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Elementary Teachers' Perceptions About Principals' Influences on Classroom Instruction

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This is to certify that the doctoral study by

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has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
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the review committee have been made.

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Abstract

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Dissertation Submitted in Fulfillment

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Abstract

Teachers in a southwestern elementary school were struggling to support students who were not meeting proficiency standards in reading. The purpose of this study was to explore teachers' perceptions and experiences of how administrator behaviors and efforts influenced instructional practices and strategies in the classroom. Marzano's leadership evaluation model served as the conceptual framework that guided this study. The research questions focused on teachers' perceptions of how building administrators offered guidance about teaching and instructional activities and how building administrators influenced teaching and instructional activities to improve student performance. A basic qualitative design was used to capture the insights of 7 teachers who taught on the selected campus during the 2015-2016 school year and any number of school years before, after, or both before and after the 2015-2016 school year through semi structured interviews; a purposeful sampling process was used to select the participants. Emergent themes were identified through open coding, and the findings were developed and checked for trustworthiness through member checking and rich descriptions. The findings revealed that teachers believe that instructional guidance, administrator support, and data tracking positively influence student performance. A professional development project was created to provide administrators with strategies and approaches to support and guide classroom teachers more effectively. This study has implications for positive social change, in that the findings may be applied in creating a structure to provide administrators with strategies to improve school leadership behaviors.

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Dedication

This project study is dedicated to my family, my friends, and the students and staff of the educational campuses where I have served. To my family and friends, I want to say thank you for all of the love and support you have given to me during my life, and for encouraging me as I pursued my doctoral degree in education. To the students and staff of the educational campuses where I have served, thank you for inspiring me and for the collaboration opportunities.

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I would like to acknowledge Dr. Howard Moskowitz for his support throughout my coursework. Dr. Moskowitz was my course instructor and served as my first chair during the capstone project. He has always been available to answer questions and guide me throughout this process, especially when I faced challenges. I am confident that without Dr. Moskowitz's knowledge, guidance, and support, I would not have enjoyed the successes I have experienced during my doctoral journey. I would also like to thank Dr. Timothy Lafferty. Dr. Lafferty had the strength to continually challenge me to improve as I finalized my project study.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

Section 1: The Problem

The Local Problem

The site for this project study was a K-4 elementary campus in western Texas. The local problem was that an elementary campus, based on accountability-based assessments, had earned an "Improvement Required" ranking for 4 of the last 5 consecutive school years (see Table 1). During the 5 years, there were three different campus principals. As the campus-level instructional leader, the campus administrator ensured that instructional practices and strategies used in the classrooms were successful at meeting the needs of students. Exploring teachers' perceptions and experiences of how campus-level leadership behaviors influenced instructional practices and strategies in the classroom provided insight into effective campus-level leadership behaviors.

Table 1

State Accountability-Based Performance Rating

Campus accountability-based performance ranking by school year	
School year	Ranking
2012-2013	Improvement Required
2013-2014	Improvement Required
2014-2015	Improvement Required
2015-2016	Met Standard
2016-2017	Improvement Required

Among students of the local K-4 elementary campus in this study, 72.2% were identified as economically disadvantaged, with the student body reported as 65.6% Hispanic, 20.4% White, 9.9% African American, and 4.1% other (Texas Education Agency, 2017). Reading scores on high-stakes accountability-based assessments for third- and fourth-grade students (third and fourth grade are the first 2 years of state-accountability-based assessments) were below statewide averages (see Table 2). It is important to note that passing scores for third and fourth grade students ranged from 48-55, varying by grade level and year of test administration. Considering the percentage of local students who earned a passing score, and factoring in the percentage of local students who did not earn a passing score, the percentage of students not demonstrating mastery increased or remained high. Therefore, there was a local need to explore this campus setting using a qualitative study to investigate elementary teachers' perceptions and experiences of principals' actions, as well as teachers' perceptions of how the principals' leadership influenced instructional practices in classrooms. In the larger educational setting, statewide averages indicated a decline in performance as students progressed from third grade to fourth grade and isolated declines in mastery at each grade level from year to year. This study focused on elementary teachers' perceptions and experiences of principals' actions and behaviors, as well as teachers' perceptions of how the principals' leadership influenced instructional practices in local classrooms.

Table 2

Reading Assessment Passing Percentages of Third- and Fourth-Grade Students

	Percentage of students passing state reading assessments			
	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016
3rd grade-local	57	49	56	60
State av.	81	76	77	73
Passing score	**48**	**48**	**53**	**53**
4th grade-local	32	43	33	51
State av.	72	74	74	75
Passing score	**52**	**52**	**55**	**55**

As noted previously, over 72% of the students enrolled at this campus were identified as economically disadvantaged. Noltemeyer, Joseph, and Kunesh (2013) stated that students living in poverty often enter and exit kindergarten lacking basic literacy skills. The effects of a lack of basic literacy skills are seen in the widening reading-skills gap between students from poverty and students from nonpoverty settings during the educational years following kindergarten, including third and fourth grades.

Data indicated student performance levels for local third- and fourth-grade students that were considerably lower than state averages (see Table 1). A comparison of local students' reading assessment scores as third-grade students in one school year to their scores as fourth-grade students in the subsequent year indicated a decrease in student performance as students progressed from third grade to fourth grade. This decrease in reading performance on high-stakes assessments by local students as they progressed from one year to the next indicated a failure to meet the academic reading needs of these students. This problem warranted exploration to ensure that effective classroom instruction is provided to students so that they can make academic progress as they progress from one grade level to the next. The interconnection between learning and instruction and between instruction and quality of leadership was emphasized by Beard (2013). Comparing the growth, or lack thereof, of local students as they progressed from third to fourth grade raised questions as to the amount of learning they experienced. Considering the current research that identified the interconnection of learning, instruction, and quality of leadership, the quality of local campus leadership and the influence that local campus leadership had on the instructional practices was of interest.

The problem statement was based on accountability-based assessments on which scores for the campus led to an "Improvement Required" ranking for 4 of the last 5 consecutive school years.

The purpose of this study was to explore teachers' perceptions and experiences of how campus-level leadership behaviors influenced instructional practices and strategies in the classroom. Qualitative data for this project study were collected through individual interviews with selected participants from the identified campus. The qualitative data collected for this study provided increased knowledge and understanding of how teachers perceived principals' leadership behaviors as influencing instructional practices and strategies in classrooms. The collected data were organized and presented in the data analysis results as findings. The findings were used to guide the development of professional development training sessions to provide a framework of understanding for campus administrators. The professional development may serve as a resource for campus administrators who seek to increase student performance.

Rationale

The ability to read is a critical element of educational success for all students. Afflerbach, Cho, Kim, Crassas, and Doyle (2013) noted the importance placed on reading skills in elementary school by the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB, 2001), the Common Core State Standards, and the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (2000). Reading skills are tantamount to academic success, and lack of basic reading skills is seen as widening gaps in academic performance during the educational years following kindergarten. Afflerbach et al., Noltemeyer et al. (2013), and

Canto and Proctor (2013) confirmed that it is well known that a student's ability to read with understanding, fluency, accuracy, and expression is a key indicator of academic success. Canto and Proctor further stated that students' ability to read with accuracy and some form of automaticity increases their ability to comprehend text without becoming fixated on decoding and pronunciation of words. Park, Chaparro, Preciado, and Cummings (2015) cited the importance of reading fluency and reading levels as key indicators of students' academic success.

Classroom teachers look to their campus principal for instructional leadership. Kindall, Crowe, and Elsass (2018) stated that teachers relied upon their campus principal's knowledge and support to deliver high-quality literacy instruction. Kindall et al. emphasized that the roles and responsibilities of the campus principal in today's educational setting had increased, resulting in principals feeling stretched thin by multiple responsibilities. To address these additional responsibilities, Kindall et al. stated, campus principals seek to hire additional staff such as assistant principals or curriculum coaches. While these additional staff members are valuable, Kindall et al. contended that the ultimate instructional effectiveness of the teacher is determined by the leadership of the campus principal.

The relationship between curriculum, instruction, and assessment was recognized by Beard (2013) as being more identifiable through accountability-based standardized testing processes. The interconnection between curriculum, instruction, and assessment is critical in the process of closing achievement gaps for struggling student groups. Through a qualitative case study, Beard focused attention on the impact of leadership on instruction and the impact of instruction on the eventual performance outcome of the students in a classroom. The quality of learning, as defined by Beard, is determined by the quality of instruction, and the quality of instruction is determined by the quality of leadership. Early intervention to address reading fluency before established benchmark assessments was cited by Park et al. (2015) as critical to the overall academic success of students in school. Although the specific traits and characteristics of educational leadership have enjoyed a long track record, Beard stated that it remains an area where there is a critical need for research. In a high-stakes environment, leaders who understand curriculum are essential to school reform and improvement. Leadership was cited by Beard as second only to classroom instruction for its influence on student learning and outcomes.

The purpose of this study was to explore teachers' perceptions and experiences of how campus-level leadership behaviors influenced instructional practices and strategies in the classroom. The educational setting, both locally and nationally is focused on preparing children to become productive members of society. That preparation takes several years and involves many teachers and campus leaders. By providing additional evidence of the interconnectedness between campus leadership behaviors, teachers' implementation and fidelity of instructional practices and strategies, and academic success on high-stakes assessments, which begin in the third and fourth grade, this study could benefit students locally and nationally.

Definition of Terms

The terms used in this study would be considered by most to be common terms. For this project study, I used the following definitions of these terms:

Fidelity: Refers to teachers' appropriate use of provided instructional strategies and content delivery of the curriculum in the same manner and format in which they were designed to be implemented and regularly used. Munter, Wilhelm, Cobb, and Cordray (2014) defined *fidelity of implementation* as the degree to which teachers and other program users implement an instructional program as it was designed by the program developer.

Implementation: Refers to teachers' initiative to implement the instructional strategies and content delivery of the curriculum in the same manner and format in which it was designed to be implemented. Munter et al. (2014) defined *fidelity of implementation* as the degree to which teachers and other program users implement a program as it was designed by the program developer.

Leadership: Refers to the campus administrator's style of leading in establishing the instructional norms, instructional strategies, and expectations of the campus. Thamarasseri (2015) defined leadership as the process of influencing others to get work done. Thamarasseri emphasized that leadership involves influencing, directing, and motivating individuals toward the attainment of organizational goals.

Curriculum: Refers to the instructional resources/materials used in classrooms. Cross and Conn-Powers (2014) defined a curriculum as a written document containing several elements that guide the teacher's instruction. Cross and Conn-Powers stated that those elements consist of goals, experiences, teacher roles, and materials designed to support the implementation of the curriculum.

The Significance of the Study

This study of campus principals' leadership behaviors that influenced the implementation and fidelity of instructional practices and strategies in classrooms may guide current and future campus leaders. The data collected and information learned may provide leaders with a resource for understanding what and how their leadership behaviors influence classroom instruction. A better understanding of the identified leadership behaviors and their effects on classroom instruction, whether positive or negative, may guide leaders as they seek to improve their campuses and, ultimately, positively affect and improve the academic success levels of students.

The purpose of this study was to explore teachers' perceptions and experiences of how campus-level leadership behaviors influenced instructional practices and strategies in the classroom. The knowledge gained from this study may provide local leaders, as well as leaders in a broader setting, with evidence to guide their decision making concerning how they address instruction and communicate with their classroom teachers. The usage of the evidence provided by this study will eventually guide campus leaders in a direction that optimizes their behaviors/actions and the behaviors/actions of their classroom teachers to academically benefit the students in their care.

Research Questions

In the educational field, there are numerous instructional strategies and practices used by classroom teachers as well as campus administrators to address the academic performance of students in school. The recognition by these entities of the need to implement instructional practices and strategies aimed at addressing the academic performance of students coincides with research addressing the importance of leadership for the academic success of students. The purpose of this study was to explore teachers' perceptions and experiences concerning how campus-level leadership behaviors influenced instructional practices and strategies in the classroom.

The research questions were as follows:

RQ1: What are the perceptions and experiences of teachers about how the building administrators offer guidance about teaching and instructional activities?

RQ2: What are the perceptions of teachers about how the building administrators influenced their teaching and instructional activities to improve student performance?

Review of the Literature

The literature review for this project study explored the influence of leadership behaviors on instructional practices and strategies and leadership behaviors' connection to and importance for the academic performance of third and fourth-grade students on high-stakes assessments. The study also explored the effect of the pressures of high-stakes assessments and increased accountability on the behavior of campus administrators.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework that grounded this research project involved identifying and outlining the interconnectedness of leadership behaviors and the influence of those leadership behaviors on the fidelity and implementation of instructional practices and strategies that are designed to positively address the academic performance of third and fourth-grade students. Marzano, Walters, and McNulty (2005) emphasized the importance of their leadership evaluation model as a framework for evaluating the effect of leadership on student achievement.

Marzano’s leadership evaluation model, which consists of five domains, was used to frame the collected data within categories. The five domains of the Marzano et al. (2005) leadership evaluation model are a data-driven focus on student achievement, continuous improvement of instruction, a guaranteed and viable curriculum, cooperation and collaboration, and school climate. Campus leadership affects the level of success that a campus achieves, as evidenced by Louis, Dretzke, and Wahlstrom (2010), who provided seminal research into the importance and effect of campus leadership making a difference in schools. Louis et al. studied the impact of three key leadership behaviors: instructional leadership (which has an impact on classroom instruction), trust (which promotes motivation and high achievement), and shared leadership (which involves the engagement of leadership at many levels). Louis et al. stated that few scholars had made sustained contributions in relation to the question of how leadership behaviors affect school outcomes. A synthesis of studies was labeled by Louis et al. as difficult to complete due to the limited number of behaviors and to the assumptions that campus leadership affects students because it changes teachers' behaviors. Instructional leadership is a concept that refuses to go away; however, according to Louis et al., it has been poorly defined over the decades. The school leader is expected to be knowledgeable in both content and proper instruction in addition to being able to provide constructive feedback to improve instruction and ultimately improve student performance (Louis et al., 2010).

