

EFFECTIVE EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP SUPPORT STRUCTURES AND THEIR
IMPLICATIONS ON SECOND-ORDER CHANGE

A Dissertation

Presented to

The Faculty of the Education Department

Carson-Newman University

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the

Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

By

Amy Christine-McCormick Kunkle

March 2016

Abstract

Effective Educational Leadership Support Structures and their Implications on Second-Order Change

Amy Christine-McCormick Kunkle

School of Education, Carson-Newman University

March 2016

The purpose of this study was to construct a theoretical framework explaining the relationship between educational leaders' hands-on support and the implications of those support structures on second-order change. The qualitative study was conducted using semi-structured interviews with teachers from six schools to determine how various support structures benefitted them as instructors thereby impacting their perceptions of efficacy and producing subsequent systemic changes within their practice. Incorporating information gathered from the interviews, the desired outcome of research is for educational leaders to reflect on effective ways to provide hands-on support, resulting in second-order change that increases students' learning.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my family and friends for their continued love and support. In particular, I want to thank my mom and dad, Jean and Jim McCormick, my sister, Katie McCormick, my wonderful husband, Nathan, our “bear,” Raja, my amazing friends, Dr. Anju Singhal, Lindsay Brazier, Jennifer Arnold, and my outstanding mentors Dr. Catherine Thompson and Dr. Elizabeth Norton. Thank you for pushing me when I wanted to stop and for listening to me when I needed a shoulder to cry on. I would also like to thank my committee members, Dr. Brenda Dean, Dr. Patricia Murphree, and Dr. Amy Ross, for helping me by offering resources and guidance: I feel very blessed to have had the opportunity to work with and learn from each of you. Finally, I would like to thank all of the wonderful teaching mentors, professors, and friends who have helped to prepare and shape me over the years. This study is dedicated to all of the hard-working teachers and teacher leaders who strive each day to increase student learning and grow students into lifelong-thinkers and citizens of the world. I truly believe that teaching is the hardest profession: without it, no other professions would exist. Thank you for all that you do.

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	i
Acknowledgements	ii
List of Tables	v
1. Purpose and Organization	1
Statement of the Problem	2
Purpose and Significance of the Study	2
Research Questions	3
Rationale for the Study	4
The Researcher	5
Definition of Terms	6
Summary.....	8
2. Literature Review	9
Second-Order Change	9
Educational Leaders: Creating a Culture of Change	10
Creating a Common Vision	11
Building Efficacy to Increase Autonomy	14
Creating Reflective Practitioners.....	17
Leadership that Creates Second-Order Change.....	20
The TAP Elements of Success	25
Professional Development Opportunities.....	25
Ongoing Applied Professional Growth: Mentored Support.....	28
Instructionally Focused Accountability.....	30
Performance-Based Compensation	31
The Impact on Student Achievement	31
Summary.....	32
3. Research Methodology	34
Description of Qualitative Research.....	35
Description of the Specific Research Approach.....	35
Data Collection Process.....	36
Ethical Considerations.....	39
Data Analysis Procedures.....	40
Summary.....	41
4. Presentation of Findings	42
Participants	42
Findings	45
Research Question 1	45
Research Question 2	46
Research Question 3	47
Safe Learning Environments	48
Clear Expectations.....	51
Lead Learners Model.....	56
Reflective Conversations.....	60
Student-Focused	69
Discussion.....	75

Summary.....	76
5. Conclusions	77
Research Question 1	78
Research Question 2	79
Research Question 3	80
Broader Theoretical Issues	81
Implications	81
For Policymakers.....	82
For Administrators.....	82
For Teachers	83
For Leadership Teams	83
For TAP or Prospective TAP Schools.....	84
Limitations of the Process Used	84
Recommendations for Future Research.....	85
Summary.....	86
References	87
Appendices	94
Appendix A Email to Principals Regarding Research Collection.....	94
Appendix B Email to Teachers Regarding Research Collection.....	96
Appendix C Research Consent Form: Teacher Interviews	98
Appendix D Semi-Structured Interview Protocol with Teachers.....	101
Appendix E Interview Guide: Interview Questions	103
Appendix F Email to Teachers Regarding Transcriptions	106
Vita	108

List of Tables

Table 4.1: Demographics of Teacher Interviews.....44

 **CARSON-NEWMAN**
UNIVERSITY

Dissertation Approval

Student Name/ CNU ID: Amy Christine Kunkle/0254516

Dissertation Title: Effective Educational Leadership Support Structures and their Implications on

Second-Order Change

This dissertation has been approved and accepted by the faculty of the Education Department, Carson-Newman University, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree, Doctor of Education.

Dissertation Committee:

Signatures: (Print and Sign)

Brenda Dean  Dissertation Chair

Patricia G. Murphree Digitally signed by Patricia G. Murphree
DN: cn=Patricia G. Murphree, o=Carson Newman University,
ou, email=pmurphree@cn.edu, c=US
Date: 2016.04.01 16:36:20 -0400 Methodologist Member

Amy Ross  Content Member

Approved by the Dissertation Committee Date: April 1, 2016

I hereby grant permission to the Education Department, Carson-Newman University, to reproduce this research in part or in full for professional purposes, with the understanding that in no case will it be for financial profit to any person or institution.

