement statements were in accordance with reading and math achievement with the context of proficiency. Examples of statements of goals for the year included, "one of them [goal] obviously is the academic goals. I want my students to increase in reading and math" and "increase reading and math achievement for all students". When referencing how participants knew they achieved their goals, statements included, "The achievement is all

the data that we're bringing up in our PLC's that we're seeing in our MAP growth that we're seeing in daily performances," and "We're monitoring all sorts of different data pieces; anywhere from benchmark assessments written by district to teacher common formative assessments that have been created, to MAP testing, all sorts of different tools we're using to measure that".

Collaboration. Collaboration was referenced as primarily professional learning communities, yet other terminology included grade level collaboration and instructional leadership teams. These comments were associated with the question of what actions would be and were taken to achieve the goals. Participant comments included, "The first one is to have teachers working in professional learning communities so PLC's, and we're really trying to have students, student data and test scores used by teachers and have those teachers collaborate using that data to determine best practices for teaching" and ". . . bring our collaborative teams together, tighten our PLC process, and really find ways that our special education staff, EL staff, saw how they fit into the PLC process".

One of the sessions during the Institute brought in a practicing principal to share insights, processes, and experiences. This principal shared a notion of 'Trust of Capability' that focused on respecting educators' knowledge, skills, and abilities; involving others; and analyzing data to know if learning is taking place beyond the teaching.

Reflection. Even though the theme of reflection was similar in references from the pre-institute to after first year institute interview, the message within this theme shifted. The pre-institute interviews focused on reflection in response to the question

about goals for the organization, “And the third goal for the year? Wow, I would, I would say it would be to, to just constantly reflect on one and two” and “. . . thinking every day at the end of the day, what did I accomplish today, did I get out, and did I, you know, start thinking about things that I wanted to do and trying to do and trying to reflect”.

Interviews after the first year of the institute took on a different message. These interviews included statements of how the Institute brought about their own reflection,

> The institute in terms of how it’s been broken up, basically every six weeks that we visit, gives me a chance to stop, take a deep breathe, and continue doing what I need to do. That’s that check in spot. That’s that reflection piece that I need to make sure that I am staying the course and staying focused.

Taking time to reflect was an integral part of each Institute session and in many cases after a specific speaker or topic. One of the exercises posed after a topic of strategic planning for student success included reflective questions such as, “What is your leadership? How do you define a student-centered school vs. a teacher-centered school? How do you build capacity? PDCA – how do you keep data in focus? What measure do you have in place for accountability?” Additional examples of the reflective questions at the conclusion of a session included, “Today I was hopeful when. . .” and “Share one word to summarize the day.”

Vision. Vision may not have been referenced as frequently as other themes, yet the messages were clearly about a vision for the school and with learning, which is why I kept it as a theme on its own. Statements such as, “And the vision, the mission; my vision would be to start hearing people use, this is what I’m in the business of- I’m at

[name of school] because- we're here to serve them to do this- and so it becomes a living, breathing document versus a piece of paper."

Sessions throughout the entire first year connected the pattern of Vision – Mission – Beliefs – Behaviors – Results. Many times, the facilitators stated, "You have to have a vision, you must paint the picture of where you're going." Vision was further reinforced by statements during the reflection time of, "My takeaway: what you will experience or get from me is communication, honesty, relationship so we can get to vision, mission, and strategic pathway to reach that vision."

Pre-institute themes with higher frequency. Analysis of the interviews showed a higher level of pre-institute theme references as compared with after first year of institute in two themes; Professional Development and School Climate. The differential in frequency of the themes is depicted in Figure 3.

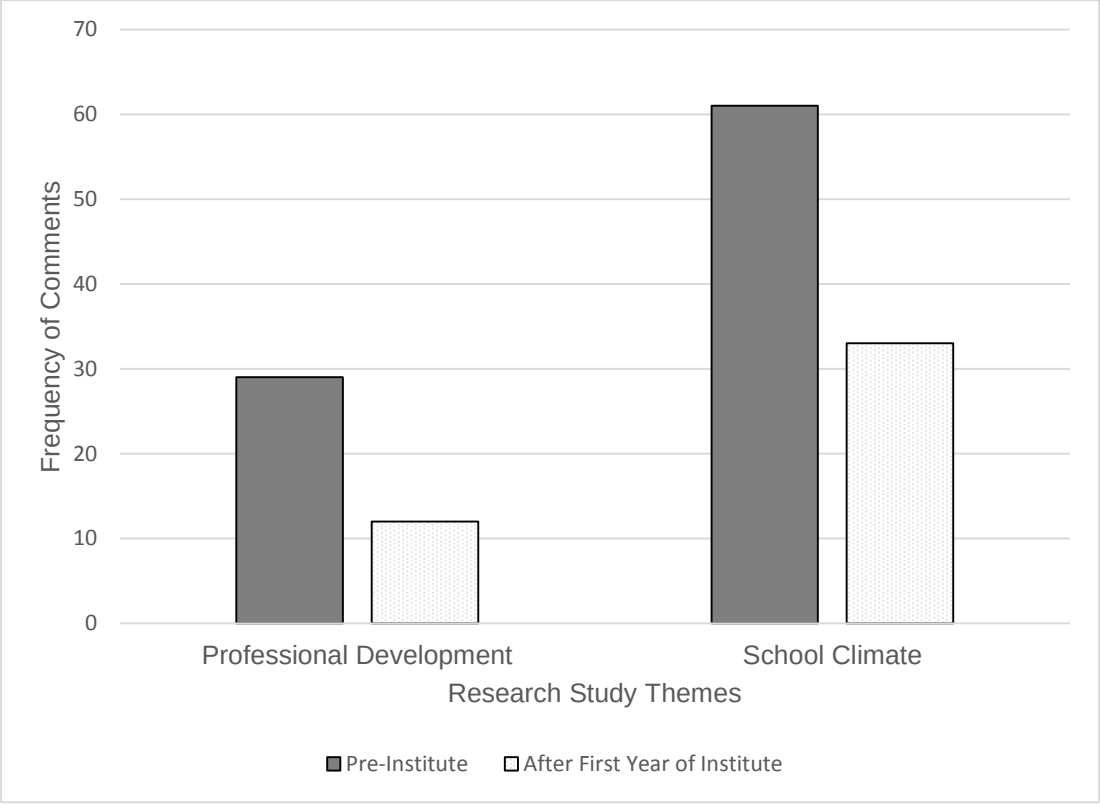

Figure 3. Pre-Institute themes at higher frequency. This figure illustrates which themes had a higher frequency of comments in the pre-institute interviews as compared with after first year institute interviews.

Professional development. The theme of professional development emerged more than twice as frequently during the pre-institute interviews as the after first year interviews. During the pre-institute interviews, professional development was referenced 29 times as compared with 12 times in the after first year interviews. Professional development was a theme from both questions of goals for the organization and actions the principal would take to accomplish the goals.