The importance of leadership and the influence that leadership has on curriculum, instruction, assessment, and the eventual academic success of students in the classroom were addressed by Beard (2013) and Wise and Wright (2012). The indirect influence that campus leaders have on the academic success of students through leaders' relationships and communications with teachers on campus was noted by Ross and Cozzens (2016). Seminal studies by Marzano et al. (2005) outlined the importance of the "four I's" of leadership (individual consideration, intellectual stimulation, inspirational motivation, and idealized influence) and provided a historical perspective on leadership behaviors that influence an organization. The importance of leadership behaviors and how those behaviors influence the eventual success of an organization were described by Cook (2014). Cook surveyed teachers to assess the leadership behaviors that they believed were essential in a leader. The teachers' responses indicated that a successful leader was one who led by example, could articulate clearly defined goals, and promoted leadership capacity within individuals in the organization.

The ability of campus leadership to affect instructional practices and strategies is clear. By furthering the known research of Marzano et al. (2005) as well as Cook (2014) and other researchers, this study could provide additional evidence of the effect that campus leadership behaviors have on the fidelity and implementation of instructional practices and strategies. The additional evidence collected through the perceptions and experiences of teachers in this study identified how leadership behaviors influenced the implementation and fidelity of instructional practices and strategies and may provide a framework for leaders seeking to improve the fidelity and implementation of instructional practices and strategies on their campus. Through teachers' perceptions and experiences, this study provides additional evidence of the interconnectedness between learning and instruction, and between instruction and the quality of leadership.

Review of the Broader Problem

Search Strategy

The search strategy used for the literature review in this project study was based on a keyword search. The keywords and key phrases used pertained to leadership and the influence of leadership on campus improvement with an instructional focus. Searches were conducted in the ERIC database of the Walden Library and Google Scholar. The keywords used were *campus leadership, leadership's influence, improving instruction, leadership, instructional setting, instructional climate, student performance,* and *improving student academic performance.*

Impact of Leadership

Campus administrators are responsible for numerous activities, events, and duties. Each campus administrator has a leadership style and leadership beliefs. The transformational leadership style has been identified by Fenn and Mixon (2011) as being the most common leadership style in Texas schools. Considering the ever-changing school demographics and the increased focus on closing achievement gaps, Fenn and Mixon stated that school leaders must be adept at transforming to ensure that their campuses are successful.

The importance of campus leadership for instruction and the interconnected impact of curriculum, instruction, and assessment on the eventual academic success of students in classrooms were confirmed by Beard (2013). Campus leadership was declared second only to instruction in determining the academic success of individual students and of an educational setting by Wise and Wright (2012). The impact of NCLB, accountability-based standardized tests, and efforts to close achievement gaps for students was cited by Beard as directly affecting the decisions of campus leadership.

Wise and Wright (2012) noted that even with recognition of the effect that leadership has on an educational setting and the academic achievement of students, there had been limited research into leadership in early childhood settings. Although the research of Baxter, Thessin, and Clayton (2014) was directed at assessing the leadership characteristics of postgraduate leadership students from a specific university, they provided useful evidence of the importance of leadership and its connection to the academic success of an educational setting.

The role of the campus administrator has the power to positively or negatively affect a campus. Numerous cases of poor leadership and the eventual impact of poor leadership on an organization were cited by Green (2014). The campus leader is responsible for many observable events and actions. Each action or inaction by the campus administrator affects the campus, thus affecting teachers, students, and others. A campus administrator can impact student achievement through how he or she interacts with faculty (Lambersky, 2016). The transformational leadership style was reported by Fenn and Mixon (2011) as improving equity in education by improving teacher effectiveness, teacher job satisfaction, school performance, and student academic performance.

Campus administrators are largely responsible for the selection, retention, and dismissal of teachers (Lambersky, 2016). Additionally, they are responsible for driving the instructional agenda, setting campus priorities, and allocating resources within the school to achieve preset priorities and goals. Campus leaders influence classroom instruction through their actions.

In a qualitative case study of leadership traits that impact instruction, Beard (2013) stated that the ability of the leader to communicate effectively, build trusting relationships with followers, and use strategic decision-making skills dramatically impacts the success of the educational setting. A campus administrator may indirectly influence student achievement, as noted by Ross and Cozzens (2016), by encouraging and supporting teachers to be reflective in pedagogical practices, professional learning communities, and the educational environment. What campus administrators could do in practical terms to lead more effectively through others was explored by Lambersky (2016), who concluded that campus administrators could act in emotionally supportive ways. Lambersky recognized the impact that a campus administrator can have on emotional commitment, self-efficacy, and group efficacy in an education setting.

A campus administrator can influence the campus climate as well as student achievement using various methods. A campus administrator can directly influence student achievement, as confirmed by Ross and Cozzens (2016), through the establishment of classroom sizes, direct communication with students, and constant interactions with students. Creating a campus climate and campus culture to support communication and foster the development of instructional settings focused on students' academic needs is an essential role of the campus administrator. The role of the leader was determined by Baxter et al. (2014) to be critical in establishing an environment where teachers work collaboratively with a focus on promoting the academic success of students. The effects that a leader has on the instructional setting of the campus, classroom instruction, the academic success of students, and the overall climate of an education setting have been documented by Baxter et al. and Wise and Wright (2012) as affecting or potentially affecting classroom instruction. The research in this area, as cited by Wise and Wright, has been limited to a few researchers and has mostly been conducted for dissertations.

History has numerous examples of poor leadership and its impact on organizations. There are also examples of great leadership that illustrate the eventual impact of a successful leader in promoting the success of an organization (Green, 2014). Green (2014) used the term *toxic leadership* to describe poor leadership. Although there is not a standard definition of a toxic leader, Green stated that common terms used to describe a toxic leader include *poor leadership* and *destructive leadership*. In his research conclusion, Green emphasized that there is a need for research into toxic leadership in schools, colleges, and universities.

The beliefs of campus administrators and the leadership behaviors/actions that they use have distinct influences on the faculty and staff on a campus. Understanding the roles and the eventual effects of formal and informal leaders in a school setting was the purpose of a study by Sun, Frank, Penuel, and Kim (2013). Campus leaders, whether formal (principals, department chairs, and instructional coaches) or informal (individuals who do not have a leadership role but are accepted as influential by their colleagues) impact classrooms. Sun et al. studied reasons for the different impacts that these types of leaders have on reading instruction in the classroom.

The methods of diffusion of external reforms brought on by the NCLB (2001) legislation to school campuses are addressed by campus leaders. These methods of diffusion and how reforms are implemented in the instructional classroom, as stated by Sun et al. (2013), are distinctly influenced by campus leaders. Through their influence on the behaviors and beliefs of the teachers whom they lead, campus leaders have a distinct influence on the instructional setting in the classroom (Sun et al., 2013). In the time since the research of Sun et al., NCLB has been replaced with the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), which Congress passed, and the president signed into law in 2015. The ESSA was the first significant educational reform since NCLB was signed into law in 2001. The importance of states following the provisions of ESSA by implementing evidence-based school improvement practices to ensure that they are meeting the educational needs of students was cited by Kane (2017). Understanding how students learn and how teachers teach, using evidence-based instructional practices at the local level, tracking the evidence, and acting on the evidence is the only way to achieve sustained improvement in education in the United States, as Kane argued. These changes in the policy landscapes of education have, according to Day et al. (2016), translated into a change in the profile of school leadership.

Accountability-Based Requirements' Impact on Leadership

High-stakes assessments and the accountability-based requirements placed on campuses and districts magnify the importance placed on student performance. The connection between student performance on high-stakes tests and the salary and continuation of employment of both teachers and superintendents was cited by Young, Cox, and Buckman (2014). The expectations placed on campuses and school districts to reach predefined performance levels based on individual student performance on high-stakes tests emphasize the need for teachers to effectively improve students' ability to read, comprehend text, and be successful on high-stakes assessments. The identification of leadership behaviors that influence the fidelity and implementation of effective instructional practices and strategies in the initially high-stakes-tested third and fourth-grade classrooms will have a social benefit, both locally and beyond.

The campus administrator is responsible for the academic performance of the campus and the students on it. The linear connection between accountability-based standardized assessments, the academic success of an organization, and the growing importance of the climate of the organization were cited by May and Sanders (2013). The role of the leader is a critical component in determining the academic success of the students and the organization (May & Sanders, 2013). The role of the principal, as stated by May and Sanders, cannot be overemphasized and has a direct connection to the academic success of students. May and Sanders produced research that is replete with leadership characteristics that are most likely to lead people to change. The campus administrator has the power to establish a clear, well-stated, firm goal for academic achievement. The campus administrator can also focus resources on the overall improvement needs of the campus (Allen, Grigsby, & Peters, 2015). Accountability-based assessments are not isolated events. Leaders globally face the challenges and importance of an accountability-based assessment system. Over the past 20 years, as indicated by Day, Gu, and Sammons (2016), educational policymakers worldwide have addressed the need for school reform through raising standards for student achievement. A common trend in all school systems has been increased emphasis on accountability through assessments (Day et al., 2016).

The leadership behaviors of the campus administrator affect the success of the campus in many areas. The teachers' perceptions of the campus administrator's leadership style, as stated by Allen et al. (2015), can influence school climate. An unhealthy school climate can lead to an ineffective academic setting, negatively affecting the academic performance of students. The campus climate was emphasized by Allen et al. as not being a bonus item for the campus administrator to address. The influence of the campus administrator in establishing the foundation for an effective campus climate was cited by Allen et al. as a critical element in the eventual success of a campus. Jones and Shindler (2016) studied 30 urban schools, seeking to define a correlation between campus climate and the academic success of students. While the direct methods of intervention and instruction in their study seemed to be appropriate for addressing academic needs, Jones and Shindler stated that if the basic structure of a school is dysfunctional, the academic achievement of the students will be limited. A strong connection was identified by Jones and Shindler between the quality of the school climate and the academic achievement performance levels of the students on the campus. The current emphasis on monitoring student achievement through high-stakes assessments increases the accountability placed on campus administrators. The importance of campus climate and how campus climate can impact the learning outcomes of students was emphasized by Allen et al. (2015). Campus climate can impact the job satisfaction of the faculty and staff on a campus. Allen underscored the importance of leadership behaviors that foster a positive campus climate, increase teacher job satisfaction, and support the academic success of students by emphasizing high expectations for students and promoting effective instruction in each classroom.

The campus administrator is the central communication point for an educational campus. In a qualitative case study investigating a high-performing elementary campus, Brown (2016) studied a campus principal who at the time had 15 years of experience on the campus. The campus was one of 12 elementary campuses in a district of approximately 7,000 students. The campus principal, as stated by Brown, is a true facilitator of communication and collaboration. The role of the campus principal was emphasized by Brown as having been researched for decades but is now moving more to the forefront of research based on increasing school accountability demands. The increased interest in research of the campus administrator was cited by Brown for its connection to the effect the campus administrator has on the academic achievement of the students on the campus. There are many behaviors to an effective leader and that those leadership behaviors as cited by Day et al. (2016) affect achievement through instructional as well as social understandings of the students as well as the faculty on the campus.

Importance of Reading and Reading Instruction

The ability to read and comprehend text is a foundation of success in core subjects. Continuing into adulthood, the ability to read and comprehend text is a prominent factor in society. National Center for Education Statistics (2013) provided data on fourth-grade students from 7,920 schools across the United States, consisting of a national sample totaling 190,400 students. The data provided by the National Center for Education Statistics were categorized into four levels. The levels were Below Basic, Basic, Proficient, and Advanced. National Center for Education Statistics data indicated, of fourth-grade students, 32% scored Below Basic, 33% scored Basic, 27% scored Proficient, and 8% scored Advanced. Additional data reported by the National Center for Education Statistics indicated 14 states in the United States scored lower than the nation in both the fourth and eighth grade. No Child Left Behind (NCLB) has brought increased awareness of the process of assessments related to reading. Over the past few decades, reading assessments, as noted by Hosp and Suchey (2014), have been pushed to the forefront of national discussions about education. The most recent reauthorizations of the

Elementary and Secondary Education Act (1994, 2001) were emphasized by Hosp and Suchey for making reading assessments a priority with teachers and administrators as they strive to meet the standards of accountability-based assessments. Reading was described by Hosp and Suchey as a five-factor model that includes phonemic awareness, fluency, phonics, vocabulary, and comprehension.

The importance of teaching vocabulary was emphasized by Duke and Block (2012) due to its ability to improve reading performance. The process of teaching vocabulary is often left to chance, leaving students struggling to comprehend what they are reading because they do not understand the vocabulary. The process of an increased emphasis on vocabulary was noted by Duke and Block for excelling as students learn new vocabulary words, the learning process of adding new vocabulary words will become less difficult based on their growth in vocabulary. The importance of addressing poor reading performance by utilizing the three instructional practices of listening centers, an intentional focus on vocabulary, and the practice of students tracking what they are reading were cited by Duke and Block as critical in improving reading performance. Also, they defined tracking as a process whereby a student uses their index finger to guide them through the words as they read them. The evidence within Duke and Block’s research will provide a basis for best practices to consider in addressing methods of improving the reading levels of students in the third and fourth grade.

Third and fourth grade are at the center of this study based on data from high-stakes assessments, which are initially administered in the third and fourth grade. Longitudinal research conducted over 40 years was cited by Snow and Matthews (2016) and indicated that the difference between high school dropouts and high school graduates could be detected as early as third grade. They also stated that students who don't develop age-appropriate literacy skills by the end of third grade are at high risk of school failure. Beginning in the third-grade, students across the United States, as confirmed by Snow and Matthews are required to take a patchwork of high-stakes accountability-based assessments to assess their performance in literacy skills. They also cited evidence from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) that only 36% of fourth-grade students across the Unites States scored at or above a proficient level. Within their research, Snow and Matthews recognized the impact of the students' background knowledge in the acquisition of reading skills as well as the importance of the instructional setting in addressing the effect of reading programs.