Signature *Amey Kumbale*
Date *April 1, 2016*

CHAPTER 1

PURPOSE AND ORGANIZATION

Go to the people,
Live among the people,
Learn from them,
Love them.
Start with what they know,
Build on what they have.
But of the best leaders,
When their task is accomplished,
Their work is done,
The people will remark,
“WE HAVE DONE IT OURSELVES.”
-Old Chinese Proverb

There has been a significant amount of research conducted to demonstrate a correlation between principals’ practices and their impact on the school. Specific leadership characteristics have been found to build a positive school environment with efficacious teachers and motivated students (Ubben, Hughes, & Norris, 2011). School leadership has been identified as secondary only to classroom instruction as a school-related factor contributing to student learning (Nettles & Herrington, 2007). But how can principals along with other strong instructional leaders support teachers to refine their craft? How can these leaders then work to change teachers’ perceptions of transformation and efficacy, thus creating second-order change in their classrooms and buildings? This study sought to examine how strong instructional leaders can impact teachers’ perceptions of support, growth, and learning, therefore creating second-order change within schools. With the proper support, everyone can grow, and by doing so, students will

benefit. Ultimately, positively impacting student learning should be every instructional leader's fundamental goal.

Statement of the Problem

Many new teachers feel isolated and overwhelmed. In fact, a study from the National Educational Association found that approximately half of new US teachers are expected to resign within their first five years of practice (Lambert, 2006). Leadership practices can impact how teachers feel about their jobs by decreasing job-related stress, thus decreasing the teacher-burnout rate. According to Wood and McCarthy (2002), when work tension causes teachers to experience systems of burnout, there are serious implications on the teachers' health and happiness, thus impacting their interactions with students, other professionals, and vested stakeholders, such as parents and community members. It should be the goal of all educational leaders to assist teachers so that they remain in the profession, feel more efficacious in order to positively impact student learning and outcomes, become more effective in their individual teaching practices, and find satisfaction within their schools and the field of education. Effective support structures should garner positive outlooks, increase perceptions of efficacy, lessen stress, and eventually lead to more contented students. With said support structures in place, systematic shifts can occur, thus creating positive second-order change within schools. The intent of the researcher was to explore how educational leaders can implement hands-on support structures designed to help teachers become more efficacious and effective in their classrooms thereby positively impacting second-order change within buildings.

Purpose and Significance of the Study

The purpose of this study is to construct a theoretical framework explaining the relationship between educational leaders' hands-on support methods and the implications of

those support structures on second-order change. The study will add to the current research by further exploring the ways that educational leaders, including instructional coaches, building-level administration, and instructional leaders within the building, can support teachers and impact their perceptions of support and efficacy. Considering the significant turnover rate amongst new teachers, coupled with the increasing demands on teachers, the need for teacher support continues to grow (Lambert, 2006). The researcher explored ways that effective educational leaders support teachers in addition to the implications of those support structures as they relate to second-order change. The central questions of the qualitative study included the following:

- Why did a specific support structure work?
- What did the educational leader do to make it work?
- How did educational leaders get the teachers to accept said support structure?
- Why did this work in some cases and not others?

Research Questions

The research questions were the following:

- 1) What educational support structures are perceived by teachers to be the most supportive and effective?
- 2) How does the type of support provided to teachers influence their perception of efficacy?
- 3) How was second-order change created as a result of the support provided?

The research data collected can then be used to further investigate why the implementation of some hands-on support structures do not work and how gender, years of experience, and cultural factors may play a role in the effectiveness of the support structures.

Rationale for the Study

The current theoretical research correlates principal leadership to teacher efficacy and effectiveness. This study examined grounded theory in order to determine how the implementation of different support structures impacts teacher efficacy. An extensive amount of research has been conducted to examine the school administrator's role as an instructional leader and the role's subsequent impact on the changes in daily practices that lead to improved student performance (Vanderhaar, Munoz, & Rodosky, 2006). Additionally, research found a strong correlation between teacher efficacy and student performance (Henson, 2001). Shaughnessy (2004) discovered that teachers' confidence in their ability to positively influence student learning is vital to the realization of their success or failure due to the teachers' behaviors when preparing to instruct. Sanders and Rivers (1996) estimated that the students of the most effective teachers, or those in the highest quintile using the value-added model, have learning gains four times greater than students of the least effective teachers, or those in the lowest quintile. In fact, Marzano (2003) determined that there is a 54-percentile point difference in achievement gains between students with the most effective teachers when compared to students with the least effective teachers. Therefore, it can be concluded that an effective teacher is an individual who is able to affect great gains in student achievement (Rice, 2010). While individual teachers can vary in their own effectiveness throughout their careers, particularly within the first five years, effective teachers produce strong student results in correlation to student growth.

Research, however, has not revealed how educational leaders can provide hands-on support to teachers in order to enable their growth and development. Hands-on support may include modeling lessons, team-teaching, individualized coaching, providing specific feedback, collaborative planning, and facilitating reflection. The research repeatedly showed that the

principal is the catalyst for what happens in the school and is tasked with assisting teachers by providing professional development opportunities, a clear and consistent vision, and a positive school culture (Fullan, 2011; Turan & Bektas, 2013; Ubben et al., 2011). The research, however, is limited on how strong educational leaders can affect teachers' perceptions of support, growth, and learning by being hands-on assistants and collaborators. The need is clear; Rosenholtz (1989) correlated teachers' workplace environments with teaching quality, determining that teachers who felt supported in their continuing professional learning and classroom practice were more dedicated and effective than those who did not receive such affirmation (Hord, 1997). Through confirmation and feedback, individuals become increasingly aware of their own values and develop a deeper understanding of their own purposes; they are then more open to new experiences, have an internal locus of evaluation, are able to work with new elements and concepts, and exhibit a lack of fear (Ubben et al., 2011). Therefore, this study specifically examined the link between how the implementation of particular support structures influences teacher efficacy, thus creating second-order change.