An example of the statements reinforcing the impact of professional development as a part of the school's goals included,

> A third goal for this school year, so relationships, data in center-based classrooms, and I think our professional development plan district-wide . . . how do our district-wide professional development plans support teachers, especially in the area of literacy, because we have a big literacy initiative going on that's just being started this year and it's a big change for a lot of our teachers.

Another statement in connection with school goals in the after the first year of institute interviews was, ". . . better professional development. We provide professional development around recruitment, outreach, focused instruction . . . ". Both examples demonstrate how professional development was a part of the school or organizations goals or an action to achieve the goals.

Although direct statements of professional development were not evident during the Institute sessions, modeling was a mainstay for each activity that the facilitators led. Institute facilitators stated, "We will provide an example of what we're asking you to do." This occurred throughout the entire first year sessions. An assignment for the participants exemplified the value of personal professional development, "Gain four pieces of input about yourself. You – Supervisor – Colleague – Someone you supervise. Ask them, 'I am working on improving my leadership and I would like you to tell me if there was one big thing that you believe that I could really improve on, what it would be?"

School climate. The theme of school climate was an anomaly in the comparison between pre-institute and after first year institute interviews. Even though there were more references to school climate in the pre-institute interviews, there was a shift in the

participants' comments regarding school climate from teacher centered to student learning centered. This shift was confirmed in the follow up individual interviews with the smaller segment of Institute participants.

Samples of the interview statements from the pre-institute timeframe were, ". . . to be really open to all the stakeholder groups coming in and meeting with me and getting a handle on what's great about the school and what they see as how we can improve things" and "Relationship building is huge with me so I'll take time to always say hello and talk to new people, make sure they're feeling welcome into the school and getting them anything that they need, any tools they need to help feel a part of the, the school." Staff relationships were referenced multiple times in the pre-institute interviews, "Number one will simply be just wanting to meet as many people as I can and get to know people at a very personal level, build some relationships."

The statements above are examples of the pre-institute interviews from the question of what actions the principals would take to accomplish the goals for the school or organization. Relationships with staff are a vital component to school climate, yet the shift after the first year of the institute was to student learning rather than relationships with staff (Edwards, 2004; Loukas, 2007; Garrett, 2008).

A shift within the theme school climate from teacher centered to student learning became evident in the after the first year institute statements, "Another goal that we had was strong, healthy relationships. Our belief is that that's [relationships with students] the foundation to student success academically within our building," and ". . . to model how to build a relationship with their students."

After first year of institute themes with higher frequency. Analysis of the interviews showed a higher level of after the first year of institute theme references as compared with pre-institute interviews in four themes; Beliefs, Confidence, Equity, and Networking. Figure 4 shows the level of difference between the themes.

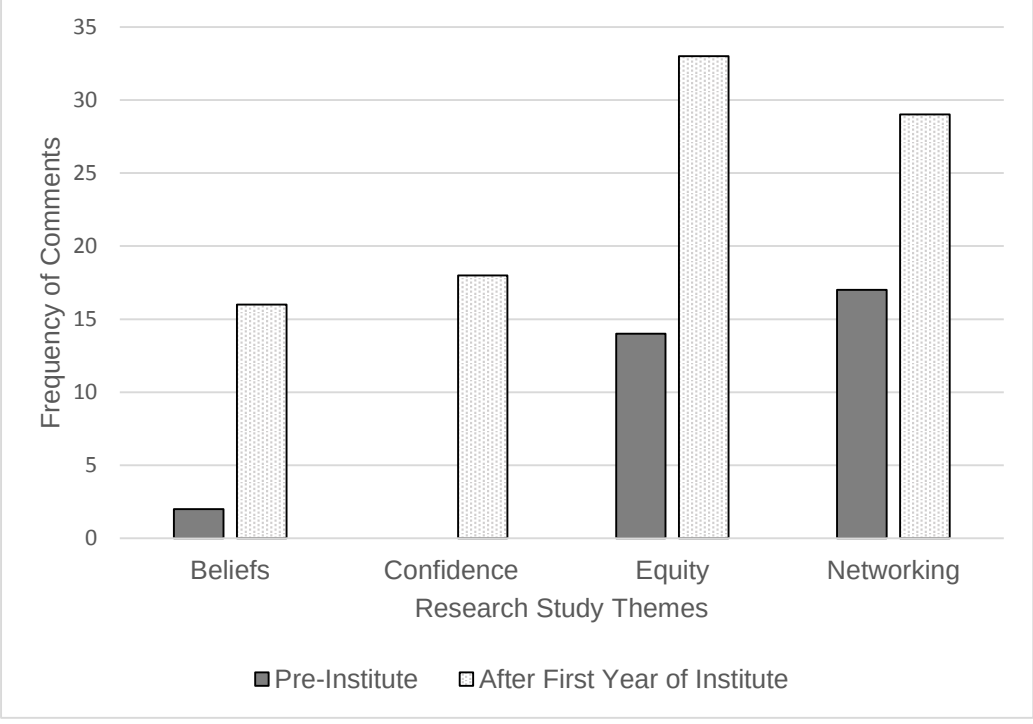

Figure 4. After first year of institute themes at higher frequency. This figure illustrates which themes had a higher frequency of comments in the after first year of institute interviews as compared with pre-institute interviews.

Beliefs. The theme of beliefs occurred eight times more frequently in the after first year of institute as compared with pre-institute interviews. Comments that fit with the theme of beliefs were only mentioned two times in the pre-institute interviews; whereas there were 16 references in the after first year of institute interviews. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, beliefs wasn't recognized as a theme with the initial

coding of the pre-institute interviews. It was only after coding the after first year of institute interviews that beliefs was included as a theme.

The mission of the Institute is to advance student achievement in Minnesota through the development of courageous principal leaders who demonstrate a desire to lead with a moral imperative (Institute for Educational Leadership brochure, 2012). Developing courageous leaders was the foundation from the very beginning session and carried through the entire first year.

Participant interviews conducted during the pre-institute phase of this study did not include any explicit comments about their personal or professional beliefs. Indirectly connected to beliefs were two comments regarding high expectations accompanied with believing all students can learn and a participant's reflection of needing to have a mindset to move out of one's comfort zone.

The theme of beliefs was more apparent in the after first year of institute interviews as direct comments about participants' beliefs were directly stated 16 times. Comments in these interviews included, "One of the things that helped me a lot was understanding my own, personal mission and vision and belief system about education", "This Institute really grounded, helped me be very grounded in my beliefs", and "Every day we have to analyze our beliefs and see if they're matching our behaviors."

My observation field notes show that the theme of beliefs was referenced 44 times through participants' and presenters' comments. Below are examples of these comments:

- Be rock solid in your beliefs.

- When you hire, it's a behavioral response to your beliefs.
- Do your meeting agendas reflect your beliefs?
- It's all about knowing who you are. Reflect and define your own personal values and the impact on your professional practice. – Know Thyself
- The whole moral imperative – hearing these leaders reminds me, "you better know – you better know what you believe."
- To be able to stand on my moral imperatives – my non-negotiables.
- More resilient than I thought I was – deeper foundation.