The interactions of teachers with students are commonly understood as the means of transferring information, i.e., educating the student. Griffith, Bauml, and Barksdale (2015) led a study investigating the decision-making process of exemplary reading teachers during reading instruction in the primary grades. The study of teaching, as noted by Griffith et al. is difficult based upon the complexities of the instructional setting. Teaching is about the interactions of a child with a task, the teacher with the child, and the child with another child. These interactions need to be different depending on the child and the instructional setting (whole group or small group). Students bring a wide variety of reading skills to the classroom and, as cited by Griffith et al., enter a school from various backgrounds, socio-economic status, and exposure to reading. Students of poverty were cited by Noltemeyer et al. (2013) for often entering and exiting kindergarten lacking basic literacy skills. The effects of this are seen in a widening gap of reading skills between students of poverty and students from a non-poverty setting during the educational years following kindergarten. Based on these gaps in reading skills, teachers must make instructional adjustments to address the needs of the students while maintaining a focus on curriculum goals, standards, and current understandings. Because teachers must use a variety of instructional practices, strategies, and settings while considering the varying needs of students and the increasing pressures of accountability-based assessments in their decision-making process, Griffith et al. stated more research is needed to unpack what takes place between teachers and students. The evidence cited in the research of Noltemeyer et al. could guide in addressing the reading deficiencies of students from both poverty and non-poverty socioeconomic status.

Literature Conclusion

A review of the literature indicated interconnectedness between campus leadership behaviors, classroom instructional practices and strategies, and the academic performance of students. The reviewed literature emphasized the importance of differentiating instructional practices, strategies, and settings in the classrooms to meet the widening literacy gaps of students and the influence of leadership behaviors/actions on instructional practices and strategies. The literature provided evidence which indicated the ability of campus leadership behaviors to influence the establishment of campus climate and campus culture and the link between the climate and culture of the campus and the academic performance of students on the campus. The literature identified the ability of the campus leader to influence staff morale through direct and indirect communications. As outlined in this literature review, the behaviors of the campus leader flowed through the campus, reaching instructional strategies, and ultimately, the academic achievement of students on the campus.

Implications

The evidence of this study will provide information through teachers' perceptions and experiences that will help campus administrators understand how the actions and behaviors of campus leadership influences the fidelity and implementation of instructional practices and strategies utilized by campus teachers in their classrooms. The evidence produced by this study will provide additional validity of the interconnectedness between campus leadership behaviors, teachers' implementation and fidelity of instructional practices and strategies, and the future academic performance of students. The ultimate implication of this study will be a clearer understanding, through the perceptions and experiences of classroom teachers, of how different leadership behaviors influence teacher-led instruction in the campus classrooms.

District leaders, individuals in charge of professional development, and campus leaders could use the findings produced by this study as a resource for future training sessions with new and veteran campus leaders. The findings in this study will provide multiple views of different leadership behaviors and the influence those campus leadership behaviors have on instructional practices and strategies. By understanding the evidence from this study, district leaders and professional development trainers will be able to provide to new campus leaders as well as veteran campus leaders a framework for successful leadership on their campus. Campus leaders will be able to understand how their behaviors influence instructional practices and strategies. A clear understanding of the influence different leadership behaviors have on the instructional practices and strategies both favorable and unfavorable could be used to create a professional development in effective campus leadership practices.

Based on findings, this study could provide a foundation of information to be used as a resource in leadership training sessions and professional development sessions. The final project could be utilized by teachers seeking to improve their classrooms, hiring committees seeking to establish hiring criteria for candidates for campus leadership, or other educational settings seeking to improve the academic performance of their campus.

Summary

The commonly understood foundation of education, as well as the ability to be a contributing member of society, is an individual's ability to read. Children learn to read at different ages and in different ways. There are numerous factors that can potentially impact this acquisition of an individual's reading skills. The classroom is widely accepted as a natural setting for the acquisition of knowledge, including the acquisition of reading skills.

The purpose of this study was to explore teachers' perceptions and experiences of how campus-level leadership behaviors influenced instructional practices and strategies in the classroom. The increased understanding provided by this study will hopefully optimize effective leadership behaviors devoted to classroom instruction, ultimately improving the academic skills of third and fourth-grade students everywhere.

Section 2: The Methodology

Qualitative Research Design and Approach

The research design for this project study was a basic qualitative design. The qualitative methodology was selected based on the singular local setting and the research objective of exploring elementary teachers' perceptions and experiences of principals' actions and teachers' perceptions of how the principals' leadership influenced instructional practices in classrooms. Locally, the problem statement was based on accountability-based assessments; the campus had received an "Improvement Required" ranking for 4 of the last 5 consecutive school years. The interconnection between student performances and the level of classroom instruction and between classroom instruction and campus leadership has been established by Beard (2013). The behaviors of the campus leader affect relationships and communications between the campus leader and the faculty on the campus, thus creating a central phenomenon. This project study focused on elementary teachers' perceptions and experiences of principals' actions and behaviors, and teachers' perceptions of how principals' leadership influenced the instructional practices in local classrooms, primarily in the third and fourth grade. These classrooms were selected based on these two grade levels being the first two grade levels tested in the state's accountability-based assessment system.

I collected data for this project through individual telephone interviews with the identified participants. Creswell (2012) defined the process of research as consisting of six steps: (a) *identify* a research problem, (b) *review* the literature, (c) *specify* a purpose for the research, (d) *collect* data, (e) *analyze and interpret* the data, and (f) *report and* *evaluate* the research. A basic qualitative research methodology was best suited for this study because it was conducted to understand a central phenomenon by exploring elementary teachers' perceptions and experiences of principals' actions, as well as teachers' perceptions of how the principals' leadership influenced the instructional practices in classrooms. Creswell stated that a review of literature plays a minor role in the research process but serves to justify a research problem. The purpose of the research was to gain data by collecting textual evidence through the perceptions and experiences of the participants. Data were collected from a small group of participants. Analyzing the data consisted of identifying recurring themes and descriptions through text analysis, categorizing the collected textual evidence, and interpreting the larger meaning of the findings. The final report included flexible, emerging structures and evaluative criteria illuminating the teachers' perceptions about how the principals' behaviors influenced the fidelity and implementation of instructional practices and strategies used by teachers in the third- and fourth-grade classrooms.

Participants

Criteria for Selecting Participants

Participants were selected using homogeneous sampling. Creswell (2012) defined homogeneous sampling as purposeful form of sampling whereby a researcher selects participants based on membership in a subgroup with defining characteristics. The specific selection criteria for the participants in this study applied to nine third- and fourth-grade classroom teachers who taught on the selected campus during the 2015-2016 school year and any number of school years before, after, or both before and after the

2015-2016 school year. The campus had the same principal for the two school years before the 2015-2016 school year. I was the campus principal during the 2015-2016 school year. A third person was the campus principal during the 2016-2017 school year. The campus was departmentalized in both third and fourth-grade, which required classroom teachers to teach specific subjects. The number of participants was limited to those individuals meeting the criteria for the homogeneous sampling subgroup. Limiting the number of participants enabled this study to provide an in-depth inquiry into the responses provided by the nine volunteer participants. Emails were sent to the identified participants, and individual telephone interviews were scheduled with these nine participants to collect qualitative data.

Setting and Sampling Procedures

After successful submission and URR approval of my proposal, I submitted my proposal to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for approval. After obtaining IRB approval, I emailed the superintendent of the selected district. The email communication to the superintendent spelled out the details of the research project and sought the superintendent's approval to begin the research study. After obtaining the superintendent's approval, I was able to initiate communication with prospective participants and request email addresses for teachers who were still employed with the selected district. Teachers who were no longer employed with the district were contacted via telephone to gain their current email addresses. I established email communication by sending the informed consent form to selected participants who were still employed on the campus, as well as those who were no longer employed on the selected campus.

Those participants who responded and gave their consent to participate in the study then received an email to schedule a telephone interview.

Ethical Protection of Participants

The collection of qualitative data from participants requires a sufficient level of trust between the participants and the researcher. Creswell (2012) stated that establishing the required trust level between the participants and researcher involves informing the participants of the purpose of the study, refraining from deceptive practices, sharing information with the participants such as the role of the researcher, being respectful of the research site, using ethical interview practices, maintaining confidentiality, and collaborating with participants. An informed consent form was used with each participant. The informed consent form was electronically signed by each participant before participation in the study. An informed consent form, as described by Creswell, outlines the participant's rights, including the right to withdraw at any time from the study, voluntary participation in the study, and the right to know the purpose of the study.

Data Collection

Data collection began with gaining permission from the district to conduct the project study. An email informing the district superintendent of the purpose and benefits of the project study and seeking the district superintendent's approval to initiate the project study was sent. Once approval to initiate the project study had been received from the district superintendent, the initial communication with the participants in the study began via email.

The informed consent form was emailed to participants. The purpose of the informed consent form was to introduce the researcher to the participants in the study, convey the purpose and benefits of the study, and ask for the participants to consent or not consent to participate in the study. After the selected participants had completed and returned informed consent forms to me, I emailed them individually to schedule telephone interviews (Appendix B). Each telephone interview consisted of two sections. The first section of the interview was used to validate that the participant met the predetermined selection criteria. The second section of the interview included 11 questions designed to collect each participant's responses concerning specific leadership behaviors and how those behaviors influenced instructional practices and strategies in the participant's classroom. Data for this project study were collected from participant responses to a researcher-generated series of interview questions.

The data collected from the personal interviews provided information about the participants' perceptions and experiences and were categorized to provide a framework to list textual evidence. The central phenomenon of the influence that campus leadership behaviors have on the fidelity and implementation of classroom instructional practices and strategies was best understood by gaining firsthand responses and information from the individuals involved. The homogeneous sampling was large enough to present multiple perspectives from individuals who represent a larger society.

I kept a log of participant responses to the personal telephone interviews and provided interview transcripts to the individual participants for verification of the accuracy of the collected information before beginning the data analysis process. The collected data were categorized using recurring themes from the personal interview responses. The data were organized to illuminate similar responses from information provided by the different classroom teacher participants.

Role of the Researcher

I served in three different leadership roles in this local school district. My first role in this district was as an assistant principal on another elementary campus in the district for the 2013-2014 school year. My second leadership role in this district was as the director of curriculum and instruction for the 2014-2015 school year. My third role in the district was as campus principal of the K-4 elementary campus in this study. I served as the campus principal during the 2015-2016 school year, and I resigned my position before the campus earned a "Met Standard" ranking from the state of Texas. Lodico, Spaulding, and Voegtle (2010) stated that a researcher might select a study because s/he may have a preexisting relationship with the program or school. I selected a basic qualitative methodology for this study, and I have not been employed by this district for the past 3 school years. I had no personal or professional influence on the responses provided by the participants in this study.

Data Analysis

Data analysis began after the data collection process was complete. Creswell (2012) stated that there are six steps commonly used in analyzing qualitative data, which are not always taken in sequence: (a) preparing and organizing the data for analysis, (b) engaging in initial exploration of the data through coding, (c) using the codes to develop a more general picture of the data, (d) representing the data through narratives and visuals, (e) making an interpretation of the results by personally reflecting on the impact of the findings, and finally (f) conducting strategies to validate the accuracy of the findings.

Preparing the Data

To prepare and organize the information from the participant interviews for coding, I transcribed the data into a text document that had a 2-inch margin for me to add field notes. The "bottom-up" analysis approach was used in the beginning phase of data analysis. Creswell (2012) stated that the "bottom-up" approach to data analysis begins with the researcher collecting data and then preparing data for analysis by coding the text for themes and descriptions to be used in the research report. I used a hand analysis of the collected qualitative data. The hand analysis process was selected based on the expected small size of the database and my desire to have a hands-on feel for the data.

Exploration and Coding of the Data

The collected data were then viewed using preliminary exploratory analysis. Creswell (2012) defined preliminary exploratory analysis as the researcher reviewing the data to gain a general sense of the data, thinking about the organization of the data, and considering whether there was a need for more data. After completing the preliminary exploratory analysis, I determined that enough data had been collected and that there was not a need to collect additional data. The collected data were then analyzed to gain a general sense of the data and organized into categories to begin the process of coding. Creswell stated the purpose of the coding process is to make sense of collected data, divide these data into text segments, label the segments with codes, examine the codes for overlap or redundancy, and collapse the codes into broad themes based on teachers' perceptions and experiences.

The textual evidence from the notes was coded to identify common or recurring themes, statements, or similarities from the individual interview responses. Once identified, these common or recurring themes, statements, or similarities were categorized into text segments. These text segments were then compared to text segments from the remaining interview questions from the individual participant to identify the frequency of overlapping themes, statements, or similarities. This same process was followed on each of the seven different teacher interviews. Upon completion of the coding process for each of the participant interviews, the individual overlapping themes were then highlighted from the different interviews to identify themes that were consistent across multiple participants' responses. These overlapping themes were then coded using selective codes determined after the data collection was complete to identify a theme or themes for this study. The data analysis results described the teachers' perceptions and experiences concerning how campus-level leadership behaviors influenced instructional practices and strategies in the classroom, and they provide insight into effective campus-level leadership behaviors.

Representing the Data

Creswell (2012) stated that the primary form for representing data in a qualitative study is a narrative discussion. The narrative discussion illuminates themes, descriptions, and overlapping themes and challenges assumptions based on evidence supplied by the participants. The overlapping themes or categories are visually displayed using connecting tables to show the connections among themes.

Interpreting the Data

Interpreting the data began with me using the data to form larger meaning about the phenomenon based on personal views and comparisons with past studies. In the interpretation of the data, I reviewed the major findings and how the research questions were answered. I constructed a theory and discussed the relationships among the categories, compared those relationships with the literature, and outlined the limitations of the study. I then summarized the findings and offered suggestions for future research.

Validating the Findings

The interview process was the first step in validating data. As the interviewer, I established trustworthiness and assured participants that their responses would be kept confidential. Throughout the interviews, I strived for neutrality and avoided being judgmental in my reactions and statements following participant responses. During the interviews, I kept field notes on participants' responses; I later provided the participants with the transcribed notes from their interviews. The data from this study were validated using a member-checking process. In the member-checking process, the selected participants in the study reviewed the findings corresponding to their individual field notes and responses to verify the accuracy of their responses. This also provided the participants with an opportunity to enrich their interview responses with descriptive narratives. The findings of the project were provided in written form to the selected participants for member checking. The participants were asked to verify the accuracy of the information presented in the study to ensure credibility and ascertain whether the study provided complete, realistic, and accurate interpretations. Doing so increased the trustworthiness and credibility of the process and the findings.

Discrepant Cases

As I analyzed the data, I looked for evidence of discrepant cases. Merriam and Tisdell (2015) defined analyzing data for discrepant cases as a process in which the researcher seeks to identify data that do not conform to the preponderance of collected data. After a thorough review of the collected data, I did not identify any data that were not consistent with the identified patterns and themes of this study.