The Researcher

Over the past ten years in education, the researcher has worked in many different roles with various leadership experiences and responsibilities. The researcher completed a yearlong internship in a single classroom, worked fulltime as a career elementary classroom teacher for four years, a mentor classroom teacher in a school implementing The System for Teacher and Student Advancement (TAP) for one year, a TAP master teacher at a Pre-K-5th grade school for two years, and a TAP regional master teacher for two years, working with a variety of schools grades Pre-K-12th. During this time, the researcher extensively worked with five superintendents, fourteen building-level principals, twelve assistant principals, six instructional

coaches, twenty-one master teachers, and forty-seven mentor teachers in addition to the countless other instructional leaders with whom the researcher has served as leader, follower, or mentor. While working with these instructional leaders, along with the hundreds of teachers that they have supported, the researcher encountered many different kinds of instructional leaders along with a variety of implemented support structures. The researcher has observed characteristics of people who motivated staff and created positive culture changes in buildings, and adversely, the researcher has seen how a lack of support for teachers can lead to a decline in morale and an increase in staff transiency.

Definition of Terms

- 1) Effective teaching—One’s ability to demonstrate at least one year’s growth for all students (NIET, 2015). For this study, teacher and student gains were measured using teacher observation data, teacher responsibility surveys, and student improvement data using the Education Value-Added Assessment System (EVAAS), which measures students’ growth over time using individual student projections (SAS, 2015).
- 2) Efficacy—One’s belief that he/she has the ability to create change. Efficacious teachers have an internal locus of self-control which allows them to perform better due to their belief that they have the capability to grow and change (Ubben et al., 2011).
- 3) Grounded theory—A systematic approach for utilizing data from social science to generate theory. The grounded theory method encourages researchers to generate their own theories, rather than simply verifying the theories of those who had come before them. Thus, grounded theory explains a social phenomenon while being grounded in data relating to a topic (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).
- 4) Hands-on support structures—Support for teachers that may include model lessons, team-

teaching, individualized coaching, providing specific feedback, collaborative planning, and facilitation of reflection (Fullan, 2011; Rowley, 2009; Ubben et al., 2011).

- 5) Instructional leaders—Individuals who support teacher development and lead teachers by example. Instructional leaders may include, but are not limited to instructional coaches, master teachers, mentor teachers, building-level administration, and other vested instructional leaders within the building (National Institute for Excellence in Teaching [NIET], 2015).
- 6) Master Teacher—A teaching professional housed in a specific school tasked with supporting, coaching, evaluating, and providing meaningful professional development for teachers (NIET, 2015).
- 7) Mentor Teacher—A classroom teacher who additionally provides support for teachers by coaching, evaluating, and assisting with the delivery of professional development for teachers (NIET, 2015).
- 8) National Institute for Excellence in Teaching (NIET)—A national school reform organization that recognizes that teachers are the most significant school-based factors impacting students' learning. Therefore, NIET works to ensure that highly skilled, strongly motivated, and competitively compensated teachers are placed in every classroom (NIET, 2015).
- 9) Second-order change—Systematic change that irreversibly impacts the culture and practices within the building. Second-order change requires new knowledge and skills in order to create complex change that surpasses existing paradigms. Once second-order change is put into practice, it fundamentally changes the way that things are done, making it impossible to go back to the way things were (The National Academy for

Academic Leadership, 2015).

10) The System for Teacher and Student Advancement (TAP)—Launched in 1999, TAP is a “comprehensive educator effectiveness model that restructures and revitalizes the teaching profession by providing teachers with powerful opportunities for career advancement, ongoing professional development, a fair evaluation system, and performance-based compensation” (NIET, 2015, “Our Mission,” para. 4).

Summary

This study is organized into five chapters. The first chapter included an introduction including the background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose and significance of the study, research questions, rationale for the study, researcher information, and definitions of pertinent terms. Chapter 2 will contain a review of the related literature. Chapter 3 will introduce the methodology used to examine how leaders’ hands-on support impacts second-order change. Chapter 4 will explain the data collection and findings, and Chapter 5 will provide the conclusion and summarization.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

When considering what will create lasting change, one must first examine what will motivate and inspire the staff. Extrinsic motivators have limited effectiveness and can actually be detrimental to success if used incorrectly (Fullan, 2011). Fullan argued that motivating others by helping them realize effectiveness and become successful is the best way to increase intrinsic motivation and build efficacy within staff. Effective leaders influence others to realize their potential, which ensures that their organizations run more efficiently and successfully (Ubben et al., 2011). These motivational leaders must be informed, inspirational, and able to translate their vision for the school to run effectively. School leadership has been identified as an essential school-related factor contributing to student learning; it is secondary only to classroom instruction (Nettles & Herrington, 2007). Therefore, if educational leaders can keep everyone motivated to improve student achievement and increase student learning, the school will have a greater sense of community and purpose, thus creating systemic change by increasing the desire to work together to accomplish educational goals.

Second-Order Change

Systemic change can only take place if all stakeholders are invested in the transformation (Wagner, 1993). Bass and Avolio (1994) originally presented the first- and second-order change theory, which outlined that leaders must attend to managerial tasks before they can proceed to transformational lasting change. During first-order change, leaders are primarily concerned with

understanding subordinates' needs, providing them with accolades for their accomplishments and contributions, and helping them understand the connection between their personal goals and the goals of the organization. "It is only after this is accomplished, Bass and Avolio suggest, that the leader really inspires others to greater values awareness, encourages their commitment to the goals of the organization, or fosters their personal or professional growth" (Ubben et al., 2011, p. 10). Therefore, after first-order change becomes established, educational leaders may begin to transform organizations and build capacity, thus becoming leaders tasked with creating second-order lasting change.