Confidence. Throughout all of the pre-institute interviews, comments on the subject of confidence were not stated at all. Again, this theme was not discovered in the initial coding of the pre-institute theme. Confidence became evident in the after first year of institute interviews with 18 references.

The front page of the first brochure developed to communicate and recruit participants for the Institute included a quote by Eleanor Roosevelt, "A good leader inspires people to have confidence in the leader; a great leader inspires people to have confidence in themselves." This was another theme that increased from the pre-institute interviews from two comments related to a subtheme of inspiration to 18 direct comments of feelings of confidence in the after first year of institute interviews.

- . . . gave me the courage to know that it is my passion to move student thinking forward and learning forward. And it's going to be rough, and finding the right angle and communication and collaboration to move myself forward. So a lot of confidence has been built because of this cohort.

- It's given me confidence to kind of stand up and say these things and to know that I have colleagues that are behind me that are saying, "You're doing that right thing."
- I think it gave me confidence to take this challenge on. I was very nervous to do this, to lead a building. So, it has really given me confidence.
- A lot of times when I'm here, I think about what my next steps are and I can outline where I need to be going. It gives me a lot of confidence.
- But it's also just, I think freed me up to really be the leader that I need to be, and to have colleagues that I can go to outside of my own district for support and for ideas, and just really inspired me to do good work in my school and in my community.

My observation notes reinforced how confidence building was embedded in presentations, participant reflections, and the facilitators' role-playing of difficult situations.

- Confidence – know who you are as a leader – knowing that I have this group gives me confidence.
- There will always be detractors – so how do you lead through the distractions?
- Leadership is difficult conversations. Problem – Conversation – Results. Need to plan the conversation. These comments were followed by a role play of a difficult conversation.

- Defining your Leadership: What kind of Leader are you going to be? (video – half full or half empty). In a reflective way what do you hope to accomplish?
- My challenge to you . . . people are losing confidence in education, in Districts, in Leaders. Every day you have a chance to change the world and we have to get doing it.

Equity. The theme of equity was referenced 33 times in the after first year of institute interviews as compared with 14 times in the pre-institute interviews. Of all of the after first year of institute themes, equity had the second to the highest amount of frequency with the theme of achievement having the highest frequency with 54 comments.

The theme of equity was an emphasis at every session of the Institute and a foundational purpose for the creation of the Institute from the start. Again, the initial Institute brochure stated:

> The candidates will gain the needed skills to eliminate achievement, teaching, and participation gaps in schools while ensuring achievement for all students. Leaders will cultivate their ability to create a school culture where every student is fully engaged, educated, and accepted (2012).

Interview comments regarding equity more than doubled from the 14 pre-institute references to the 33 statements in the after first year of institute interviews. Not only was there an increase in the number of comments in the interview comparisons, but the core message in regards to equity was different with each timeframe of interviews. Drilling down into the theme of equity exposed a stronger emphasis on achievement gap in the

participants' description of goals for the school or organization at the pre-institute timeframe.

- How we are serving our ELL learners. We have a pretty large gap in the performance of those students and some of our other learners, and so we really want to address that.
- The other goal is to close the achievement gap. At the school, there's a pretty wide achievement gap. There's about 50% white and 50% brown kids there, and there's an achievement gap between those groups.
- One of them [goals] obviously is the academic goals. I want my students to increase in reading and math and for the achievement gap to close.

A similar disaggregation of the after first year of institute interviews displayed a stronger emphasis on equity, such as cultural competence, access, viewing data through the lens of equity.

- . . .look at as a climate, how we were dealing with suspensions and that sort of thing. We kind of looked at all of that with the lens of equity.
- . . . relationship piece, we analyze and look at our discipline trends and our participation rates outside of school with co-curricular things. All of those are up at this point. The discipline has gone down, we reflect on certain populations that are over-represented in terms of discipline and under-represented in co-curriculars and after school activities.

- And we looked at data together, and it was broken down by race. And we talked a little bit about race and equity and had the courageous conversations compass, and talked about the four agreements.
- We have barriers within our building, or within our district, that they don't work for all kids. So, just being able to articulate that with the staff, being able to model that, being able to bring in a lens of equity to all the work that we do when we're looking at student data.

Discussions and actions the participants were engaged in during the Institute sessions emphasized equity in data analysis, systems and structures within schools, as well as in beliefs and mindsets. Examples of this from observation notes and actual modules presented included:

- Groups [of participants] asked to share, "How have you operationalized your moral purpose?"
- Share a success story that you've had since our last session . . . a courageous conversation, a "critical move" to advance equity, or something that you did to interrupt the status quo
- We've been working hard on equity – started a care team. Look at instructional practices through lens of equity. Culturally relevant pedagogy – not just strategies.
- Questions [data analysis protocols]: How did kids do overall? How did kids of color do? How did special education kids do? Adult Causal Behaviors –

What instructional strategies did you do that you all agreed to? What was the impact of those strategies on kids of color?

- Do we have the *will* to educate all children? (Hilliard, 1991)
- Viewing "The Danger of a Single Story: Chimimanda Adichie" followed by reflective discussions around the following questions; How does the single story show up in your school? How will you insist on a more complete story?

Networking. The theme of networking was evident in both timeframes of interviews; yet increased from 17 references in the pre-institute to 29 comments in interviews conducted after the first year of institute. The prevalent messages in the pre-institute interviews in relation to networking were about gaining knowledge and ideas as well as collaborating with others.

- So I think just having colleagues where I can share what's working, what's not.
- I'm inexperienced and I'm sitting in a room full of experienced administrators so I'm going to be a sponge.
- Giving me an opportunity to reflect and meet with other people and gain knowledge and experience from hearing their stories, and just, and being a place to learn.

The interviews after the first year of the institute reflected that the networking in the Institute became a "safe place" for them. There were multiple references to how lonely the position of principal can be and they felt their networking in the Institute helped them to remain focused on the important work.

- This has been, to me, the place that has allowed me to not be an island.
- It provides us with the time to collaborate, to reflect, to vision, to stay focused on the right work of what we're doing.
- Having the support with other people from other districts that do the same or similar work that I do and have the same or similar conflicts and stresses has been reassuring to know that together we can get through this, we can lean on people.
- I think this is the kind of support that principals need. Because a lot of times we are alone. And when we're not intentional about meeting with other leaders and then about learning from them and with them, it makes the job a lot harder. But to be able to come and just listen, a lot of times for me, you know, just common listening.

Phase III: Follow-up Interviews

At the conclusion of transcription, analysis, coding, and comparison of themes from the pre-institute to after first year institute interviews; I conducted follow up individual interviews with four participants. Follow up interviews provide a triangulation of the qualitative data collected (Creswell, 2003).

The four participants were chosen randomly and were included in both the pre-institute and after first year institute interviews. Demographically, this group included the following: White female principal of a suburban school and served in this school during the institute; Black male principal of an urban school and new to this school;

White male principal of an urban school and served in this school during institute; and White male principal of an urban school and new to this school.