Data Analysis Results

Tentative approval from the IRB, pending approval by the district superintendent, was obtained on January 16, 2019. Upon receiving the tentative approval from the IRB, I sent an email to the superintendent of the local district seeking his approval to begin the research study. Approval from the district superintendent was received on January 19, 2019, and that approval was subsequently forwarded as an email to the IRB. On January 28, 2019, official approval was received from the IRB to begin the project study.

The first step in data collection was to initiate communication with the nine participants in the study. These nine participants were selected based on their employment as either third- or fourth-grade teachers on the selected campus during the 2015-2016 school year. To meet the homogeneous selection criteria for this study, the nine participants had to work on the selected campus during the 2015-2016 school year and any number of years either before, after, or both before and after the 2015-2016 school year. It was discovered in the initial communication that one of the nine participants had only been employed at the campus during the 2015-2016 school year and was therefore eliminated as a participant. The remaining eight participants all met the homogeneous selection criteria and qualified to be participants in the study. Of the eight remaining participants, seven agreed to participate in the study by electronically signing and returning their informed consent form to me.

Once the electronically signed informed consent form was received from the seven participants in this study, an email was sent to each of the participants. The purpose of the email was to establish an agreed upon date and time to conduct their telephone interview. The first of the telephone interviews began on January 31, 2019, and the final telephone interview was conducted on February 4, 2019. Each of the seven individual telephone interviews with the participants was recorded using an audio recorder. The telephone interviews with the seven participants followed the interview questions listed in Appendix B.

Data Analysis and Coding Process

Five of the 11 interview questions (Appendix B) are aligned with RQ1 and are listed in Table 3. The remaining six interview questions (Appendix B) are aligned with RQ2 and are listed in Table 4. Participant responses from these 11 interview questions were coded. In the coding process, the interview responses were analyzed and categorized into text segments. The text segments were then labeled to form descriptions and broad themes. These broad themes were then examined for overlapping and redundancy across the seven different participant interviews to identify a theme or themes for this study. Table 3 and Table 4 visually display each of the 11 interview questions, the common themes and statements identified by participants for each interview question. The overlapping themes identified in Table 3 and Table 4 were participant responses that were common among participants from individual interview questions and that also overlapped multiple interview questions.

RQ1: What are the perceptions and experiences of teachers about how the building administrators offer guidance about teaching and instructional activities?

Table 3

Guidance About Teaching and Instructional Activities

	Common themes/statements	Overlapping themes
Question 1: What did the campus principal do to provide all students the opportunity to learn the critical content of the curriculum?	Schedule, PLC meetings, student data, motivator	PLC meetings
Question 2: What did the campus principal do to provide teachers opportunities to observe and discuss effective teaching?	Peer observations, PLC meetings	PLC meetings
Question 3: What did the campus principal do to ensure that teacher teams and collaborative groups regularly interact to address common issues regarding curriculum, assessment, instruction, and the achievement of all students?	Schedule, PLC meetings, student data, motivator, supportive	Schedule, PLC meetings, supportive
Question 4: How did the campus principal manage the fiscal, operational, and technological resources of the school in a way that focuses on effective instruction and the achievement of all students?	Resources, schedule	Schedule, PLC meetings
Question 5: What did the campus principal do to provide a clear vision as to how instruction should be addressed in the school?	Frequent classroom visits, supportive in both discussions and lesson modeling	PLC meetings, supportive

RQ2: What are the perceptions of teachers about how the building administrators influenced their teaching and instructional activities to improve student performance?

Table 4

Influenced Teaching and Instructional Activities

	Common themes/statements	Overlapping themes
Question 6: What did the campus principal do to ensure clear and measurable goals are established and focused on critical needs regarding improving the achievement of individual students within the school?	Posted learning targets, weekly PLC meetings with administration, tracked and displayed student data for all students	Weekly PLC meetings with administration, tracked and displayed student data for all students
Question 7: What did the campus administrator do to ensure data are analyzed, interpreted, and used to regularly monitor progress toward school achievement goals?	Daily PLC meetings with grade level teachers, weekly PLC meetings with administration, tracked and displayed student data for all students	Weekly PLC meetings with administration, tracked and displayed student data for all students
Question 8: What did the campus principal do to ensure clear and measurable goals are established and focused on critical needs regarding improving overall student achievement at the school level?	Regular checkpoint assessments, tracked and displayed student data for all students, weekly PLC meetings with administration	Weekly PLC meetings with administration, tracked and displayed student data for all students
Question 9: What did the campus principal do to ensure teachers are provided with job-embedded professional development that is directly related to their instructional growth goals?	Daily PLC meetings with grade-level teachers to discuss instruction, a voice in selecting professional development trainings, scheduling, book study, trusting	Daily PLC meetings with grade-level teachers
Question 10: What did the campus principal do to ensure teachers are provided with clear, ongoing evaluations of their pedagogical strengths and weaknesses that are based on multiple sources of data and are consistent with student achievement data?	Presence in our classrooms, peer observations, frequent instructional feedback, frequent walk-throughs	Peer observations
Question 11: How do the leadership skills of a campus principal influence the academic performance of the students on the campus?	Positive, supportive, trusting, clear expectations with accountability	Positive, supportive, trusting

Relation of Research Findings to the Problem and Research Questions

The problem statement of this study is based on accountability-based assessments, an elementary campus earned an “Improvement Required” ranking for 4 of the last 5 consecutive school years. Through review and analysis of the interview transcripts, responses were coded, identifying common or recurring themes, overlapping themes, statements, or similarities from the individual interview responses. Recurring text segments from participant statements for interview questions aligned with RQ1 (What are the perceptions and experiences of teachers about how the building administrators offer guidance about teaching and instructional activities?) identified that teachers believed that the Professional Learning Committee (PLC) meetings, peer-observations, tracking student data, scheduling, and regular classroom visits by the administration were common themes. PLC meetings were identified as an overlapping theme for RQ1. Recurring text segments from participant statements for interview questions aligned with RQ2 (What are the perceptions of teachers about how the building administrators influenced their teaching and instructional activities to improve student performance?) identified that teachers believed that the PLC meetings, tracking student data, learning targets, supportive, teacher voice, classroom observations, and positivity were common themes. Tracking of student data and positive and supportive classroom presence were identified as overlapping themes for RQ2. By exploring teachers' perceptions and experiences of how campus-level leadership behaviors influenced instructional practices and strategies in the classroom, this study identified three overlapping themes.

Patterns-Themes in Findings

Combining the participant responses from the 11 interview responses revealed three common overlapping themes: (a) teachers believed the PLC meetings offered guidance about teaching and instructional activities; (b) teachers believed that positive and supportive classroom presence by administrators influenced their teaching and instructional activities; and (c) teachers believed that tracking student data influenced their teaching and instructional activities.

Theme 1: Teachers believed the PLC meetings offered guidance about teaching and instructional activities. PLC meetings were referenced by six of the seven participants in the first section of the interview aligning with RQ1 and by seven of the seven participants in the second section of the interview aligning with RQ2. When combined, the total of references by the participants for PLC meetings was 13 out of 14. Participant 3 stated "daily PLC meetings with grade level teachers and weekly PLC meetings with administrators were built into our master schedule and were a great time for discussing teaching". Participant 2 stated "these PLC meetings were the first time I had ever experienced a principal participating in grade-level PLC meetings, and the principal then sharing what was said from one grade-level to the next grade-level each week". Four of the seven participants emphasized that the purpose of the PLC meetings was to discuss instruction and needed instructional adjustments based on collected student data. Two of the seven participants expressed the benefit of having a master schedule with a built-in time for PLC meetings during the school day was important.

Seven of the seven participants mentioned the importance of peer-observations. Participant 1 stated "the teachers were required to complete one peer-observation each six-week grading period". The peer-observations were opportunities for teachers to go into another teacher's classroom and complete a peer-observation form describing the lesson, where the teacher was in the classroom, how well the teacher engaged the students, what they learned by being in the classroom, and what they would like to take back to their classroom to try. These completed peer-observation forms were displayed in the teachers' lounge to permit other staff members to see what was observed in the classroom. Participant 1 stated "during our PLC meetings, the teachers would talk about what they observed in another teacher's classroom, what they learned, and how they wanted to implement it in their classroom".

Six of the seven participants mentioned the importance of PLC meetings during the second half of the interview questions. Throughout the interviews, several participants referenced a "War Room" as the location for their PLC meetings. The War Room was described by several participants as a data room where the data of all students were displayed, discussed, and utilized to make instructional adjustments discussed during PLC meetings. Participant 6 stated "the PLC meetings in the War Room were excellent for tracking instruction through changes in student data". Seven of the seven participants referenced the importance of tracking student data during PLC meetings. Participant 6 also stated

> "the PLC meetings were a great time to talk with other teachers in our grade level about specific students, how they learned in each teacher's classroom. It was great to have time in our PLC meetings to talk about teaching with a teacher".

Theme 2: **Teachers believed that positive and supportive classroom presence by administrators influenced their teaching and instructional activities.** Positive and supportive are terms referenced by the participants in the two sections of the interview questions. Participant 6 and Participant 7 mentioned both terms in response to interview questions aligned with RQ1. The two references of positive and supportive by Participant 6 and Participant 7 were combined into one theme. Combining the two terms into one theme of positive/supportive produced a reference to positive and supportive in 12 of 14 responses. Classroom observations by principals and the classroom presence of principals have been combined into one theme of classroom presence. Combining these two terms into one similar term produced a reference to positive and supportive classroom presence in 12 of 14 responses. Seven of the seven participants stated that classroom observations by principals were important. Five of the seven participants referenced the importance of positive support from the campus administrator. Participant 4 stated “it was important for the principal to be very informed. Our principal was very supportive, always visiting our classrooms, and the principal knew the students and their needs”. Participant 6 stated “our principal was always helpful and offered ideas to help us as we discussed instruction with other teachers”.

Participant 1 stated “the presence of principals in our classrooms and the instant feedback we received from those visits along with the peer-observations were important”. Participant 1 also stated “we received a lot of feedback and affirmation from our principals”. Participant 2 stated

> “classroom observations were very frequent, and I loved the instant feedback. Instead of one or two in a year, we were observed every two to three weeks. During these observations, our principal would come in the classroom for ten minutes or more and watch us teach. When the principal left, he always left us written feedback before leaving the room”.

Seven of the seven participants mentioned the power of positivity from the principal as being important. Participant 1 stated “when you have a positive and effective leader, one who trusts the teachers as professionals; then teachers are willing to work harder and smarter”. Participant 2 stated “the principal sets the standards and expectations that everyone follows”. Participant 5 stated “a strong, positive leader makes our jobs as teachers much easier”. Participant 7 stated “it is important for the principal to be positive, our principal believed in us so much that we began believing in ourselves more, and the positive attitude just took over the school”. Participant 6 stated

> “the principal was a cheerleader for us, he helped us look at and understand data. He believed in me so much that I believed in me and in turn I would believe in my kids more, and it all just connected”.

Participant 7 stated

> “our principal was always popping into our classrooms and interacting with the kids, sharing information with us about what we were doing well and what we could improve on. Our principal was confident, knew what he was talking about, and empowered us to be decision-makers in our classrooms; that made us all better teachers”.

Theme 3: Teachers believed that tracking student data influenced their teaching and instructional activities. Tracking student data was referenced by seven of the seven participants in the first section of the interview aligning with RQ1 and by four of the seven participants in the second section of the interview aligning with RQ2. When combined, the total of references by the participants for tracking student data was 11out of 14. Participant 1 stated “we had a war room where we displayed and tracked individual students and their performance on our checkpoints”. Participant 2 stated “the war room was the neatest thing; we could see student data on every student, and we could see exactly what they needed extra support in and what they were strong in too”. Participant 3 stated “our principal met with us weekly in our war room during PLC time and we discussed instruction and needed instructional changes based on the student data displayed in our war room”. Participant 3 also stated “the war room and the student data are where I first realized we had a lot of students struggling with reading across all of the grade levels”. Participant 7 stated “our principal was an excellent communicator, we met regularly in our war room and discussed goals and individual student needs. We didn’t just track grades; we tracked individual SEs and knew specifically what kids needed”. Participant 5 stated “we had so much data to look at in our war room. When we met in there for our PLC meetings, we could study the data together and discuss with our principal and other teachers exactly what students needed and discuss how to meet those needs”.

Table 5 illustrates the frequency of these recurring themes being mentioned by the seven participants in the study in response to the first five of eleven interview questions. Table 6 illustrates the frequency of these recurring themes being mentioned by the seven study participants in response to the final six of eleven interview questions.

Table 5

Number of Mentioned Occurrences During First Five Interview Questions

	PLC meetings	Student data	Schedule	Supportive	Peer observations	Classroom presence
Participant 1	X	X			X	X
Participant 2	X	X		X	X	X
Participant 3	X	X		X	X	
Participant 4	X	X		X	X	X
Participant 5	X		X		X	
Participant 6	X			X	X	X
Participant 7	X		X	X	X	X

Table 6

Number of Mentioned Occurrences During Final Six Interview Questions

	PLC meetings	Student data	Learning targets	Supportive	Teacher voice	Classroom observations	Positivity
Participant 1	X	X	X			X	X
Participant 2	X	X			X	X	X
Participant 3	X	X	X		X	X	X
Participant 4		X	X		X	X	X
Participant 5	X	X				X	X
Participant 6	X	X		X		X	X
Participant 7	X	X		X	X	X	X

Three of the seven participants mentioned the posting of learning targets in every classroom as important in setting instructional goals. During the final six interview questions, two of the seven participants mentioned the importance of the principal's support. Four of the seven participants stated the importance of having a voice in decision-making and the selection of professional development was important.

Salient Data and Discrepant Cases

One question from the interview questions did not produce data that fit into the categories of themes or codes and can be considered discrepant data. Question number four asked how the campus principal managed fiscal, operational, and technological resources of the school in a way that focuses on effective instruction and the achievement of all students. Six of the seven participants responded with positive statements about having technology resources in their classrooms. The remaining participant referenced having resources that were needed.