Ubben et al. (2011) contended that the very term "transformational" suggests significant change. Thus, transformational leaders that are concerned with second-order change work to elevate both followers and leaders to higher levels of motivation and values in order to create a shift in attitude and purpose that results in a change in behavior. Subsequently, transformational leaders are considered leaders for the "moment only" since their ultimate goal is to build capacity within the building wherein teacher leaders may share leadership.

In order for second-order change to transfer, an intentional plan for the organization of the process should be developed and clearly communicated (Adelman & Taylor, 2007). The educational leaders in the building are charged with the development and organization of the desired changes, but without the transfer of responsibility to staff and eventually students, the modifications will never adhere in order to create a change of culture. Effective educational leaders are necessary to ensure that the systemic changes are understood and embraced if pervasive second-order change is to be achieved (Ubben et al., 2011).

Educational Leaders: Creating a Culture of Change

Research on school effectiveness found that educational leaders are the key to an

effective school by being the people responsible for and empowered to organize the entire school and propel it forward (DuFour & Mattos, 2013). The most effective school leaders are those who establish a positive atmosphere in order to build a sound school culture (Turan & Bektas, 2013). Cohesion must be built amongst teachers, parents, students, and administration to build a strong sense of community (Hord, 1997). An effective leader must develop a positive school culture centered on a common purpose. The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) identified six professional standards for principals, the second of which was that the principal should be “an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth” (1996, p. 12). The second CCSSO standard means that school leaders must keep everyone focused on the most important thing found in the school: the students. The community needs to remember that they are there to promote lifelong learning, and its focus should always be brought back to that (Henson, 2011).

[Educational leaders] should believe in, value, and be committed to student learning as a fundamental purpose of schooling; the proposition that all students can learn; the variety of ways in which students can learn; lifelong learning for self and others; professional development as an integral part of school improvement; the benefits that diversity brings to the school community; a safe and supportive learning environment; and preparing students to be contributing members of society (Ubben et al., 2011, p. 87).

Creating a Common Vision

A strong sense of community focused on student learning must be strategically built and maintained. In order for the educational leaders to communicate the ideals necessary to build a sense of community, it is essential that the leaders are efficient communicators (Ubben et al.,

2011). In order to strengthen a positive school culture, leaders must celebrate success, look for opportunities to relay stories about achievement and collaboration, and use a clear and common language to bolster the dedication of staff and students (Turan & Bektas, 2013). For people to be motivated, they must perceive that others see their potential and appreciate their contributions (Ubben et al., 2011). Recognizing and rewarding accomplishments, celebrating school achievements, and providing affirmation and feedback on a regular basis support motivation. Research indicated that the human brain processes positive and negative comments in different hemispheres, and therefore the negative comments tend to resonate more than the positive remarks (Tugend, 2012). Negative emotions generally require more thinking, and data are processed more thoroughly than positive emotions (Tugend, 2012). Therefore, people tend to focus more on unpleasant events, and they use stronger words to describe them. “Through affirmation and feedback, individuals become increasingly aware of their own values and develop a deeper understanding of their own purposes” (Ubben et al., 2011 p. 26). The confidence and vision for their purpose helps empower teachers and allows them to feel more efficacious and autonomous.

Efficacious individuals are able to set and work towards rigorous goals. Therefore, if effective leaders can communicate common goals clearly and frequently while building efficacy, everyone will feel as though they are working for a common vision (Ubben et al., 2011). It is extremely important to be able to clearly and succinctly describe what needs to be done (Prive, 2012). The leader may know exactly what he or she wants or thinks, but if he or she cannot clearly express the vision to others, everyone will not be working toward the same goal. Without that clear explanation of what the leader wants or envisions, the common school vision cannot be clearly communicated to all stakeholders, and people become easily frustrated. Therefore, an

effective leader must develop a positive school culture centered on a common purpose (Protheroe, 2008). He or she should elicit the achievement of all students by promoting, encouraging, and sustaining a school culture and instructional setting conducive to student learning and staff professional development (Fullan, 2011).

Consequently, the school leader must keep everyone focused on a clearly identified and personally meaningful school vision to keep working towards a common purpose. Whatever the vision is, whether it is to create exciting learning experiences that motivate individuals to reach their maximum potential as life-long learners or to generate positive learning environments for all students so they can discover more about themselves and the world surrounding them, the idea behind the vision acts as a powerful principle (Calder, 2006). In order to be more effective, educational leaders should invest time and effort in "selling" their vision to gain buy-in. They should believe in, value, and be dedicated to the idea that the fundamental objective of any school is to facilitate student learning (Rice, 2010). School leaders need to have confidence that all students can learn, and they should know the variety of ways that students can learn. They must be proponents for lifelong learning for themselves and others; therefore, they should include professional development as a fundamental part of their school improvement plan (Fullan, 2011). Additionally, they have a duty to value the benefits of diversity in order to celebrate all types of individuals. Finally, they should help create and maintain a safe and supportive learning environment while preparing students to become contributing members of society (Ubben et al., 2011).

Effective educational leaders are the vital solution to creating comprehensive and sustainable school reform (Fullan, 2011). The most effective leaders have a clear vision of how the school can serve its students; have clearly aligned resources and priorities organized to

support their vision; and can engage other vested stakeholders, within and outside the school, to achieve the goals embedded in their vision (Vanderhaar, et al., 2006). If the leader can keep everyone focused on how everything in the school comes back to those essential ideals, then the school will have a greater sense of community and purpose, therefore creating more of a desire to for everyone to work together to accomplish their educational goals (Calder, 2006).