Table 4

Demographic Characteristics of Follow Up Interviewees.

Gender	Race/Ethnicity	Location of School	Reference in this Study
Female	White	Suburban	Participant 1.
Male	Black	Urban	Participant 2.
Male	White	Urban	Participant 3.
Male	White	Urban	Participant 4.

Note. Table depicts the demographic characteristics of four participants in follow up interviews.

Follow up interview questions were semi-structured in order to gain deeper insights into the theme of school climate that appeared to shift from teacher centered to student centered, and emergence of the themes of beliefs, confidence, equity, and networking from the after first year institute interviews. These interviews were conducted via internet or phone and a year after the participants completed the Institute in order to know if the impacts of the Institute were long lasting and how the participants applied what they learned and experienced.

School climate. The theme of school climate was evident in both the pre-institute and after first year institute interviews yet the references within the comments appeared to shift from teacher-centered climate indicators to a student-centered climate focus.

Follow up interviews with four participants from the Institute confirmed this shift in their focus of school climate. Examples of these confirming comments included:

> Participant 1. I would say that the school climate focus for me changed because of the Institute on being much more student centered. And student centered being driven by being very transparent by my belief system and having teachers and other staff members examine their own belief systems. Having people examine the why of why they're here and really the why really needs to be around student success.
>
> Participant 2. My focus is more on student learning than basically the, how students appear in the climate of school. Student learning determines what the climate is or what the culture of the school is. Because if kids are learning, then the climate is always positive.
>
> Participant 3. I would say that the idea around creating conditions for students so that they can learn, and again a big focus for us on how we create a calm safe critical environment where students can learn and feel safe. We know that when students have, or are worried, it's the same part of their brain that, where we learn. And so it's a huge focus of our work.
>
> Participant 4. It's the heart of everything we do. I'm always, school climate is very important to me. . . everybody has everybody's back. Everybody, you go home tired but you go home feeling like I'm not alone. . . we're really pushing the equity work in a fierce way this year because we built such a high level of trust last year.

Beliefs. The theme of beliefs wasn't evident in the pre-institute interviews while comments in the after first year of institute clearly indicated a growth in the participants' educational beliefs and courage to act according to those beliefs. The follow up interviews with the four individuals further validated the emergence of beliefs as a result of participation in the Institute.

> Participant 1. As leaders I think that we are constantly reflecting on who we are and how we can be the most effective. But the institute really helped me to be really laser focused on what truly my true beliefs are on education and through that process it really impacted who I was as a leader, and how I interact with staff, how I interact with students, how I interact with parents. Because I realize that sometimes my behavior was not necessarily aligned with my beliefs because sometimes you get in some situations that you have to be really courageous and it's not necessarily the most comfortable.
>
> Participant 2. The Institute had a MAJOR impact on my beliefs as a leader. Before the Institute, I would try to lead from behind the scenes. I realized in the Institute I realized after year 1 that it's important that I get my voice out there as a black male because kids need to see me out front first of all and the other most important piece is that my beliefs about student learning is solid that all kids can learn at a high level and it's our jobs as leaders to make sure that they get the best education as possible.

Participant 3. The idea of actually writing down your beliefs and values and then seeing if my actions really match what my beliefs are was huge. To really stand in front of my staff and my community and say this is what I believe in. . . . That was all work that I learned from the Institute and really honed in my craft and learned more about myself as a leader. That was just really important.

Participant 4. As far as my beliefs, there really, there were two things that impacted my beliefs. One is I learned who I was. I learned not to be somebody else. Who I am, the way I lead is okay, it's different, very different. I'm not your typical leader or principal. I hate the spotlight. I hate the title of principal to be honest. But it, and so just because I wanted to do this job, doesn't mean I need to be someone I'm not. So that was one thing that taught me that how I lead is okay. That and I have to believe that I have to stay true to who I am. And the second thing, the biggest belief that came to me from the institute was from [presenter]. And, again I've always held this belief that we have to love our kids. Its' our job to love, whether that's caring for them, whether that's teaching them, whether that's just being a servant leader for our kids.

Confidence. Even stronger affirmation of the growth of confidence came through in the follow up interviews with the sampling of participants.

Participant 1. Well, I think as a school leader, you know it's like you walk in in the morning and you know I'm ready for a great day and then one

ringer will throw you within three minutes of walking in and will really challenge you in a way that you've never been challenged before. And then you're confidence will be like . . . why would I ever think that I could have done this job in the first place. I just think that that's part of the job. But, I think confidence is very tied to knowing who you are and what you believe, and if you have the courage to then align your behavior to your beliefs. And I think that it's, I think I've used this example with you before, it's I really use an analogy of a tree as a leader. I really feel like the beliefs are your roots and if you have really deep strong roots, and that would be like your really deep strong beliefs, then you will, no matter what storm hits or how hard the wind blows, or how cold it gets or just what severity it gets with the weather, the crisis, that as long as you hold strong to those deep strong beliefs that you have, that you can weather the storm a little easier. . . .So I think my confidence has risen a lot because I've been able to really laser focus on my beliefs and truly as personally, professionally as a leader I've been able to think deeply about them and really put those roots very deep. I think that helps with confidence. So that's where I think the confidence has come from by going through this Institute.

Participant 2. It's MAJOR, my confidence has grown 10 fold since I started the Institute. I had a lot of uncomfortable situations during the Institute that helped me grow as a person. A lot of times, it takes a person

to be in disequilibrium to grow and learn to their best of their ability. And I was in disequilibrium quite a bit in the Institute because I had to speak for, honestly a whole race of people.

Participant 3. Oh, I think, I really believe that the principal needs to be the lead learner in the building. This idea that you're the instructional leader, but I really like the idea of being the lead learner. The more I grow as a teacher, as a principal, as a leader, the better I can help move my building forward. So it is incredibly important, in fact, I am constantly looking for continuing that type of growth and development. I feel so much more confident now.

Equity. The theme of equity had a significant impact on the sampling of participants as indicated in the follow up interviews.

Participant 1. What we know is that in order to be successful with students with whom we're working, being able to totally understand who they are and what makes them the most successful. And because we are working with students of color, students in poverty, a lot of different backgrounds, students who have been through trauma, living in trauma right now, that's not something we can ignore anymore. And it's not something we think about on Fridays or only at a staff meeting. It's something we have to think about day in and day out. We need to learn instructional strategies that meet the needs of all of our learners. . . . The focus of equity it needs to be the lens that, through which we see everything. Every decision

needs to be made with an equity focus. . . . For me, it's just how we do business now. It has to be how we do business as a principal, how we do business as a teacher, how we do business as a custodian, a secretary. Everyone has to have that right at the front of everything we do.

Participant 2. Well it's changed tremendously for me because before the Institute, I could see the need for the equity work . . ., I felt like there were a lot of inequities in our educational system. But I didn't think anyone else saw those inequities. But then a part of the Institute we talked equity, we talked about equitable access, we talked about a lot of things dealing with equity. And also in my school district . . .I think everything is aligning, my beliefs around equity and the beliefs of the Institute and the beliefs of my current school district all align because there are definitely inequities.