Evidence of Quality

Merriam and Tisdell (2015) stated the process and purpose of the member check was to take the preliminary analysis back to some of the participants to ask if the researcher's interpretation of their responses rings true. The Informed Consent form for this study disclosed that approximately thirty percent of the participants would be selected to participate in the member checking process. Participant 1 and Participant 2 were chosen at random to participate in the member check process for this study. The findings of the study were read to Participant 1 and Participant 2 via separate telephone calls. Participant 1 stated the responses were accurate and reflected Participant 1's experiences and perceptions of campus principals. Participant 2 stated the responses were accurate and added “the data tracking process in the war room said it all”. Participant 2 also stated “having the SEs posted and color-coded for every child on the campus was the first time I had ever experienced that process and that it was a very important part of the success of the campus”.

As the instructional leader of the campus, the campus level principal must ensure that instructional practices and strategies utilized in the classrooms are successful at meeting the needs of students. The purpose of this study was to explore teachers’ perceptions and experiences of how campus-level leadership behaviors influenced instructional practices and strategies in the classroom. The data provided by the seven participants of this study highlighted PLC meetings, tracking student data, classroom presence by principals, and positive/supportive actions as being key leadership actions that influenced instructional practices in the classroom. Participant 2 stated that discussions in the weekly PLC meetings included recognition of student needs in the different grade levels and how each grade level could support student needs in another grade level. Participant 2 and Participant 7 stated the importance of the principal’s presence in the classrooms and how important the ongoing regular instructional feedback was to their classroom instruction. Participant 7 stated how the confidence of the principal was encouraging and that being empowered to be a decision-maker in the classroom made them all better teachers.

Project Deliverable and Findings

In the findings of this study, participants provided individual perceptions and experiences with the actions and behaviors of campus principals that identified three common themes. Teachers believed the PLC meetings offered guidance about teaching and instructional activities. Teachers believed that positive and supportive classroom presence by administrators influenced their teaching and instructional activities. Teachers believed that tracking student data influenced their teaching and instructional activities. More importantly, teachers believed that the actions and behaviors of campus principals influenced instructional practices in the classroom. During the interviews, some participants described the importance of the principal being visible in the hallways, as well as frequently visiting the classrooms as important behaviors in developing relationships with both students and staff.

The themes identified by this study revealed teachers' perceptions and experiences of how campus-level leadership behaviors influenced instructional practices and strategies in the classroom and will be utilized to create a professional development training for campus-level principals. The three themes identified in this study will be connected to research literature supporting the three identified themes and presented to current and future campus-level principals. The method of presentation will be a three-day professional development training session. The professional development training will include information from the literature review that highlights the influence of leadership behaviors related to the three identified themes of this study on instructional practices and strategies in the classroom.

Section 3: The Project

Introduction

The research conducted for this basic qualitative study was completed using individual teacher interviews. The study was developed to address the following local problem at the selected elementary campus: Based on accountability-based assessments, the selected campus earned an "Improvement Required" ranking for 4 of the last 5 consecutive school years. During these 5 consecutive years, the campus had three different campus principals. The individual teacher interviews included questions to assess, through teacher perceptions and experiences, how the actions and behaviors of the campus principals influenced instructional practices in the classrooms. The information collected from these teacher interviews was used as a database for a 3-day professional development training session designed for current and future campus-level principals. Texas Education Agency (2019) policy requires administrators with a standard educator certificate to complete 200 continuing professional education (CPE) hours every 5 years. Professional development training is one method of obtaining credit toward these identified 200 CPE hours for administrators in Texas. Professional development is an approach to improving the success of students by improving the effectiveness of educators and administrators.

Selection of Basic Genre Project

Professional development was selected as the best-suited project for the findings of this study. Interviews and the data collected from those interviews revealed three overlapping themes. Teachers believed that the PLC meetings offered guidance about teaching and instructional activities. Teachers believed that a positive and supportive classroom presence by administrators influenced their teaching and instructional activities. Teachers believed that tracking student data influenced their teaching and instructional activities. These themes illuminate the influence of the campus principal's actions and behaviors on instructional practices and strategies in classrooms. Maximizing the effect of classroom instruction to increase the academic performance of all students is a very common practice in education. Recognizing and addressing the campus principal's role in classroom instruction benefits teachers as well as students. Therefore, professional development training designed to positively increase the campus principal's influence on classroom instruction was selected as the best-suited project for the findings of this study.

Project Goals

The project following this study is a professional development training directed at current and future campus-level principals. The primary goal of this project is to provide campus-level principals with data highlighting how the campus principal's actions and behaviors influence instructional practices and strategies in the classroom. The goal follows the purpose of this study: to explore teachers' perceptions and experiences of how campus-level leadership behaviors influenced instructional practices and strategies in the classroom.

Rationale

The problem that prompted this study was that an elementary campus, based on accountability-based assessments, earned an "Improvement Required" ranking for 4 of the last 5 consecutive school years. In the data analysis results, teachers' perceptions and experiences about how campus-level leadership behaviors influenced the instructional practices and strategies in the classrooms were explored.

The campus principal is the central communication point for an educational campus. Brown (2016) stated that the campus principal is a true facilitator of communication and collaboration. The role of the campus principal was emphasized by Brown as having been researched for decades but now moving more to the forefront of research based on increasing school accountability demands. The increased interest in research on the campus principal was cited by Brown for its connection to the effect that the campus principal has on the academic achievement of the students on the campus. There are many behaviors of an effective leader, and that those leadership behaviors, as cited by Day et al. (2016), affect achievement through instructional as well as social understandings of the students and the faculty on the campus. A basic qualitative study was chosen for this project to gain qualitative data by exploring the perceptions and experiences of the teachers on the selected campus.

Considering the participant responses and the three identified themes of this study, I chose a 3-day professional development session for conveying the information to session participants. The professional development training session will focus on how the campus-level principals' behaviors and actions influenced instructional practices and strategies in the classroom. The information shared with session participants will include presentation and discussion of the three identified themes, how these themes are supported by the literature review, as well as an open discussion forum, including role-playing sessions.

Review of the Literature

The additional literature review provides research to support the project study's selection and development of a professional development training session as a method of conveying the three identified themes to current and future campus-level principals. The results of the research and the project study will be conveyed to attendees during professional development as described in the final part of Section 2 from the individual teacher interviews and outlined in Appendix A. The peer-reviewed articles for this literature review were selected from the Walden University Library, ERIC, and Sage research databases. Keywords and phrases used in the search were *professional development*, *professional development designs*, *professional development programs*, *professional development benefits*, *PLC meetings*, *tracking student data*, and *positive and supportive leadership*. The review of literature allowed me to research my findings and helped me link the following three themes of this study with research topics:

1. Teachers believed that the PLC meetings offered guidance about teaching and instructional activities.
2. Teachers believed that positive and supportive classroom presence by administrators influenced their teaching and instructional activities.
3. Teachers believed that tracking student data influenced their teaching and instructional activities.

Teachers Believed the PLC Meetings Offered Guidance About Teaching and Instructional Activities

Archbald (2016) discussed PLC meetings from their origination in the 1920s, when organizational psychology emerged as a field of study, to the current day. In his research, Archbald stated that PLC meetings are often viewed as a solution, and in that they are viewed as such, then a problem must exist. Archbald cited numerous findings in his study that supported the use of PLCs as a means of breaking down barriers in an educational setting, improving teacher performance, and improving the academic performance of students. Archbald stated that master schedules and the overall design of an academic setting produce an “egg carton” appearance that provides little time for collaboration or sharing of ideas between teachers. Hallam, Smith, Hite, Hite, and Wilcox (2015) stated that PLCs are a critical component of the effort to improve instruction. Hallam et al. identified PLCs as an effective method for campus principals to implement. Hallam et al. stated that principals often group teachers by grade level or subject and schedule PLC meetings in which teachers review student data form regular assessments and openly discuss instruction and needed instructional changes. Hallam et al. emphasized that principals often indirectly affect academic performance though their influence on classroom instruction, campus climate, and campus organizations.

Brown, Horn, and King (2018) stated that to be effective, PLCs must have regularly scheduled meeting times, review student performance, and assess and modify goals as needed. Brown et al. further stated that PLCs are designed not only to discuss what students will learn, but also to provide teachers with a place to discuss instruction and needed instructional changes when students do not learn. The findings of this study are aligned with and supported by current research. The participants in this study emphasized the importance of their PLC meetings being built into their master schedule. They shared through their responses that the PLC meetings were held in the war room where all student data were displayed and explained how they used the data to assess instruction and needed instructional changes.

Teachers Believed That Positive and Supportive Classroom Presence by Administrators Influenced Their Teaching and Instructional Activities

Hollingworth, Olsen, Asikin-Garmager, and Winn (2018) emphasized the importance of the principal in establishing the climate and culture of the campus. Hollingsworth et al. declared that an effective campus principal recognizes the power of positive influence on student achievement, collaborative relationships among staff, shared decision making, and empowerment of staff in decision-making processes. Hollingsworth et al. stated that good leaders can promote change by providing reasons for the need for change, supporting change through positive interpersonal interactions, and building positive relationships. McIntosh, Kelm, and Canizal Delabra (2016) stated that the principal plays a key role in the establishment of a positive and supportive campus environment. McIntosh et al. emphasized the importance of the principal's influence on the job satisfaction of teachers, attitudes of staff, outcomes of student performance, as well as fidelity of implementation of instructional practices and strategies in classrooms.

The findings of this study are aligned with current research and illuminate the power of the influence that the campus principal has on attitudes, classroom instructional practices, and strategies. Participants in this study identified the importance of the campus principal being positive and supportive. It was stated by Participant 6 that

> the principal was a cheerleader for us, he helped us look at and understand data. He believed in me so much that I believed in me and in turn I would believe in my kids more, and it all just connected.

Teachers Believed That Tracking Student Data Influenced Their Teaching and Instructional Activities

Datnow and Park (2018) addressed the purpose of tracking student data in three studies over two decades. In their studies, Datnow and Park reported that data tracking is often ineffective due to a misuse of the process. Datnow and Park declared that data tracking is not intended to empower principals and is often used to group students based on abilities. Effective data tracking was defined by Datnow and Park as a process of improving students' performance by studying their individual needs and adjusting instruction to meet those needs. Datnow and Park stated that effective leaders use data tracking as an effective means of improving student and teacher performance in the classroom. Wesolowski (2015) studied the importance of tracking student data to improve performance. Although the primary target for Wesolowski was the music classroom, Wesolowski emphasized that the results of the study extend to the academic setting as well. Wesolowski stated that the purpose of tracking student data is to establish a foundation of knowledge, track the growth of that knowledge, and adjust when the growth is not meeting expectations. Wesolowski contended that the purpose of a learning objective in the classroom was to set the expectations for a lesson from which to measure growth. By tracking student growth through collecting and analyzing student data, and using the data to improve instruction, schools can improve student performance.

Tracking student data was mentioned many times by the participants in this study as having influenced instructional practices and strategies in their classrooms. Participant 1 stated,

> I think when we met in the war room that was a big part of that, we analyzed data and looked at questions that were common in regard to all teachers' strengths and weaknesses and looked at different ways to teach those weak areas and keeping up with the data for all of the students.

Participant 3 stated,

> we used the student data we tracked as a means of tracking instruction. When the students didn't do well, we looked at how we taught it to make changes. When the students did well, we looked at that to share ideas of how to teach it the next time.

Current research on tracking of student data aligns with the participant responses and findings of this study. Participants reported benefits to their classroom instructional practices and strategies based on the process of tracking student data. Participant responses from this study on the purpose of data tracking as a method of making instructional adjustments align with the research of Datnow and Park (2018), who stated that tracking data is about making instructional adjustments based on the data.

Professional Development

The purpose of this study was to explore teachers' perceptions and experiences of how campus-level leadership behaviors influenced instructional practices and strategies in the classroom. Professional development, described as continuous professional education (CPE) by TEA, is both a requirement for continued certification and an essential method for improving the success of students through the improvement of educator skills and instructional effectiveness. Therefore, districts in Texas use professional development training sessions as a method of providing CPE hours for all staff. In the development of this project study, where using professional development was the method of conveying the three identified themes of this research study, it was important to provide research evidence about the intricacies of professional development.

The literature review in Section 1 identified the connection between campus leadership, classroom instruction, and the academic performance of students. Considering this connection related to instruction, a parallel relationship must exist for professional development. Thannimalai and Raman (2018) cited a significant relationship between the level of the campus principals' professional development and the level of the teachers' implementation of classroom instruction aligned with the principals' professional development. In their study assessing the level of instructional technology use in the classrooms, Thannimalai and Raman (2018) emphasized the importance of improving the use of instructional technology in classrooms by improving campus principals' understanding of instructional technology through effective professional development.

It is generally understood and supported by state certification requirements that professional development training of educators is a practiced method for improving education. Peterson-Ahmad, Hovey, and Peak (2018) and Nguyen (2019) recognized professional development as a process of improving teaching by becoming more knowledgeable in and about teaching. Nguyen (2019) further stated that professional development is a process whereby educators review, renew, and extend their commitment as change agents to the educational process. Bringing together the findings discussed in Section 2 regarding the instructional relationship of principals, teachers, and academic outcomes of students and the research findings of Thannimalai and Raman (2018) and Peterson-Ahmad et al. (2018), a professional development training for campus-level principals to convey the findings of this study will be an effective method and supports state requirements for CPE for administrators.

Peterson-Ahmad et al. (2018) stated that to improve academic performance in classrooms, professional development that is specific to the needs of the local educational setting, school, or community is essential for educators. Koellner and Jacobs (2015) emphasized the importance of professional development that is based on published materials, has explicit design characteristics and a stated learning objective, and is readily responsive to the local context. Improving the academic performance of students in the local setting through the professional development of educators is supported by Alanson and Robles (2016). In their study focusing on improving student academic outcomes, professional development was selected as the appropriate course to promote the suggested student learning outcomes. Stosich, Bocala, and Forman (2018) cited a growing consensus among researchers that leadership practices foster improvement in instruction and student learning. Stosich et al. (2018) emphasized leveraging professional development of educators to enhance schoolwide capacity for school improvement.

Building a Program

In creating and designing a professional development training, it is imperative to provide research findings of professional development program designs that are proven successful. Stosich et al. (2018) identified three key challenges that need to be addressed in designing professional development experiences for educators that strengthen their capabilities to lead instructional improvement: maintaining the connection between organizational processes and instructional practice; approaching school leadership team collaboration as joint work and utilizing a developmental approach to improvement. Stosich et al. broadly defined professional development as activities that help educators develop skills and knowledge to meet their school's goals and to meet the needs of students.