Building Efficacy to Increase Autonomy

Effective leaders motivate and encourage staff to reach their fullest potential. Autonomy is one of the top factors in overall effectiveness (Fullan, 2011). Fullan (2011) noted that people need to feel autonomy in order to exercise judgment while trying new things in order to become more invested in the process and in turn own their experiences; this will then help build intrinsic motivation. Teachers who are empowered think that they can reach their desired goals because they have an increased sense of teacher efficacy wherein they believe that they can make a difference (Ubben et al., 2011). Vested individuals are open to new experiences, have an internal locus of evaluation, are able to work with new elements and concepts, and exhibit a lack of fear. Maslow (1954) described self-actualized behavior wherein one can seek personal growth and can pursue inner talent (Maslow, 1954; McLeod, 2014).

Research suggested a strong correlation between teacher efficacy and student performance (Henson, 2001). Rosenholtz (1989) determined that teachers who received support were more dedicated and effective than those who did not receive support (Hord, 1997). In the study, support included teacher networks, collaboration among coworkers, and increased professional roles which increased teacher efficacy towards addressing students' needs. With intrinsic motivation in place, Rosenholtz (1989) found that efficacious teachers were therefore more likely to implement new classroom behaviors, make gains with students, stay in the

teaching profession, and create positive change within the building. Jerald (2007) noted subsequent teacher behaviors were in turn related to a teacher's sense of efficacy. Teachers with a higher sense of efficacy tend to have better planning and organization skills, are more open to new ideas and implement more new methods to more effectively meet the needs of their students, are more persistent and resilient when things are challenging, are less critical of students when they make errors, and are less inclined to refer difficult students to special education (Rice, 2010). Subsequently, teachers who feel that they have the power to teach more are actually preparing themselves to, in fact, teach more (Hoy, Sweetland, & Smith, 2002; Shaughnessy, 2004). As reported by Merton in 1948, teachers who think that they can teach more will self-fulfill that prophecy in order to become more effective educators. The self-fulfilling prophecy states that whatever prediction is made at the beginning of a new task or role affects one's behavior in such a way that the individual essentially ensures the prediction comes to fruition (Merton, 1948). The results translate in several ways. For example, if a teacher receives a student that he or she perceives as "low," then that teacher may have lower expectations for that student, thus planning and teaching that student less. On the end of the spectrum, if a teacher believes a student to have outstanding potential, he or she may plan more, teach more, and expect more of that student, thus ensuring that the student, in fact, learns more. During an interview with Woolfolk, a longtime researcher of teacher efficacy, Shaughnessy (2004) found that teachers who have a strong sense of efficacy and are willing to act because of it are more liable to have students who learn. Efficacious teachers set high goals, persist, and try new strategies when others are not working in order to overcome obstacles and become more successful (Shaughnessy, 2004).

For staff, there have been several positive outcomes observed in the workplace when efficacy has been honed and cultivated by leaders within the building. There has been a recorded reduction of the isolation of teachers, an increased dedication to the goals of the school and increased enthusiasm in working to bolster the mission, and shared accountability for the growth of students as well as a group ownership of students' success (Henson, 2001). Additionally, the teachers participated in more professional learning opportunities to improve teaching methods and classroom practices by planning for effective teaching and learning. Furthermore, there was an increased understanding of the content teachers were expected to teach and the parts they play in assisting students to achieve high expectations. Subsequently, there was a higher probability that teachers were informed, professionally transformed, and encouraged. Finally, there was more satisfaction in the profession, higher morale, and lower rates of absenteeism. The feeling of empowerment also translated to the classroom where teachers were able to accomplish more at a more rapid pace, there was a commitment to making considerable and continuing adjustments, and there was a higher probability of assuming fundamental systemic change (Hipp, 1996).

But what can instructional leaders do to ensure teacher efficacy? The answer lies in part with the roles and responsibilities discussed previously which deal with communicating a common vision and working together to build a common student-centered goal with support structures to help the goal become a reality (Protheroe, 2008). The educational leaders in the building are responsible for building collective efficacy, which involves teachers who think that they can make a difference by working together. Principals of schools with high levels of teacher efficacy contributed to the creation of a shared vision focused on establishing a student-centered atmosphere (Hipp, 1996). Additionally, Hoy et al., (2002) determined that collective

efficacy is a more significant factor than socioeconomic status in relation to school achievement due to the fact that it is easier to change the collective efficacy of a school than it is to influence the socioeconomic status of the school.

Creating Reflective Practitioners

It is not an easy task to build a community of learners who are interested in examining areas of weakness to become stronger practitioners, but that is exactly the goal educational leaders who are working to build efficacy and to create more reflective and intentional staff members. Effective leaders challenge the status quo of their staff members by pushing them to reach their highest potential (Fullan, 2011). These leaders work with other vested individuals to study how to grow and renew both individuals and organizations. It is then their job to facilitate group members so that the group can learn together and construct meaning and knowledge collectively and collaboratively (Ubben et al., 2011). During the facilitation process, it is important to model that no one in the group and the group itself will never “fully arrive,” showing instead that there are continually opportunities for growth. The teachers and administrators within the community constantly seek and share learning and then proceed based on what they learn. Their primary objective is to increase their effectiveness as professionals so that their students may benefit (Hord, 1997).

While facilitating a process to foster reflective conversations, the first thing that must be established is fluid interaction between all members. The foundation of a community is that there are frequent opportunities for individuals to come together and interact to build their knowledge and skills (Ubben et al., 2011). Often there are barriers to people interacting in a group because people feel uncomfortable with being vulnerable, but it is essential that a safe environment is maintained for all members to be transparent and open to new growth so the

community can work together to have a deeper level of exchange which will, in turn, allow for growth (McLeod, 2014). A safe environment must be strategically and purposefully built to allow for interactions that will cultivate growth.