Participant 3. I've grown so much. I would say that my knowledge of equity and how you actually make an equitable school for all has grown ten-fold since starting the Institute. What we've done, we've created an equity team, an equity committee, and we've already looked at our first year. . . . we're really working on creating more of a building that looks and feels more like our community and our kids who come here. . . . One of the big things we talk about is equity of voice. Are teachers calling on volunteers and non-volunteers? Are they using equity sticks to call names?

> Some of these quick look fors we just want to develop this year and moving into next year to really start looking at practice within classrooms.
>
> Participant 4. There is something that [the facilitators] are doing in that Institute to really deepen the work of individuals. Now I felt that going into the institute I had a pretty good foundation because I had, we were a beacon school at [name of school]. But obviously, being around those leaders got me to go deeper in the work. And I can't name it, I can't name what they did, but the proof for me was when I sat with those [principals] and they were impressed. Because part of [specific story], because of where we, I was very surface level with it at first. But the more I've seen it, the more I've talked with my staff of color, I know that I [specific story] when I'm perpetuating institutional racism . . . But I get to . . .interrupt the system. . . [Facilitators] are doing something there that is, that is getting us to go deeper. I just can't name it.

Networking. The follow up interviews also referenced how valuable the networking was and the loneliness of the job. They have even started getting together with other participants from the first Institute to continue the dialogue and continued learning.

> Participant 1. So I just hosted a little reunion . . . it was a great discussion and it was great to see everyone. And one thing I think the Institute that I don't know if it was intentional or if it was just a result of being together, it was I have truly enjoyed the relationships I've formed with other leaders

> who are in the metro area and outside of the metro area. Who are really facing the same challenges and barriers and that alone, and I don't know how you would measure that but I think it is something that, that support and collegiality because you really can be so lonely in this job. . . . And that's one of the outcomes of the institute besides all of the great work that we did research, and studying, but just having those contacts and relationships. Getting that perspective that is different from your district. It's definitely worth noting.
>
> Participant 2. If they [facilitators] call me, whenever they call me I will drop what I'm doing to go help out whenever needed.
>
> Participant 3. I would say the Institute was probably some of the best learning I've had as a leader. . . . We're trying to work on ways to keep it going. . . . now being able to work with [facilitators] in the new principal program . . . has been great.

Summary

A review of the results for this qualitative case study on the perceptions of participants in the Institute of Engaged Principal Leadership provided emerging themes from the pre-institute and after first year of institute interviews. These themes were: achievement, collaboration, equity, networking, professional development, reflection, school climate, vision, beliefs, and confidence. Observation field notes data aligned with these emerging themes from the interviews.

A shift of perception occurred in the themes of equity, networking, beliefs, and confidence from the pre-institute to the after first year of institute interviews. These shifts were validated in the follow up individual interviews with a sampling of four participants from the 2012-2013 Institute. Another shift was evident in school climate with the pre-institute interviews describing more of a teacher-centered, collaboration among educators, and relationship based climate to a student learning focus in the after first year of institute interviews.

The next final chapter provides the overall findings of this study along with recommendations for future studies and principal institutes.

Chapter V

Conclusions and Recommendations

The purpose of this study was to identify early career Principals' perceptions of the benefits of participating in the Institute of Engaged Principal Leadership, discover how they applied the components of this Institute in their work, and identify further support needed by early career Principals. The following research questions informed this study's findings: (a) What are the perceptions of early career Principals as the benefits of participation in the Institute of Engaged Principal Leadership? (b) How did early career Principals apply the components of the Institute of Engaged Principal Leadership to their work as a Principal? (c) What further support is identified by early career Principals as significant to their work as a Principal?

Research was conducted through structured face-to-face interviews with participants of the Institute for Engaged Principal Leadership, direct observation of each Institute session, and follow up interviews with a sampling of the Institute participants. This chapter provides a review, analysis, and discussion of the findings in alignment with the research questions. Finally, this chapter outlines recommendations for further study and implications for future principal institutes.

Conclusions

Three fundamental questions guided this research study:

1. What are the perceptions of early career Principals of their participation in the Institute of Engaged Principal Leadership?

2. How did early career Principals apply the components of the Institute of Engaged Principal Leadership to their work as a Principal?
3. What further support is identified by early career Principals as significant to their work as a Principal?

Research question 1: Perceptions of early career principals. The qualitative data collected from the pre-institute and after first year of institute interviews provided insights into the perceptions of principals engaged in this Institute. This is particularly evident when comparing the interviews from the pre-institute to those after the first year and the shifts in thinking that appeared to emerge.

Overall, there were ten themes that emerged from the interviews; achievement, collaboration, equity, networking, professional development, reflection, school climate, vision, beliefs, and confidence. The interview information, field note observation notes, and follow up interviews represented these results. The shift in thinking in the areas of equity, networking, beliefs, confidence, and within the essence of the responses related to school climate highlight the perceptions of participants' in relation to their involvement in the Institute.

The literature review revealed a necessary change in the role of the principal and the impact a principal has on student achievement in the areas of accountability, student performance, serving as a change agent, and instructional leadership. Research findings in the themes of equity, beliefs, confidence, and shift in school climate reinforce those changing roles.

Examining achievement data through the lens of equity is needed to not only increase achievement overall but to also close the achievement gap to insure high levels of learning for all (Murphy, 2010). Participant interview responses shifted from equity within achievement gap in test results to a broader need for equity to be a lens for schools structures, policies, communication, and creation of culturally responsive instruction.

In order to serve as the instructional leader and change agent within a school takes a solid foundation in a principal's beliefs and confidence (Fullan, 2003; Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004). Interviews with all participants and the follow up interviews along with the observations notes revealed an increase in the levels of confidence based upon the work of examining one's beliefs, communicating those beliefs, and aligning behaviors with those beliefs.

Research question 2: Application of the components of the institute. The application of the components of the Institute were evident in the responses to the after first year institute interview question of what actions the principal took to achieve the goals and the follow up interviews with the sampling of participants. The responses to these interviews indicate that participants applied the components of the Institute through their courageous statements of beliefs with staff, through their work with equity teams and challenging current structures that promote institutional racism, and through their pursuit of high levels of learning with all students not matter their socio-economic status, race, gender, or qualification for special services.

Achievement data from the schools that the sampling of participants in the follow up interviews lead include moving from an identification by the Minnesota Department

of Education as a Focus School to no longer being in the lowest 5% of schools in the state, thus no longer receiving that identification. A further recognition of the improvements in achievement with this school is the identification through a non-profit organization and local business as a school making a difference in closing the achievement gap in an inner city school. This school is in the running for a $100,000 grant to support and continue the work and grow current systems they have implemented.