Building a professional development training session that is purposeful and meaningful is supported by Peterson et al. (2018) who stated professional development should be based on local needs and Stosich et al. (2018) who stated professional development is more meaningful when is part of an organizational strategy for building the instructional capacity of teachers and the school as a whole. Stosich et al. stated schools with strong leadership are often better able to leverage professional development to enhance and support student learning. Jackson, Huerta, Garza, and Narvaez, (2019) reported professional development was utilized in their two-year study addressing low academic performance of students. Jackson et al. stated professional developments was used to train staff in effective methods of improving the academic performance of the students on the campus. The professional development training session for this project is a three-day session that includes face to face interactions between the facilitator and participants. Teräs and Kartoglu (2017) emphasized professional development that is interactive and not delivered as a curriculum that is to be consumed by participants is more beneficial for the construction of new knowledge by the participants.

The format of the three-day professional development session includes social interaction between participants and the facilitator as well as scheduling follow-up meetings to provide an avenue for collaboration. Stosich et al. (2018) identified social interaction and ongoing collaboration as important for transferring new knowledge from professional development and aligning new knowledge with teachers' work and schoolwide improvement.

Collaboration

The literature review in Section 1 recognized the importance of the professional relationship between teachers and principals in fostering a climate of success on the campus. The three-day professional development training concluding this project study provides evidence from this project study regarding the importance of collaboration in building a climate of success. Included in the three-day professional development project is cross-campus interactions and collaboration among campus principals. Boylan (2016) cited organizational improvement stems from the opportunities of organizational leaders within the organization to collaborate through interschool relationships focused on school-wide improvement. MacKinnon, Young, Paish, & LeBel (2019) stated that high-quality learning opportunities focused on curriculum and instruction in a setting that provided opportunities to network, form study groups, and utilize peer-coaching were effective methods of professional development.

Throughout the entire three-day professional development training session, there are numerous opportunities for the participants to collaborate with other participants and with the facilitator. Participants are encouraged to openly discuss personal practices and to compare those practices with other participants and with the findings of this research study. Cuesta, Azcárate, and Cardeñoso (2016) and Hildreth, Rogers, and Crouse (2018) cited the importance of professional development, focusing on real problems educators face and educators recognizing these problems as concerns that need to be addressed. Cuesta et al. recognized collaboration and reflections as tools to encourage communications and dialogue for sharing interests, expectations, and problems. Hildreth et al. emphasized professional development as being a critical element in the continued professional growth of campus leaders who are striving to continuously improve their campus. The 3-day professional development project for this research study utilizes participant reflections and collaboration as a method for assimilating real-world problems facing education with personal experiences and the findings of this research study. Lee and Madden (2019) stated that when participants of professional development are able to actively participate, share trust, expertise, and experiences, they form a community and learn by reading, talking, and reflecting.

Barriers and Distractions to Learning

In designing and planning the three-day professional development training for this project study, the level of engagement and consideration for the participants' time was at the forefront of the design process. In a study of high-quality professional development barriers and impacts, Kimbrel (2018) confirmed that high-quality professional development does have a significant impact on student achievement. The purpose of this research study was to explore teachers' perceptions and experiences of how campus-level leadership behaviors influenced instructional practices and strategies in the classroom. The goal is to improve the academic performance of students in these classrooms. Educators who engage in sustained professional development are more likely to implement specific learning methodologies learned in professional development, Kimbrel (2018). Barriers that were considered in the planning of this 3-day professional development were relevance, financial commitment, and time management. The relevance of the findings of this project study is documented in the data analysis section of the project study. To address the issue of time management, the project was concentrated into a 3-day professional development project which reduces the financial expense of the professional development session. In a study focusing on professional development barriers in a charter school, Kimbrel identified money, time, and educator attitude as barriers encountered in the development of successful professional development training sessions. Funding was cited by Broad (2015) as a distinct barrier to engaging and purposeful professional development.

The level of participant engagement for this 3-day professional development session is a critical element in the success of the program. Therefore, the level of engagement becomes a potential barrier for the professional development training. To increase the level of engagement, the professional development training includes time segments for participants to relate the relevance and the local connection with the findings being presented. By clarifying the relevance of the professional development, participants will understand the impact of the training and how it relates specifically to them as campus-level principals. In a study by Broad (2015) a common barrier to successful professional development was the common misconception of participants attending the professional development merely as a state compliance piece for maintaining their educator license.

Project Description

This data collected in this basic qualitative study will provide insight through the perceptions and experiences of the participants in the study. The participants of this study shared their perceptions and experiences with the actions and behaviors of campus principals. By understanding teachers' perceptions and experiences of how campus-level leadership behaviors influenced instructional practices and strategies in the classroom, current, and future campus-level principals who attend this 3-day professional development training will be better equipped to provide more positive and effective leadership for their campus. The proposed 3-day professional development training will be presented to district leadership personnel who will then present the training to campus-level principals before the start of the school year. The objective of this 3-day professional development is to convey the collected data to current and future campus-level principals in a professional development setting to ensure they are better qualified to successfully lead their campus to academic success.

Needed Resources

The resources required to present the collected data to participants will be basic presentation supplies. A facility large enough to comfortably seat the attending participants, video and audio presentation equipment, large presentation sticky notes, and markers for each table of participants, and a 3-ring binder including a printed copy of the PowerPoint presentation with a section for note taking.

Existing Supports

Districts in Texas have Educational Service Centers (ESCs) that can provide ongoing support for many areas of the educational setting, including support for campus principals. The local ESC could be one provider of ongoing support through regularly scheduled campus visits to meet and mentor the campus principal. The local district has several campuses within the district and could provide a regular meeting schedule between campus principals to provide opportunities for open discussion of campus leadership actions and behaviors.

Potential Barriers

Campus principals have been described as the central point of communication for a campus. Removing the campus principal from the campus to attend ongoing professional development sessions or to attend regularly scheduled meetings could affect the communication channels on the campus. Time would then be a potential barrier to the regularly scheduled meetings. The issue of time away from campus could be addressed by holding these meetings in a virtual format or as an after-school meeting. Another possible barrier would be finding three consecutive days during the summer to hold the 3-

day professional development session that would not conflict with the other duties of a campus principal. Through effective long-range planning, the issue of conflicting summer schedules could be reduced or eliminated, providing adequate time to complete the professional development session.

Proposal for Implementation and Timetable

Implementation of the project from this study will begin in the summer before the 2020-2021 school year. By beginning in the summer before the start of the 2020-2021 school year, campus principals would be able to begin their school year with a full understanding of the presented data. Campus-level principals would also be able to meet as a group and schedule future discussion meetings for the ongoing support of one another throughout the 2020-2021 school year.

July 2020

Meet with the district leadership team

- Present the findings of the study
- Schedule dates for the professional development training
- Create an itinerary and communicate attendance expectations for potential participants

Day 1

- Introductions and Professional Development objective
- PowerPoint presentation
- Discussions and role-playing

Day 2

- PowerPoint presentation
- Discussions and role-playing
- Reflections

Day 3

- Wrap up of PowerPoint presentation
- Personal and campus goal setting
- Schedule follow-up meetings

Role and Responsibility of Student and Others

As the researcher, I am responsible for presenting the proposed professional development training to the leadership team for the local district. Once the results of the study have been presented and accepted by the district, the process for implementing the professional development training will begin. As the researcher, I will be responsible for all communication between the district leadership team and the invited participants of the professional development training session. Any changes requested by the district leadership team will be addressed by me and addressed promptly according to the directions of the district.

At the beginning of the 3-day professional development training session, participants will be provided with a copy of the materials presented during the professional development session. After the professional development session, additional support to the district will include one-to-one meetings with campus-level principals or by attending follow-up meetings with campus administrators at the district's request and approval.

Project Evaluation Plan

Interviews and the data collected from interviews revealed three overlapping themes. Teachers believed the PLC meetings offered guidance about teaching and instructional activities. Teachers believed that positive and supportive classroom presence by administrators influenced their teaching and instructional activities. Teachers believed that tracking student data influenced their teaching and instructional activities.

A summative assessment is designed to assess student learning at the completion of an instructional unit, project, school year or program. At the end of the 3-day professional development training session, participants will be assessed utilizing a summative assessment. The attendees of the 3-day professional development training will complete an evaluation form. Participant responses to the evaluation form will assist in planning and organizing future professional development training sessions focused on the leadership of leadership behaviors on classroom instructional practices and strategies.

All stakeholders in the education setting could potentially benefit from the project evaluation of this study. Ultimately, students will benefit from improved instruction in the classroom. Campus principals will be able to recognize how their actions and behaviors influence instruction in the classroom. Teachers will benefit from better relationships and communication with campus principals as well as from an improved campus climate focused on improved classroom instruction. Overall, the education setting will benefit from the increased knowledge of the campus principal as the central communication point of the campus.

Project Implications

The data collected from this basic qualitative study and project are designed to provide suggestions and solutions for improving instruction in the classroom. Improvement in classroom instruction can improve the academic success of students at both the local and national levels. Educating campus principals on how their actions and leadership behaviors influence instruction in the classroom can increase awareness of the influence campus principals have the academic success of students on their campus. Providing professional development that is targeted and purposeful can increase the self-efficacy of current and future campus principals and empower them to be better campus leaders.

Conclusion

To improve the instructional setting of classrooms, professional development focused on understanding the perceptions and experiences of how campus-level leadership behaviors influenced instructional practices and strategies in the classroom, will provide insight into effective campus-level leadership behaviors. Understanding the influence of the campus principal on classroom instruction is important to all stakeholders in education. The increasing pressures to meet performance standards placed upon schools by the new and ever-changing accountability system requires schools to optimize every minute of classroom instruction time to ensure all students have their individual educational needs met at the highest level of success. This study produced findings, through the perceptions and experiences of classroom teachers, about how the campus principals' actions and behaviors influenced instruction in their classrooms.

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

Project Strengths and Limitations

The purpose of this study was to explore teachers' perceptions and experiences of how campus-level leadership behaviors influenced instructional practices and strategies in the classroom. Data were collected from interviews with the seven participants of this study. The collected data were analyzed and used to answer the two primary research questions for this study.

RQ1: What are the perceptions and experiences of teachers about how the building administrators offer guidance about teaching and instructional activities?

RQ2: What are the perceptions of teachers about how the building administrators influenced their teaching and instructional activities to improve student performance?

The results from this basic qualitative study identified three overlapping themes. Teachers believed that the PLC meetings offered guidance about teaching and instructional activities. Teachers believed that positive and supportive classroom presence by administrators influenced their teaching and instructional activities. Teachers believed that tracking student data influenced their teaching and instructional activities.

These three themes were linked to current research and provided the foundation for the professional development discussed in Section 3. Professional development training provides the venue for conveying the findings from the teacher interviews conducted in this study and how those findings are related to current research.

Project Strengths

The objective of this project was to better understand the influence of the actions and behaviors of campus principals on classroom instruction. The outcome of the study resulted in a 3-day professional development training session focused on how the actions and behaviors of campus principals influence instruction in the classroom. More specifically, the study produced specific activities that influenced classroom instruction, resulting in improved academic performance by the students in the classrooms. One of the strengths of this study is that it was supported by qualitative evidence collected from participants who were on the campus, had firsthand experience, and shared their opinions, perceptions, and experiences. The data from this study may benefit current and future campus principals as well as classroom teachers and students under the leadership of current and future campus principals. Another strength of this project is that it may increase awareness of campus-level principals about the influence that leadership actions and behaviors have on instructional practices and strategies in the classrooms of their campus.

Project Limitations

Limitations of this project are founded in the length of the professional development training session and the ability of participants to commit to attending all 3 days of the training. Although the information collected could be conveyed in a quick 1-day training, it could also be extended over more 3 three days, with training including additional role-playing segments involving teachers as well as campus-level principals. The concern with extending the professional development session to more than 3 days would be the increased possibility of conflicting schedules of participants and their ability to attend all of the professional development days.

Another limitation for this project study is the resistance to change that some campus-level principals may have when presented with the evidence supporting their individual need to change or adjust their leadership actions and behaviors. Through extra support and scheduled follow-up meetings with other campus-level principals, this resistance could be conquered and replaced with new confidence and a higher level of self-efficacy.

Recommendations for Alternative Approaches

Although professional development was selected as the most appropriate project for presenting the findings of this study, there are alternative approaches for presenting the study findings. One alternative could be to provide the findings of this study in written format to current and future campus-level principals. These principals could then collaborate in teams to review the findings of this study and report their perceptions and understanding of the collected data back to their superiors. A second option would be to present the findings of this study to a blended audience of both teachers and campus-level principals with a goal being to foster increased collaboration between teachers and campus-level principals related to classroom instruction.

Scholarship, Project Development and Evaluation, and Leadership and Change

The challenges faced in creating this doctoral project have been the most difficult I have faced as an educational professional. The beginning phase of this research project seemed fairly simple. My initial understanding of identifying a local problem, developing a study that would produce a positive impact on education, and presenting the findings in a written report turned out to be vague at best. Through multiple conversations with my chair and multiple reviews of the beginning sections of my study, my initially selected problem faded, and a more centralized problem was revealed. The findings from this basic qualitative study addressing the newly identified local problem may be beneficial both locally and on a larger educational scale.

Researching the literature about the selected topic was a time-consuming task, but a task that was enlightening and very beneficial to me as an educational leader. Through continuous research on the selected topic, I increased my understanding of leadership and the importance of a leader's skills, as well as how those skills influence campus staff, students, and all educational stakeholders. The increase in my knowledge empowered me to develop and enhance the actual professional development session content and program.

Completing the initial prospectus phase of this project study was the first challenge that forced me to reconsider the local problem. After revising the local problem and completing the prospectus phase of this project study, I began writing the first sections of the proposal. These initial sections proved to be the most difficult sections of my project study. Once these initial sections were completed, I was able to begin the data collection phase. The data collection phase proved to be both enjoyable and rewarding. The next phase included the process of analyzing the collected data. During the data analysis, the interview responses were coded and categorized. The analysis phase was much easier to complete and seemingly stress free. Section 3 included my second literature review and provided an opportunity to research professional development as a viable project for conveying the findings of this study.