The second consideration when facilitating reflective conversations is to ensure that there is a clear and meaningful purpose. Purpose unites the group in a way that moves the meeting from a mere gathering of individuals into a community with defined goal (Ubben et al., 2011). Each person must see the value in this goal to become committed toward its achievement, and so it is the reflective facilitator's job to clearly communicate that vision as well as make it personally meaningful and relevant for each of the stakeholders (Fullan, 2011; Ubben et al., 2011). Without a clearly shared purpose with clarification of one's values, it is difficult to lead with credibility and to maintain the vision required for leadership.

Sharing vision is not just agreeing with a good idea; it is a particular mental image of what is important to an individual and to an organization. Staff are encouraged not only to be involved in the process of developing a shared vision but to use that vision as a guidepost in making decisions about teaching and learning in the school. (Hord, 1997, para. 19)

The third thing that reflection facilitators must do is to develop a level of interdependence within the group. Interdependence results from the group's commitment to a shared purpose (Ubben et al., 2011). Without a strong sense of community, the learning community will never evolve. "Support, security, and friendship form the foundation for knowledge of acquisition" (Ubben et al., 2011, p. 26). The same principal can be found in Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (Maslow, 1954). People must feel a sense of belongingness and love to be able to move into a higher level of self-actualization. The basic social needs must be met first (Maslow, 1954;

McLeod, 2014). By implementing a safe environment, teachers will perceive that they can be transparent to share their successes and failures collectively in order to increase their learning.

The last thing that educational leaders who are working to build reflective practitioners must do is to foster individual growth for all individuals, including themselves. In the best learning communities, individuals become benefactors, growing in a climate of support and security (Ubben et al., 2011). The dialogue and discussion challenges stakeholders to grow and provides a sustaining force for development and progression. Again, this cannot take place without a sense of safety and trust between all learning community members (McLeod, 2014). The educational leader must develop an increased trust to bring about higher levels of enhanced learning.

Another way to think about the facilitation of practitioners' development is to describe these vested stakeholders as a community of reflective professionals who are continuously inquiring and improving. Just as with any craft, one must gain knowledge from mistakes that have been made in order to continually strive to strengthen areas in which he or she may be weak. No one likes to be told what to do, but if one can help provide analysis and insight through meaningful discussion, then the positive ripple effect on autonomy and effectiveness can be substantial. Michael Fullan described that one cannot make people change, but successful change happens when the masses get involved and the leader works with all individuals, both those that agree with him and those that do not, while showing impressive empathy to reach all individuals (2011). "Managers do things right and leaders do the right things-but *enlightened and empowered* leaders do the right things in the right way and for the right reasons" (Houston, Blankstein, & Cole, 2007, Chapter 1, Para 19).

The most effective way for leaders to become enlightened and empowered is to begin consciously reflecting on their own competencies while developing their personal emotional intelligence. The four stages of conscious competence link to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1954), wherein individuals move up the competency model as they become more aware of their skills and needs. Mayer, Savoy, Caruso, and Sitarenios (2001) argued that the first hallmark of intelligence is abstract reasoning and that abstract reasoning is directly influenced by how information is input in order to be internalized and processed. Therefore, how aware one is of his or her emotional responses and the responses of others will have a direct impact on how he or she internalizes information in order to make decisions. So if one can think of other's perspectives and motives, it may help that individual to make fair and compassionate decisions (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2005). This supports the notion that by demonstrating empathy towards others, one will not only be able to come to fair conclusions, but he or she will also be able to communicate decisions in a way that motivates others and encourages them to become reflective and empathetic themselves.

Leadership that Creates Second-Order Change

Personality, values, desired outcomes, and personal principles generally dictate which types of leadership styles educational leaders normally apply. However, through a careful examination of the facets of the types of leadership styles and therefore the outcomes and effects on employees, one can fully understand the implications of leadership styles and can then employ different leadership skills and traits to positively impact working environments (Hallinger, 2003). Effective educational leaders employ a number of leadership skills in order to build a learning environment that is centered on growth and performance (Fullan, 2011).

Arguably, the most important element to consider is how to motivate workers to become a community of workers whose main focus is to grow.

Research indicated that specific leadership philosophies and tendencies impact leaders' abilities to transcend their specific roles in order to effectively translate their vision by creating a group of vested stakeholders who are interested in carrying out common goals (Fullan, 2011). The creation of a common culture depends on the presence and association of a group of people interacting with each other. Leaders must accept a collegial relationship with staff to share leadership, power, and decision-making (Onorato, 2013). While there are many effective leadership styles, transformational is most widely recognized as the leadership for change (Hallinger, 2003). A transformational leader inspires others to follow, has a vision and passion that he/she can achieve great things, and gets things done by injecting energy and enthusiasm. An effective leader put excitement and energy into everything and he/she cares about each person in the professional learning community and wants each member to succeed. "In order to create followers, the Transformational Leader has to be very careful in creating trust, and their personal integrity is a critical part of the package that they are selling. In effect, they are selling themselves as well as the vision" ("Transformational Leadership," 2015, Selling the vision, para. 4). These innovative leaders encourage others and push them to do more than they ever thought that they could (Onorato, 2013).

The most engaging leaders are those that build trust through transparency (Wang, 2011). The more honest and open the instructional leaders are, the more their teachers trust them, and the greater the sense of belonging and engagement from teachers (Bass & Riggio, 1995). Interdependence then results from the openness of the leader, which precedes the group's commitment to a shared purpose (Ubben et al., 2011).