A second participant who leads a school who qualifies for Title I and was identified as a Reward School by the Minnesota Department of Education. Schools identified as Reward Schools are the top 15% of Title I schools based on the Multiple Measurement Results (MMR). Reward Schools represent the highest-performing schools on the four domains in the MMR; proficiency, growth, achievement gap reductions and graduation rate and elementary schools do not include graduation rate.

A third participant stated that the discipline referrals for the school this participant leads has decreased by 50% in the last year due to the capacity building of staff in dealing with students in trauma. The fourth participant is in the first year as a principal of the current school and served as an assistant principal of a school during the time of the 2012-2013 Institute.

Research question 3: Further supports identified by participants. The consistent comment from the question "What further support do you believe is necessary for your work as a principal?" was to continue the networking beyond the Institute. Examples of these statements were:

- To keep these networks going, because this is a group who have common understanding and beliefs and are living on the edge of education to make the difference.
- I think that this type of work needs to be ongoing, this type of support and networking. It is often a lonely position to be in, to be the lead of a building.
- I think the part that is going to be really hard is just kind of missing that connection with the people in our group, and just taking that time. Because this happens approximately once a month, but that time is huge.
- . . . being able to find a way to stay connected with other leaders. You know, you get so caught up in working with leaders from your own district, but this being able to network and connect with people from all over the cities is really helpful.
- I think it would be nice if there was any way that our cohort can maintain a group so that we can come together and stay in touch with each other.
- The job is just so overwhelming in so many ways. It's very exciting and I do everything that I can. But I think in the future having a network of principals outside of the district would be very helpful.

The value of this Institute is apparent the fact that some have tried to meet an entire year after it concluded. The topic of that reunion was literacy, rather than simply getting together to visit.

As stated in the literature review, new principals often experience feelings of fatigue, reality shock of what the position truly entails, isolation, and frustration (Duke,

1987). From the responses to these after first year institute interviews, indications are that this Institute provided support, networking, on the job skill development, and confidence to communicate their foundational beliefs as a leader.

The findings of this study point to five recommendations for future principal institutes and educational career preparation programs.

Recommendations as a Result of this Study

The need for improving student achievement goes well beyond the No Child Left Behind Legislation's (2002) emphasis on accountability. Retired school principal and researcher, John Morefield (1996), wrote in an online article for Johns Hopkins New Horizons for Learning,

> We are becoming increasingly aware that it is no longer enough to educate just some of our children. . . . Our society is changing, our demographics are changing, and so, too, must our educational beliefs and practices change. It is from this realization that the impetus comes to create schools that work for all children.

This level of moral imperative is what drove the creators and facilitators of the Institute of Engaged Principal Leadership to develop professional development deeply rooted in equity for practicing school leaders.

The findings of this study indicate participants' perceptions of the importance of equity and the imperative to address achievement gaps in student learning. Follow up interviews with the sampling of Institute participants' further show that the

implementation of this equity focus in these participants' schools is resulting in student achievement growth and reduction in discipline referrals.

The call for public schools to educate all students at high levels and the findings of the impacts of the Institute of Engaged Principal Leadership with the initial participants point to five recommendations for future Institutes and educational preparation programs: (a) continue Theory of Action and lens of equity within the Institute, (b) expand the number of Institutes and locations, (c) strive for diversity within the participants of an Institute, (d) equity emphasis embedded into education administration preparation programs, and (e) equity emphasis embedded into masters programs for teachers.

Recommendation 1. Continue Theory of Action and Lens of Equity within Institute

Making a recommendation to continue what is currently happening within the Institute may appear to not be much of a recommendation, yet there was such a shift of thinking with the participants in their beliefs about equity that this appears to be a core impact to its effectiveness. Not only did participants' beliefs become clear and grounded in equity, their confidence to align their behaviors to those beliefs grew. Follow up interview with participant 1 depicted this grounding of beliefs like the roots of a tree and in order to weather the challenging storms, those roots [beliefs] need to be deep.

As an observer, I witnessed how this grounding of beliefs led to the moral imperative of acting upon those beliefs. There were inspiring moments when participants began to discuss racial inequalities, courageously address inequitable practices within their schools, and challenge the beliefs and actions of others in their educational

communities. Fullan (2003) states, "The first lesson of the moral imperative is, Don't forget the why question" (p. 61). In the context of the Institute, the why question was directly connected to one's beliefs.

Recommendation 2. Expand the Number of Institutes and Locations

The qualitative data collected in this study indicates the value and positive impact the Institute had on the initial participants in their leadership beliefs, confidence, and resulting actions within their schools. Comments from follow up interviews with participants point to the value of this professional development as the, "most rewarding professional development I've had in 19 years as an educator" and "I think it's the future of the principal program".

This recommendation is careful to state an expansion of the number of Institutes rather than expanding the number of participants within an Institute. The deep discussions that occurred in the first year of the Institute along with the relationships and high level networking necessitate a limited number of participants within the Institute sessions. The Institute is not a "sit and get," but instead engaging, collaborative, and structured in a way that sessions become a safe haven for sharing and problem solving.

Two Institutes are conducted concurrently; with one being in year one and the other in year two with the location being at Minnesota State University, Mankato at Edina. The sessions are facilitated by the two creators of the Institute and any level of expansion would require additional facilitators. Having observed all of the first year sessions, I would further recommend that any additional facilitators possess the high

level of passion and commitment to equity and access for all students along with the skills of modeling situations and guiding deep discussions.

A 2013-2014 report conducted by the Rural School and Community Trust indicates that one-quarter of Minnesota's students attend rural schools with a "disproportionate percentage identified as having special needs" (p. 64). The report goes on to state, "(Minnesota) has relatively low poverty rates; yet, more than a third of the state's students are eligible for free/reduced-price lunches" (p. 64).

The Minnesota Department of Education website data portal indicates the percentage of rural minority students 11.9%. Of the 155 schools identified as priority or focus schools through the state of Minnesota's Multiple Measurement Ratings, 41 were rural Minnesota public schools. As the state of Minnesota addresses and works to close the achievement gap across the varying demographic segments of our student population, rural Minnesota must take on the equity work. Schools across our state need to have courageous and results driven leaders along with the types of networking that the Institute has demonstrated it can provide. For this reason, I recommend an expansion to a rural Minnesota location.

Beyond expanding the number of Institutes and locations, this recommendation includes expanding the career experience of the participants of the Institute. The Institute of Engaged Principal Leadership began as a focus on early career principals, yet the learning strands and theory of action fit with principals at any time in their career with the key being a personal growth mindset and desire to improve one's skills and impact.

Recommendation 3. Diversity of Participants within an Institute

My recommendation of diversity of participants within an Institute is two-fold; insuring there are multiple school districts represented in an Institute and demographic diversity of the participants. The after first year of institute and follow up interview comments provided insights into the value of having colleagues from multiple school districts participating in the Institute. An example was in this participant's comments after the first year, "Having the support with other people from other districts that do the same or similar work that I do and have the same or similar conflicts and stresses has been reassuring to know that together we can get through this, we can lean on people."