Project Development and Evaluation

Project development and the evaluation of a project are critical to the success of the project. As a project developer, I wanted to ensure that the findings of this study were presented in a way that focused on the needs of the project participants. The purpose of the professional development training was to present findings on teachers' perceptions and experiences with campus leaders' actions and behaviors in a clear and concise manner. To increase the usefulness of the data presented and to increase the attention of the participants, the professional development training will include opportunities for group work/activities, collaboration, and feedback. Feedback from the participants will be used to guide and refine future professional development training sessions for presenting the collected data.

Leadership Change

During the time in which I have been completing this project, I have experienced a long-distance move and a change in job assignment. My move to a different region of the state and my new assignment as a high school campus leader have given me opportunities to implement practices I learned while conducting the literature review for this doctoral project study. My confidence as a campus leader has grown and has given me additional opportunities to lead professional development opportunities for both staff and colleagues within my district and other districts in the region.

For a campus leader, recognizing a local problem is only one aspect of school improvement. Once a local problem has been identified, a positive plan of action must be developed to address it. Consideration must be given to how the plan of action will be received by stakeholders. Dialectical thinking must be used to ensure that the plan of action has been vetted to increase success. Additional plans must be in place to ensure follow-through on necessary action steps. All of these steps require long hours of study and research by a campus leader. When plans do not meet initial expectations, the campus leader must be diligent and resilient, keeping in mind that the purpose of the process is to improve education for all children.

Reflection on the Importance of the Work

The art of self-reflection is in the honest evaluation of oneself. As I reflect on my doctoral journey and honestly evaluate myself, I recognize that my confidence can be detrimental to my education. I have learned that although the basis of education is simple—the transfer of knowledge from one to another—the reality is that it can be very complicated. Not everyone learns in the same way, and not everyone teaches the same curriculum in the same way. My confidence in the method that I used as a classroom teacher or as a campus leader led me to believe in my method. Through extensive research during my doctoral journey, I have learned that education is an ever-evolving practice regulated by an ever-changing accountability system. Having confidence is important, but not allowing one’s confidence to prevent the acquisition of new information is critical in ensuring growth as an educational leader.

Analysis of Self as a Scholar

I began my career in education with the idea of rising to the top in my field and becoming a leader whom other leaders admired. My first step was obtaining a master's degree in educational leadership; my second step was earning a second master's of curriculum and instruction. Once I had completed those degrees, I took some time off from my personal education and focused on my work. I soon found that I missed the challenge of my education, so I began my doctoral coursework at Walden University. I quickly realized that the doctoral coursework was at a much higher level of rigor than I had experienced in my previous master's-level coursework. The assignments were much lengthier, the writings more scholarly, and the amount of time required to complete all assignments more demanding.

My confidence was immediately challenged because my expectations of myself were very high, and I was intimidated by the level of difficulty of my doctoral assignments. Cohort members in my original class began to disappear from subsequent class lists as we progressed through the courses. After completing all of my coursework, I felt very confident in my ability to complete doctoral-level coursework. After my first proposal submission was reviewed, I took the critiques personally and was slow to revise the proposal. My chair was methodical in his advice on the proposal, and he successfully guided me through the process. As I entered the project study phase, I was once again jolted by review critiques. During the URR review process, I learned the importance of listening and ensuring that I fully understand the revision suggestions before attempting my revisions. The review process taught me patience, and I learned that I can always do better when I am guided by those who are more knowledgeable than I am.

Analysis of Self as a Practitioner

Conducting doctoral-level research has taught me to be more specific and to pay close attention to all details. I have learned to be better at time management and to ensure that I approach a project with an open mind and a focus on data collection before forming any firm opinions. My experience has been beneficial professionally and personally. I have learned to be more patient in my decision-making process and to practice leadership skills that have been proven effective through research for my current situation. My experience as a practitioner has increased my confidence as a successful leader, without allowing my confidence to be detrimental to my ability to be an effective leader.

Analysis of Self as a Project Developer

A successful project developer must effectively use data collected as a researcher to create and present a project that is beneficial to the target audience. As a project developer, I must fully understand the data that are to be presented and present these data to the participants in a manner that is concise, clear, and meaningful. Having the opportunity to create this project has been inspiring, and during the creation of the project, I thought of the audience and how to ensure that I keep them engaged. Presenting the data is only one phase of the project; a second and very important phase of the project is successfully conveying of the data to the participants. I believe in the data that are to be presented, and I am confident in my ability as a project developer to create a project that is meaningful, engaging, and relevant for participants.

While developing this project, I often thought of myself and other campus principals I had known and worked with during my years in education. Campus principals are typically very busy and attend several professional development sessions during a typical school year. A personal goal of mine as I created this project was to create a project that inspired and challenged the participants with idealized influence to encourage participants to look at old problems in new ways.

Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research

The outcome of this project study relating to the potential for social change may initially affect campus-level principals, teachers, and students in the local educational setting at the center of this study. A thorough, complete, and concise presentation of the study findings at the initial 3-day professional development session is critical to the success of the project. Teachers in the local educational setting will be inspired to know that campus principals are attending a professional development training that is designed to present qualitative teacher perceptions of effective campus leadership behaviors and actions. Campus principals will gain a better understanding of how their actions and behaviors influence instruction in the classroom. This new understanding and appreciation of the influences that campus leadership behaviors and actions have on instruction will ultimately lead to instructional improvements in classrooms and improvement in the academic performance of students.

The social change effect may not only benefit the local education setting, but also lead to increased community involvement as parents and community members begin to see improvement in their children's or their school's academic performance. The increased academic performance of students will increase their self-efficacy and self-confidence, resulting in greater academic gains and increased belief in their ability to be successful beyond the classroom.

Further research projects aligned with this study could potentially reveal additional campus principal actions and behaviors that positively influence classroom instruction. These future new findings could result in improved academic performance of students in classrooms. Continued research into the influence that campus leadership's behaviors and actions have on classroom instruction may improve classroom instruction by improving the communication and professional relationships between campus principals and teachers. The goal of the research is to collect data that constitute a clear and unbiased knowledge base that provides avenues for promoting positive social change.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to explore teachers' perceptions and experiences of how campus-level leadership behaviors influenced instructional practices and strategies in the classroom. After conducting individual teacher interviews to collect data on teachers' perceptions and experiences, I analyzed and coded the data, identifying common and recurring themes. The findings were, in some ways, typical or what might be expected. Several participants mentioned the importance of being positive and supportive. However, the participants made several statements about the importance of irregular and frequent visits to their classrooms and the importance of providing targeted feedback on instruction. Another often-mentioned statement was the importance of the campus principal attending regularly scheduled PLC meetings and sharing the discussion with other grade levels on the campus. Having a voice in the selection of professional development sessions they attended was also mentioned by several participants in this study.

The project created from the research study was a 3-day professional development training session for campus-level principals. Creating and eventually presenting this project study to campus-level principals in the local educational setting will provide the local educational setting with evidence-based research findings to address the local problem and improve the academic performance of students in the district.

Conducting this basic qualitative study and developing a project worthy of addressing the local problem has been extremely challenging but has been the best learning experience I have had during my years in education. The continued support of my committee, especially the support of my chair has been vital in reaching the completion phase of this project study. Moving forward from this point in my education, I know I will be a better educator because I will be a better researcher, capable of recognizing facts, formulating effective plans for improvement and diligently seeing those plans through to fruition.

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Appendix A: The Project

The project for the basic qualitative study includes a 3-day professional development training session for current and future campus principals. The materials utilized during this 3-day training are the findings of this basic qualitative study and existing research aligned with the findings of this study. The purpose of the 3-day professional development training is to provide campus principals with evidence-based findings of how the actions and behaviors of a campus principal influence instructional practices and strategies in the classrooms. One goal of the professional development is to bring a heightened awareness to campus principals of how their actions and behaviors influence classroom instruction. A second goal is to increase the effectiveness of campus principals as a campus leader by providing targeted professional development aimed at ultimately improving instruction in the classrooms.

Professional Development: 3-Day Training on Campus Leadership Actions and Behaviors

Purpose:

To provide campus leaders with targeted professional development based on evidence-based research findings to increase their effectiveness as a campus leader

Program Goals:

- To provide campus principals with evidence-based professional development
- To provide campus principals with techniques to improve their individual effectiveness as a campus-level leader

- To provide teachers with campus principals who recognize the importance of their actions and behaviors as a campus leader
- To provide students with a campus leader who understands the connection between their leadership actions and behaviors and their academic success

Program Outcomes:

- Campus principals will understand how their actions and behaviors influence classroom instruction
- Classroom teachers will have a campus leader who understands their role and how their actions and behaviors can influence classroom instruction
- Students will benefit from the improved influence of the campus leader on classroom instruction

Audience:

All campus principals at the selected district

Timeline:

District administrators will meet with researcher to organize and outline a timeline of implementation during late June or early July 2019. The 3-day professional development will begin in early August of 2019. At the conclusion of the initial 3-day professional development training, the follow-up meeting schedule created by campus-level principals during the 3-day professional development will be presented back to district administrators for approval.

Materials:

- Continental breakfast items for three days

- Sign-in sheets
- 3-ring binders including copies of research study findings and supporting research
- Large presentation size sticky notes and markers for each attendee
- Audio/video equipment for PowerPoint presentation
- PD evaluation form

Agenda for 3-Day Professional Development Training

Day 1:

8:00-8:30 Welcome, continental breakfast, introductions, objective, and expectations (slide 1 & 2)

Presenter Notes: Welcome attendees to the 3-day professional development. Explain where the sign-in sheet is located for the day and where the refreshments are located. Pass out a printed copy of the 35 slide PowerPoint presentation with three slides on each page and a section for taking notes next to each slide on each page to each attendee. Introduce the presenter and ask each attendee to introduce themselves to all attendees. Clarify the objective of the 3-day professional development training is to provide campus principals with evidence-based findings of how the actions and behaviors of a campus principal influence instruction in the classrooms. State the expectations of each participant participating in role-playing activities as well as group conversations.

8:30-10:00 Team building, discovery (slide 3, 4, 5, & 6)

Presenter Notes: Ask attendees to select a partner for the day's activities and relocate to a table with their new partner. Ask teams to establish a scribe for their team for the purpose of writing their teams notes. Ask attendees to discuss with their partner three actions/behaviors they believe are critical for a campus principal. Once they have their three items, list them on their large sticky notepad. After all teams have identified their three items, each team will present their critical actions/behaviors to the total group. As a total group, identify the top three actions/behaviors identified for the total group.

10:00-10:15 Morning break (slide 7)

Presenter Notes: Dismiss the group for the morning break. Explain where restrooms are located and what time they need to be back in their seats for the next session.

10:15-12:00 Introduce research findings (slide 8)

Presenter Notes: Pass out three-ring binders to each attendee (included in the three-ring binders will be handouts for the three-day profession development). Ask attendees to turn to the first handout titled: Guidance about Teaching and Instructional Activities and to handout two, titled: Influenced Teaching and Instructional Activities.

Handout One

Guidance about Teaching and Instructional Activities

	Common Themes/Statements	Overlapping Themes
Question One: What did the campus principal do to provide all students the opportunity to learn the critical content of the curriculum?	Schedule, PLC Meetings, Student Data, Motivator	PLC Meetings
Question Two: What did the campus principal do to provide teachers opportunities to observe and discuss effective teaching?	Peer-Observations, PLC Meetings	PLC Meetings

Question Three: What did the campus principal do to ensure that teacher teams and collaborative groups regularly interact to address common issues regarding curriculum, assessment, instruction, and the achievement of all students?	Schedule, PLC Meetings, Student Data, Motivator, Supportive	Schedule, PLC Meetings, Supportive
Question Four: How did the campus principal manage the fiscal, operational, and technological resources of the school in a way that focuses on effective instruction and the achievement of all students?	Resources, Schedule	Schedule, PLC Meetings
Question Five: What did the campus principal do to provide a clear vision as to how instruction should be addressed in the school?	Frequent Classroom Visits, Supportive in both discussions and lesson modeling	PLC Meetings, Supportive

Handout Two: *Influenced Teaching and Instructional Activities*

	Common Themes/Statements	Overlapping Themes
Question Six: What did the campus principal do to ensure clear and measurable goals are established and focused on critical needs regarding improving the achievement of individual students within the school?	Posted Leaning Targets, Weekly PLC Meetings with Administration, Tracked and Displayed Student Data for all Students	Weekly PLC Meetings with Administration, Tracked and Displayed Student Data for All Students

Question Seven: What did the campus administrator do to ensure data are analyzed, interpreted, and used to regularly monitor progress toward school achievement goals?	Daily PLC Meetings with Grade Level Teachers, Weekly PLC Meetings with Administration, Tracked and Displayed Student Data for All Students,	Weekly PLC Meetings with Administration, Tracked and Displayed Student Data for All Students
Question Eight: What did the campus principal do to ensure clear and measurable goals are established and focused on critical needs regarding improving overall student achievement at the school level?	Regular Checkpoint Assessments, Tracked and Displayed Student Data for All Students, Weekly PLC Meetings with Administration	Weekly PLC Meetings with Administration, Tracked and Displayed Student Data for All Students
Question Nine: What did the campus principal do to ensure teachers are provided with job-embedded professional development that is directly related to their instructional growth goals?	Daily PLC Meetings with Grade Level Teachers to Discuss Instruction, A Voice in Selecting Professional Development Trainings, Scheduling, Book Study, Trusting	Daily PLC Meetings with Grade Level Teachers,
Question Ten: What did the campus principal do to ensure teachers are provided with clear, ongoing evaluations of their pedagogical strengths and weaknesses that are based on multiple sources of data and are consistent with student achievement data?	Presence in our Classrooms, Peer-Observations, Frequent Instructional Feedback, Frequent Walk-Throughs	Peer-Observations
Question Eleven: How do the leadership skills of a campus principal influence the academic performance of the students on the campus?	Positive, Supportive, Trusting, Clear Expectations with Accountability,	Positive, Supportive, Trusting

Read the five questions from Handout One and the six questions from Handout Two that were asked during the research study. Connect the three overlapping themes from the research study to current research. Ask the attendees to compare the common themes and statements from the research to their top three items listed. Openly discuss how the research compares to the groups top three items.

12:00-1:00 Lunch (slide 9)

Presenter Notes: Dismiss the group for lunch and explain what time they will need to be back in their seats for the afternoon session.