Transforming leaders convert followers to disciples; they develop followers into leaders. They elevate the concerns of followers on Maslow's need hierarchy from needs for safety and security to needs for achievement and self actualization, increase their awareness and consciousness of what is really important, and move them to go beyond their own self-interest for the good of the larger entities to which they belong. The transforming leader provides followers with a cause around which they can rally. (Bass & Riggio, 1995, p. 467)

Many studies have recommended that educators implement a transformational teaching style due to its positive implications for instructional practices and student learning outcomes. In relation to how transformational leadership styles can impact individual student learning in a diverse setting, Harrison (2011) claimed that based on the existing literature, the implementation of transformational leadership in the educational field results in increased affective learning, student motivation, and student perceptions of teacher credibility. Oftentimes it is the students who are considered exceptional who need the most motivation and positive student-teacher relationships in order to stay on track with their studies. In fact, the dropout rate for students with disabilities is roughly twice that of general education students (Blackorby & Wagner, 1996). Additionally, in 2011, the graduation rate for Caucasian students was higher than that of African American and Hispanic students (National Center for Educational Statistics). The aforementioned statistics indicate that all of our students deserve the best leaders who elicit the best from those around them.

If students benefit from transformational leadership characteristics in order to rise to high expectations, then teachers can also be expected to benefit when working with transformational leaders. "Transformational instruction is positively correlated with lower faculty turnover rates,

higher levels of faculty job satisfaction, increased faculty commitment to university reform and change, and faculty empowerment” (Harrison, 2011, p. 97). Transformational leadership attempts to impact the conditions that directly influence the quality of curriculum and instruction presented to students in the classroom. It pursues variables in the change process, using strategies such as encouraging continuous learning amongst staff, sharing learning throughout the group, and working with the community to achieve more expansive organizational goals.

The characteristics of transformational leaders are not just those of effective leaders, they are also characteristics of leaders who are concerned with meeting the needs of diverse learners and exceptional students. By focusing on these skills and remembering the fundamentals, effective leaders can work to ensure that their organization runs smoothly to meet the needs of all students. There needs to be a focus on individualized learning by emphasizing what students can do and accommodating to assist students in that process as opposed to focusing on their limitations (Onorato, 2013). It takes a long time to create a school environment where people have a common vision, a focus on the best strategies to meet the individualized needs of the students, and a feeling of motivation and empowerment to meet the needs of all students and staff. Even so, when people can trust each other to work together for the common good for students, student achievement for all students can occur.

In order for this sort of systemic change to take place, leaders, staff, and vested stakeholders need to change the way they view things. Second-order change can only occur if there is an intentional plan for how the process will be organized and implemented (Adelman & Taylor, 2007). The process needs to start with a small sample group and then be brought out to the entire staff of vested stakeholders for it to be meaningful to the entire staff. The key to success starts with individuals being able to self-reflect and understand their own intentions as

well as where they should focus their attention (Mayer et al., 2001). By gaining everyone's perspectives, leaders will be able to clearly communicate all perceived strengths and weaknesses while building trust and a shared responsibility within the community. Effective leaders aspire to help open others to change in order to ultimately reach their professional goals. Therefore, in order to have others open to the goals so that they can be pervasive, everyone must be part of the assessment and construction of these changes using systematic steps.

Wagner (1993) described specific questions that must be analyzed to begin the philosophical and cultural shifts necessary for systemic second-order change. Leaders must first begin by honestly reflecting on their current strengths and weaknesses before moving to a goal. During this assessment, Wagner (1993) argued that self-awareness can only be obtained by looking past the numbers and asking other vested stakeholders about their perceptions of the organization's strengths and weaknesses in order to fully understand people's viewpoints, as well as, help them feel involved in the process. When analyzing the process using a holistic approach, after one reflects on where they are, they then determine what they want and how they are going to get there. Therefore, the next step is to determine what their vision is for a better school (Wagner, 1993). During this step, an honest discussion needs to take place to determine what everyone perceives are important core values. After determining the vision, priorities must be determined. A timeline must be determined in order to concentrate on specific objectives and narrow the focus. Once the priorities have been set, then the structures, skills, and resources must be determined in order to create an actionable plan for implementation.

By utilizing the aforementioned steps, educational leaders will be more able to clearly communicate and create a safe environment that can engender change, which will then empower their ability to effectively lead others (Adelman & Taylor, 2007). Throughout this process, it is

their task to collaborate and communicate with others by creating a trusting environment wherein everyone is valued, respected, trusted, and open to each other's ideas and experiences in order to learn from each other and grow together. They should constantly communicate where they are in relation to where they are going, always tying back to the bigger picture and the greater good, while expressing gratitude for those working to help achieve the desired goals (Calder, 2006).

The TAP Elements of Success

So, what can be done in order to help instructional leaders to create, communicate, and support stakeholders to reach a common goal focused on improving student achievement? A systemic approach must be implemented in order to clearly communicate the intentions and visions to others, as well as detail the steps necessary to achieve the goals. The TAP system has identified four core components, including professional development opportunities, ongoing applied professional growth, instructionally focused accountability, and performance-based compensation, which are used to place and keep top educators in the field. Through the implementation of these elements, educational leaders can support teachers as they work to improve their craft and develop professionally.