Another participant referenced that although there are multiple principals within [the participant's] district, there is an added value to getting outside of your district to network with leaders who are doing the same type of work but have a different perspective. Just as schools have an internal climate, districts do as well and that can impact perspectives and possibilities for addressing situations (Shannon & Bylsma, 2004).

As an observer of this Institute, I found the impact of each participant gaining insights into equity at a personal level through one another. This was particularly evident during a discussion of participants' cultural views on leadership and how that impacts how they address situations. An example of this is when a participant shared, "In my culture . . . I go to the person I have a problem with . . . I grew up in a culture of collectivism, but the school culture takes that away." Another participant stated, "I'm viewed as abrasive when I act as who I am."

The richness of understanding equity and the power of the lens of equity, especially racial equity, was felt by the participants because of the demographic diversity and experiences each participant shared. Because of this internal shift with participants, if at all possible, my recommendation is to have diversity of gender, race/ethnicity, and age within the participant groups for future Institutes.

Recommendation 4. Equity Emphasis in Administrative Preparation Programs

The literature review of this study summarized the National Staff Development Council's recommendations for supporting principals in the change process. These recommendations were; continuous improvement strategies, building supportive school cultures, knowledge about change processes, importance of data, and public engagement strategies (Sparks & Hirsch, 2000).

The portion of the literature review on principal development programs also depicted Darling-Hammond's research on principles of adults learning to support effective leadership programs. Those recommendations are summarized as; a clear focus about leadership and learning, instructional/organizational leadership, field-based internships, cohort groups for collaboration, instructional strategies linked to theory and practice, rigorous selection, and school/district partnerships.

Although a limitation of this study is that not all principal preparation programs in our Nation were reviewed, the noted National Staff Development Council and Darling-Hammond's recommendations have no mention of equity or development of courageous leadership to impact the achievement gap in student achievement. Another theme from

the interviews that appeared to have a strong impact on these early career principal was the development of their professional beliefs and the match of beliefs and behaviors.

A review of three different Minnesota university principal preparation programs of study show coursework in areas such as personnel, school law and finance, leadership studies, teaching and learning; and others but none had as a core requirement a course in equity. One university did have two elective courses directly related to the diversity competency. In order to meet our Nation's need to educate all students at high levels, a clearer focus on equity work will need to be a part of principal preparation programs so all are ready to lead in this capacity and so students in all schools benefit.

Recommendation 5. Equity Emphasis in Teacher Preparation and Masters Programs

Comments made by guest speakers in Institute sessions referenced the need for participants to empower and engage teachers in their schools with creating cultures of high levels of learning for all students. Two examples of these comments were; "You're not going to be enough [in closing the achievement gap]. You've got to find those teachers who align with your beliefs," and "It has to start with you as the principal, but that's challenging. When it becomes shared ownership, that's powerful."

This study focused on the Institute of Engaged Principal Leadership and the literature review pointed to how the principal impacts student achievement. Research also indicates that teachers have the greatest impact on student achievement (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Marzano, Pickering, & Pollock, 2001; Sanders & Rivers, 1996), which

leads this researcher to recommend an emphasis on equity and closing the achievement and access gap become embedded into educational masters' programs for teachers.

Researcher's Comments

As I began my role as a principal, I did not know of an opportunity to engage in a professional development like this Institute. My mentor was one of those rare finds as a principal who held a belief that all students can learn at high levels and her actions aligned with those beliefs on a daily basis.

This research study and year of observing each session of the Institute of Engaged Principal Leadership solidified my own beliefs as a leader at a deeper level and further ignited my alignment of behaviors and district structures to those beliefs. There is no question in my mind that I benefited from the Institute, even as an observer, and now in my role as a school superintendent.

Recommendations for Further Research

This researcher recommends four areas for potential further research that may influence future Institutes and principal preparation. This study was conducted throughout the first year of a two year institute. A study inclusive of the second year would be valuable to gain insights into the full impact of the Institute on the participants and possibly which learning strands or activities had the highest impact.

A follow up study conducted four or five years after the Institute with participants would provide data on the sustainability of these educational leaders. Are they still in the educational field? How have they continued to implement the beliefs and lens of equity in their work? How has this impacted student learning within their schools? Knowing

the long lasting impact of participation in this Institute will guide facilitators' planning and garner ongoing support for the sustainability of offering future institutes.

Ultimately, this Institute was created to advance student achievement and guide principals to lead courageously and eliminate achievement gaps (Minnesota State University Mankato, 2012). A study of student data over trend and time within schools with leaders who have participated in the Institute will show if the achievement gap has diminished or even eliminated. This could be combined with a broader study of student achievement trends throughout the state of Minnesota with analysis of what are the commonalities of schools that are successfully closing or eliminating the achievement gap.

Finally, if an Institute like the Institute of Engaged Principal Leadership were conducted in rural Minnesota or with principals who have more than five year of experience, would it have the same results? Replicating this study with participants of another Institute inclusive of a wider variation of educational leadership years of experience or an increase of outstate school districts would provide insights into the transferability of the learning strands and institute impact.

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Appendix A

IRB Consent Form

Early Career Principal Development: A qualitative case study of Principals' Perceptions of Participation in the Institute for Engaged Principal Leadership

Principal Investigator: Dr. Candace Raskin
Co-Investigator Student: Teri Preisler
Institution: Minnesota State University, Mankato

You are being invited to take part in a research study about participants' perceptions of participation in the Institute for Engaged Principal Leadership. You have been identified as a potential participant because you are currently participating in the Institute for Engaged Principal Leadership through Minnesota State University, Mankato at 7700 France. The Principal Investigator for this study is Dr. Candace Raskin and one student researcher referred to as Co-Investigator Student, Teri Preisler. Within this study, Dr. Candace Raskin will serve as a Facilitator/Instructor for the Institute for Engaged Principal Leadership and Teri Preisler will serve as the researcher.

This consent form gives you the information you will need to help you decide whether to participate in this study or not. Please read the form carefully. You may ask any questions about the research, the possible risks and benefits, your rights as a volunteer, and anything else that is not clear. When all of your questions have been answered, you can decide if you want to participate in this study or not. You will be provided a copy of this document.

Purpose
The study is designed to help gain insight into the participants' perceptions of the Institute for Engaged Principal Leadership. Results of the study will be shared through dissertation and possible peer reviewed publications and conference presentations.

Procedures
Should you decide to participate in this study, you will be asked to participate in an interview with the Co-Investigator Student during an Institute session at a time and location that is mutually beneficial to both parties and confidentiality can be maintained. This interview will last approximately 15 minutes and will be videotaped. Your personal information will not be included in this study at any time. The researchers may ask your permission to conduct follow-up investigation for further clarification and understanding of your perceptions of participation in the Institute for Engaged Principal Leadership. Contact will be made through the e-mail address you supplied when you registered for this Institute or at a future Institute session.

Videotaped interviews will be transcribed by a private transcription company, Verbalink, with the transcribed documents then used in this research. You will not be identified by name in any publication of this study. Confidentiality procedures to guarantee that your information will remain private, including confidentiality agreements, background checks, and other technical safeguards are incorporated by this private transcription company.