1:00-2:30 Review findings and role play (slide 10 & 11)

Presenter Notes: Welcome the attendees back. Review the groups top three items and review the research findings from the first five questions listed on handout one. Ask attendees to select one of the group's top three items and role-play with their teammate the selected action or behavior. Ask teams to switch roles and role-play one of the common themes from the research findings. Discuss with their teammate how they felt in each scenario of the role-playing and share with the group any discoveries.

2:30-2:45 Afternoon break (slide 12)

Presenter Notes: Dismiss the group for the afternoon break. Explain where restrooms are located and what time they need to be back in their seats for the next session.

2:45-4:00 Continued role play, recap, and dismissal (slide 13 & 14)

Presenter Notes: Welcome the attendees back. Ask attendees to select a second item from the group's top three items and role-play with their teammate the selected action or behavior. Ask teams to switch roles and role-play a second of the common themes from the research findings. Discuss with their teammate how they felt in each scenario of the role-playing and share with the group any discoveries. Dismiss the group and remind them of the start time for the second day of the professional development.

Day 2:

8:00-8:30 Welcome and continental breakfast (slide 15)

Presenter Notes: Welcome attendees back for day two of the 3-day professional development. Explain where the sign-in sheet is located and where the morning refreshments are located.

8:30-10:00 New teammates open discussion of Day One (slide 16 & 17)

Presenter Notes: Ask attendees to get up from their seats and find a new teammate in the group for day two activities and role-playing. Once new teams are established, ask attendees to share their day one discoveries with their new teammate and share out any new discoveries with the total group.

10:00-10:15 Morning Break (slide 18)

Presenter Notes: Dismiss the group for the morning break. Explain where restrooms are located and what time they need to be back in their seats for the next session.

10:15-12:00 Review research findings from binders (slide 19)

Presenter Notes: Pass out Handout Three and Handout Four to the attendees.

Handout Three: *Number of Mentioned Occurrences During First Five Interview Questions*

	PLC Meetings	Student Data	Schedule	Supportive	Peer-Observations	Classroom Presence

Participant One	X	X			X	X
Participant Two	X	X		X	X	X
Participant Three	X	X		X	X	
Participant Four	X	X		X	X	X
Participant Five	X		X		X	
Participant Six	X			X	X	X
Participant Seven	X		X	X	X	X

Handout Four: *Number of Mentioned Occurrences During Final Six Interview Questions*

	PLC Meetings	Student Data	Learning Targets	Supportive	Teacher Voice	Classroom Observations	Positivity
Participant One	X	X	X			X	X
Participant Two	X	X			X	X	X
Participant Three	X	X	X		X	X	X
Participant Four		X	X		X	X	X
Participant Five	X	X				X	X
Participant Six	X	X		X		X	X
Participant Seven	X	X		X	X	X	X

Review the number of occurrences identified in Handout Three and Handout Four and discuss with the group the first leadership action/behavior identified in the research findings.

12:00-1:00 Lunch (slide 20)

Presenter Notes: Dismiss the group for lunch and explain what time they will need to be back in their seats for the afternoon session.

1:00-2:30 Review and discuss research findings (slide 21)

Presenter Notes: Continue reviewing the number of occurrences identified in Handout Three and Handout Four and identify and discuss the second leadership action/behavior identified in the research findings.

2:30-2:45 Afternoon break (slide 22)

Presenter Notes: Dismiss the group for the afternoon break. Explain where restrooms are located and what time they need to be back in their seats for the next session.

2:45-4:00 Review and discuss Top 3 findings (slide 23, 24, & 25)

Presenter Notes: Welcome the group back from their afternoon break. Ask attendees to continue reviewing the number of occurrences from Handout Three and Handout Four. Ask attendees to identify the third leadership action/behavior identified in the research and compare the top three from the research to their identified top three form Day One activities. Recap the activities and discoveries from the first two days of the professional development training clarify the start time for day three and then dismiss the attendees.

Day 3:

8:00-8:30 Welcome and continental breakfast (slide 25)

Presenter Notes: Welcome attendees back for day three of the 3-day professional development. Explain where the sign-in sheet is located and where the morning refreshments are located.

8:30-10:00 Review Day One and Day Two discoveries, explore all research findings (slide 26, 27, & 28)

Presenter Notes: Ask attendees to get out of their seat and locate a new teammate for day three activities. Once they have located their new teammate, discuss their discoveries from day one and day two with their new teammate. Share any new discoveries with the total group. Ask each attendee to select one of the identified leadership actions/behaviors from the research findings and read it aloud to all attendees, then explain what that means to them personally. Continue this activity until all research identified leadership actions/behaviors have been read aloud.

10:00-10:15 Morning break (slide 29)

Presenter Notes: Dismiss the group for the morning break. Explain where restrooms are located and what time they need to be back in their seats for the next session.

10:15-12:00 Discuss the importance of campus leadership (slide 30)

Presenter Notes: Pass out Handout Five to attendees and read aloud the handout to attendees. Openly discuss with the total group how the excerpt from the research findings could influence classroom instruction.

Handout Five: Excerpt from Research Findings

As the instructional leader of the campus, the campus level principal must ensure that instructional practices and strategies utilized in the classrooms are successful at meeting the needs of students. The purpose of this study was to explore teachers' perceptions and experiences of how campus-level leadership behaviors influenced instructional practices and strategies in the classroom. The data provided by the seven participants of this study identified three themes. Teachers believed the PLC meetings offered guidance about teaching and instructional activities. Teachers believed that positive and supportive classroom presence by administrators influenced their teaching and instructional activities. Teachers believed that tracking student data influenced their teaching and instructional activities. Participant 2 emphasized that discussions in the weekly PLC meetings included recognition of student needs in the different grade levels and how each grade level could support student needs in another grade level. Participant 2 and Participant 7 expressed the importance of the principal's presence in the classrooms and how important the ongoing regular instructional feedback was to their classroom instruction. Participant 7 emphasized how the confidence of the principal was encouraging and that being empowered to be a decision-maker in the classroom made them all better teachers.

12:00-1:00 Lunch (slide 31)

Presenter Notes: Dismiss the group for lunch and explain what time they will need to be back in their seats for the afternoon session.

1:00-2:30 Review all research findings, set personal goals (slide 32)

Presenter Notes: Welcome the group back for the afternoon session. Recap the findings from Handout Three and Handout Four. Provide the attendees with an opportunity to individually reflect on the information from the professional development and to establish their personal goals for the 2019-2020 school year.

2:30-2:45 Afternoon break (slide 33)

Presenter Notes: Dismiss the group for the afternoon break. Explain where restrooms are located and what time they need to be back in their seats for the next session.

2:45-4:00 Share personal goals, create follow-up meeting schedule, recap 3-day training (slide 34 & 35)

Presenter Notes: Welcome the group back for the final segment of the 3-day professional development session. Ask attendees to share their personal goals for the upcoming 2019-2020 school year with the total group. Ask attendees to openly discuss and establish a follow-up meeting schedule for future meetings during the 2019-2020 school year. Thank attendees for their time and dedication to education, ask them to complete the Professional Development Appraisal Form and leave it on their table, then dismiss them.

Professional Development Evaluation Form

Name__________________________________ **Date**___________________________

(Please Circle One Response)

How would you rate the overall quality of the PD?	Excellent	Good	Fair
How well did the presenter state the objectives?	Excellent	Good	Fair
How well did the presenter engage participants?	Excellent	Good	Fair
What is your overall rating of the presenter?	Excellent	Good	Fair
How effective were the handouts?	Excellent	Good	Fair

How will you use what you have learned?

What was the most useful part of this professional development? Why?

What was the least useful part of this professional development? Why?

What additional professional development/support do you need?

Slide PowerPoint to be presented at the 3-day Professional Development

Campus Leadership Actions and Behaviors

Day One:

- Continental Breakfast
- Sign-In

Campus Leadership Actions and Behaviors

Welcome

- Introductions
- Objectives
- Expectations

Campus Leadership Actions and Behaviors

Welcome

Professional Development for Campus Administrators

3 Day Training 2019

Campus Leadership Actions and Behaviors

Teams

- Pick your partner for today's activities
- Select who will be your team's scribe

Campus Leadership Actions and Behaviors

- Discuss with your partner three things you each believe are critical for a campus leader
- Write down your team's Top 3

Campus Leadership Actions and Behaviors

Share Your Top 3

- Each team will share their Top 3
- Collectively as a group select the group's Top 3

Campus Leadership Actions and Behaviors

Break

- Short Break
10:00-10:15

Campus Leadership Actions and Behaviors

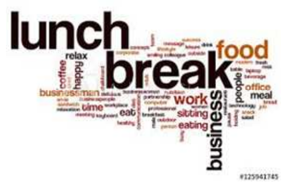
Welcome Back

- Introduce the Research Findings of Top Actions and Behaviors
- Provide attendees with individual 3-ring binders containing research findings
- Discussion

Campus Leadership Actions and Behaviors

Lunch

12:00-1:00



Campus Leadership Actions and Behaviors

Welcome Back

- Review of the group's Top 3
- Compare the group's Top 3 with the research findings

Campus Leadership Actions and Behaviors

Role Play

- One team member will be the teacher and one will be the administrator
- Role play one of the group's Top 3
- Role Play one of the research findings top actions or behaviors

Campus Leadership Actions and Behaviors

Break

2:30-2:45

Campus Leadership Actions and Behaviors

Welcome Back

- Switch roles and role play a second of the Group's Top 3
  - Role play a second of the research findings top actions or behaviors

Campus Leadership Actions and Behaviors

Group Discussion

Dismissal

4:00

Campus Leadership Actions and Behaviors

Day Two:

- Welcome
- Continental Breakfast
- Sign-In

Campus Leadership Actions and Behaviors

Pick a new teammate

- Regroup with your new teammate
- Discuss your personal Day One discoveries with your new teammate

Campus Leadership Actions and Behaviors

Open Discussion

- Participants will share their Day One discoveries with the entire group

Campus Leadership Actions and Behaviors

Break

- Short Break

10:00-10:15

Campus Leadership Actions and Behaviors

Open Binders

- Discuss the importance of the first leadership action/behavior identified in the research findings

Campus Leadership Actions and Behaviors

Lunch

12:00-1:00

Campus Leadership Actions and Behaviors

Welcome Back

- Review the first leadership action/behavior discussed
- Discuss the importance of the second leadership action/behavior identified in the research findings

Campus Leadership Actions and Behaviors

Break

2:30-2:45

Campus Leadership Actions and Behaviors

Welcome Back

- Review the second leadership action/behavior identified in the research findings
- Discuss the importance of the third leadership action/behavior identified in the research findings

Campus Leadership Actions and Behaviors

Review

- Discuss and compare the group's Top 3 with the Top 3 identified in the research findings
- Recap
- Dismissal 4:00

Campus Leadership Actions and Behaviors

Day Three:
- Welcome
- Continental Breakfast
- Sign-In

Campus Leadership Actions and Behaviors

Pick a new teammate
- Regroup with your new teammate
- Discuss your personal Day One and Day Two discoveries with your new teammate

Campus Leadership Actions and Behaviors

Open Discussion

- Participants will share their Day One and Day Two discoveries with the entire group

Campus Leadership Actions and Behaviors

- Review the remaining leadership actions/behaviors identified in the research findings
- Discuss the importance of the campus leader's actions and behaviors relating to classroom instruction

Campus Leadership Actions and Behaviors

Break

- Short Break
10:00-10:15

Campus Leadership Actions and Behaviors

Welcome back

- Discuss the importance of the campus leader's actions and behaviors relating to classroom instruction

Campus Leadership Actions and Behaviors

Lunch

12:00-1:00

Campus Leadership Actions and Behaviors

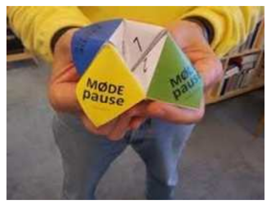
Welcome Back

- Recap the research findings
- Individually establish your measurable personal goals for the 2019-2020 school year

Campus Leadership Actions and Behaviors

Break

2:30-2:45



Campus Leadership Actions and Behaviors

Welcome Back

- Share your personal goals with the group
- Discussion of goals
- Establish dates for future group meetings during the 2019-2020 school year

Campus Leadership Actions and Behaviors

Recap

- Review the importance of the campus leader's actions and behaviors on classroom instruction
- Dismissal 4:00

Appendix B: Interview Questions

Time of Interview:

Date:

Place:

Interviewer:

Interviewee:

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the project study and for signing the Informed Consent Form. The purpose of this study is to investigate elementary teachers' perceptions and experiences of principals' actions and the teacher's perceptions of how the principals' leadership influenced the instructional practices in classrooms. The data collected will be encrypted to protect the confidentiality of the interviewee and the interview should last approximately 30 minutes.

Section I

1. Did you work on the selected campus during the 2015-2016 school year?

☐ Yes

☐ No

2. Did you work on the selected campus for any number of years before, after, or both before and after the 2015-2016 school year?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Section II

RQ 1: What are the perceptions and experiences of teachers about how the building administrators offer guidance about teaching and instructional activities?

What did the campus principal do to provide all students the opportunity to learn the critical content of the curriculum?

What did the campus principal do to provide teachers opportunities to observe and discuss effective teaching?

What did the campus principal do to ensure that teacher teams and collaborative groups regularly interact to address common issues regarding curriculum, assessment, instruction, and the achievement of all students?

How did the campus principal manage the fiscal, operational, and technological resources of the school in a way that focuses on effective instruction and the achievement of all students?

What did the campus principal do to provide a clear vision as to how instruction should be addressed in the school?

RQ2: What are the perceptions of teachers about how the building administrators influenced their teaching and instructional activities to improve student performance?

What did the campus principal do to ensure clear and measurable goals are established and focused on critical needs regarding improving the achievement of individual students within the school?

What did the campus administrator do to ensure data are analyzed, interpreted, and used to regularly monitor progress toward school achievement goals?

What did the campus principal do to ensure clear and measurable goals are established and focused on critical needs regarding improving overall student achievement at the school level?

What did the campus principal do to ensure teachers are provided with job-embedded professional development that is directly related to their instructional growth goals?

What did the campus principal do to ensure teachers are provided with clear, ongoing evaluations of their pedagogical strengths and weaknesses that are based on multiple sources of data and are consistent with student achievement data?

How do the leadership skills of a campus principal influence the academic performance of the students on the campus?