The Principal Investigator of this study, Dr. Candace Raskin, will keep the videotape(s) and corresponding transcriptions in a locked cabinet. The videotape(s) and corresponding transcriptions of the videotaped interviews will only be accessible by the Principal Investigator and Co-Investigator Student.

The videotaped recordings and corresponding transcriptions will be erased and destroyed by shredding when the research has been accepted and approved.

Risks/Discomforts
There are minimal risks for participation in this study. Your interview will be recorded via video recording. This poses a minor risk of breach of confidentiality. In order to minimize this risk personal identifying information will not be recorded. In addition, you may feel some emotional discomfort when answering questions about your perceptions of participation in the Institute for Engaged Principal Leadership. This discomfort should be minimized since only the investigators will analyze the data, and your individual responses will be coded into group themes of perceptions rather than individual responses.

Benefits
While you may not personally benefit from this study it is anticipated that in the future this study will influence future early career Principal leadership development. You will not receive payment, monetary or otherwise, for participation in this study.

Confidentiality
The information you provide during this research study will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by law. To help protect your confidentiality, we will secure all recordings, transcripts, and noted themes in the locked office of the Principal Investigator, Dr. Candace Raskin. Transcription of the recordings will be conducted by Verbalink, a company with strict protocols related to the storing and transfer of data. Once the data has been transferred, only the primary and secondary researchers will have access to the data. All electronic data will be stored on a password protected computer. All data, including video recordings, transcripts, and noted themes will be kept for a period of 3 years after completion of the project, after which time all data will be erased or destroyed. Data will only be published or presented in aggregate format and your personal information will not be made public.

Participation
If you decide to take part in the study, it should be because you really want to volunteer. You will not lose any benefits or rights you would normally have if you choose not to volunteer. You can stop at any time during the study and still keep the benefits and rights you had before volunteering. You will not be treated differently if you decide to stop taking part in the study. If you feel you have been treated unfairly or have in any way been coerced to participate in this study, you may contact Dean Barry Ries, Internal Review Board Administrator in the College of Graduate Studies and Research for Minnesota State University, Mankato at (507) 389-2321.

Questions about the Research
The Principal Investigator for this study is Dr. Candace Raskin and the Co-Investigator Student Teri Preisler. You may contact Dr. Raskin at the University by calling (952) 818-8888. If you have any questions or concerns regarding the treatment of human subjects, contact: MSU IRB Administrator Minnesota State University, Mankato, Institutional Review Board, 115 Alumni Foundation, (507) 389-2321.

As a participant in this research study, you have the right to keep a copy of this complete consent form.
MSU IRB LOG # 435427-4
Date of MSU IRB approval March 6, 2013

Early Career Principal Development: A qualitative case study of Principals' Perceptions of Participation in the Institute for Engaged Principal Leadership

Principal Investigator: Dr. Candace Raskin
Co-Investigator Student: Teri Preisler
Institution: Minnesota State University, Mankato

Participant consent

I, (print full name) _____, have read and understand the foregoing information explaining the purpose of this research and my rights and responsibilities as a participant. My signature below designates my consent to participate in this research, according to the terms and conditions listed above.

Signature _____

Date_____

Follow Up Interview

If you are willing to allow the Investigators to contact you to conduct follow up investigation for further understanding of your perceptions of participation in the Institute for Engaged Principal Leadership, please check the following box. Contact will be made through the e-mail address you supplied when you registered for this Institute or at a future Institute session.

☐ Yes, I am willing to allow the Investigators to contact me for follow up investigation.

If you have any questions you may contact:

Principal Investigator	IRB Administrator
Name Dr. Candace Raskin	Name Dean Barry Ries
Phone Number 952-818-8881	Department and phone number 507-389-2321
Email address candace.raskin@mnsu.edu	Email address irb@mnsu.edu

MSU IRB LOG # 435427-4
Date of MSU IRB approval March 6, 2013

Appendix B

Pre-Institute Interview Questions

1. What were the top three goals for your staff or organization this past school year?
2. How do you know you have attained these goals?
3. What actions did you take to help attain these goals with your staff or organization?
4. In what ways did this Institute support you in these actions and goals?
5. What further support do you believe is necessary for your work as a Principal?

Appendix C

After First Year of Institute Interview Questions

1. What were the top three goals for your staff or organization this past school year?
2. How do you know you've attained these goals?
3. What actions did you take to help attain these goals with your staff or organization?
4. In what ways did this institute support you in these actions and goals?
5. What further support do you believe is necessary for your work as a principal?
6. Are there any specific areas or any of the learning strands that would provide further support?

Appendix D

Follow Up Interview Questions

1. As you reflect upon your career as a Principal from the Pre-institute timeframe to After the First Year of the Institute and now, how would you describe your focus on school climate?
2. The theme of equity was referenced twice as many time after the first year of the Institute as compared with the Pre-Institute interviews. In what ways is equity a focus in your school? How has your leadership lens changed since the start of the Institute in relation to equity?
3. What impact did the Institute have on your beliefs as a leader?
4. An area that emerged in the After First Year of Institute interviews was the theme of Confidence. How was your confidence as a Principal affected by your involvement in the Principal Institute?
5. Are you willing to send/share your school's trend data for math and reading for the last 3 years (2011-2012, 2012-2013, 2013-2014) or for your time as a Principal at your school?
6. Please share what you feel was the most significant impact that the Principal Institute had on your leadership? What suggestions do you have for improving the Institute?

Appendix E

Demographic Characteristics of Pre-Institute Interviewees

Gender	Race/Ethnicity	Location of School
Female	Black	Urban
Male	White	Outstate
Male	White	Suburban
Female	White	Suburban
Female	White	Urban
Male	White	Urban
Male	White	Suburban
Female	White	Suburban
Female	White	Suburban
Female	White	Suburban
Female	White	Suburban
Female	White	Suburban
Female	Black	Urban
Female	White	Urban
Female	White	Suburban
Male	White	Suburban
Female	White	Urban
Female	White	Suburban
Male	White	Urban

Male	White	Suburban
Male	White	Outstate
Female	White	Outstate
Male	White	Outstate
Female	White	Suburban
Male	Black	Urban
Male	White	Urban
Male	White	Urban

Appendix F

Demographic Characteristics of After First Year of Institute Interviewees

Gender	Race/Ethnicity	Location of School
Male	White	Outstate
Male	White	Suburban
Female	White	Suburban
Female	White	Urban
Male	White	Suburban
Female	White	Suburban
Female	Mixed Race	Urban
Female	White	Suburban
Female	White	Suburban
Female	White	Suburban
Female	White	Suburban
Female	Black	Urban
Female	White	Urban
Female	White	Suburban
Male	White	Suburban
Female	White	Urban
Female	White	Suburban
Female	Asian	Urban

Male	White	Suburban
Female	White	Suburban
Male	Black	Urban
Male	White	Urban
Male	White	Urban