Professional Development Opportunities

One way to support teachers in helping them to accomplish educational goals is to create professional development opportunities wherein teachers are accorded the appropriate resources, time, and support required to best support students' learning. Effective leaders should be knowledgeable about instruction and how to support teachers with classroom content delivery (Barlow, Frick, Barker, & Phelps, 2014). Thus, leaders must be informed on the most current instructional strategies and standards, the most appropriate instructional materials, and expanded opportunities for professional development. Additionally, educational leaders are responsible for

ensuring that staff and faculty are conscious of the latest theories and practices in education through the implementation of appropriate professional development. The instructional leaders must be active members in the development and implementation of curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices (Birman, Desimone, Porter, & Garet, 2000). In order to achieve this, instructional leaders must be viewed as active participants in a community designed to improve student learning. The educational leaders should therefore be additionally well informed on the students within the school and how the students are progressing academically as well as socially (Fullan, 2011). Educational leaders must monitor the effectiveness of school procedures and their effect on student learning. Through this examination, staff members can recognize the positive impact that their daily procedures have on student learning and development. It can become easy for educational leaders to get mired by managerial issues, therefore losing insight into how classroom instruction impacts student learning and achievement. However, it is essential for staff to see the school as a community with a focus on working together to ensure student achievement (Calder, 2006). If teachers can view the educational leaders as part of committed team whose purpose is to work together to enhance student learning and achievement, they will be much more motivated and feel empowered to make a difference in their students' education.

The TAP model supports this theory by restructuring schools to provide in-house professional development that is ongoing, job-embedded, collaborative, student focused, and instructed by school-level knowledgeable professionals who develop teaching and learning strategies specifically designed for participants in that building (NIET, 2015). Engagement of the educators in the concepts allows the educators to not only become higher quality instructors, but also teach more confidently. An increase in confidence can lead to increases in student

achievement, more willingness and desire to become a leader within the school or system, and decreased burnout amongst educators (Birman et al., 2000; Fullan, 2011; Barlow et al., 2014). Research indicated that leaders should create the types of environments that promote desired behavior (Fullan, 2011). If educators want their students to feel more confident in order to take risks, to be positive leaders and role models within their community, and to become life-long learners, then educational leaders need to encourage school staff to adopt these same characteristics. Teachers who feel empowered to create change within their school will be more inclined to elicit higher expectations of themselves and their students.

There are many different ways to structure meaningful professional development opportunities. Matching the professional development to teacher needs and school needs, involving teachers in the activities, providing opportunities for active participants, providing sessions that are long term or ongoing, and having sessions led by high quality instructors are all ways to engage and motivate staff to participate in professional development opportunities (Fullan, 2011). Quality professional development opportunities should follow a structural pattern, form, duration, and participation in order to be effective (Birman et al., 2000). Additionally, the focus of professional development should be centered on meaningful content knowledge and application, active learning, and coherent information. If professional development opportunities are structured in that way, teachers are less likely to have burnout from professional development sessions; instead, they will feel rejuvenated (Bayar, 2014).

Based on the research provided by Bayar (2014), nontraditional forms of professional development lead to stronger teachers and high student achievement. Nontraditional forms of professional development include mentoring, coaching, and peer evaluation. Professional development should focus on allowing educators to master specific content by providing a strong

model for teachers to implement in their classroom instruction (Barlow et al., 2014). Since many schools already employ instructional coaches, the teachers who are mentors or coaches should be leading professional development sessions, as well as supporting teachers as they work on implementing the new learning in their own classrooms (Bayar, 2014).

Ongoing Applied Professional Growth: Mentored Support

It is difficult to apply any new learning without proper support. Not being provided with proper support for new learning can lead to teachers feeling isolated and overwhelmed. As previously noted, a study from the National Educational Association found that approximately half of new US teachers are likely to resign within the first five years of teaching due to inadequate employment conditions and low wages (Lambert, 2006). Therefore, creating mentor programs to support teachers as they transition into their new roles can help with more than just procedures; it can be an opportunity to help teachers become more confident and effective. The TAP System utilizes a career ladder with master and mentor teacher positions available in order to keep effective educators in the classroom while creating opportunities to support their colleagues as teacher mentors (NIET, 2015).

According to the research, successful mentor programs should ensure appropriate time for mentors to interact with mentees, include specific guidelines for mentoring activities, and require formal mentor training (Holloway, 2004). Rowley (1999) suggested that in order for mentors to be successful, they must possess the following skills: the ability to be accepting while demonstrating empathy, the ability to provide instructional support, the ability to work with individuals of varying levels of expertise, and the ability to model reflective practice. In addition, effective mentors should also be optimistic in their role and committed to the task of mentoring. The positive news is that these traits and skills can be cultivated and honed

(Holloway, 2004). Therefore, training for new mentors must be established in order to set the standard for the level of commitment required, clearly define the expectations and role responsibilities, and educate mentors on how to begin the support process (Rowley, 1999).

The researcher explained that, “when trying to create a sustainable support structure, the most difficult but important consideration is how to build a comprehensive program that can support a variety of needs within the building” (Kunkle, 2015). Not every new teacher will have the same needs, just like not every new student will have the same needs. Research repeatedly indicated that differentiated instruction is the best way to meet the needs of all students (Fisher & Frey, 2012). It is clear that ideal instruction includes individualization for students. Likewise, individualization in the professional development of teachers is most effective. Ubben et al. (2011) and Fullan (2011) identified several differentiated support structures that could be utilized; the researcher (2015) synthesized these support systems to include the following structures:

- Observation of other professionals with coaching to help the mentee reflect on what the observed teachers is doing, why it is being done, and the impact on student learning;
- Model lessons in the mentee’s content area/grade level with a reflective coaching conversation afterwards and/or another individual coaching during instruction;
- Team-Teaching with a reflective coaching conversation afterwards;
- Planning sessions; and
- Observation of the mentee teacher with a reflective coaching conversation afterwards.

After determining the types of support structures that could be utilized, the next step would be to determine how to start supporting the teacher based on individualized needs in order to create an actionable plan of sequenced support (Rowley, 1999). In the same vein as a teacher’s

individual needs being considered, a plan for a gradual release of support for teachers can be developed to help build confidence and efficacy as they work with students. Fisher and Frey (2012) provided four steps in the gradual release of responsibility as new learners transition into more accountable roles with support. In the gradual release model, new learners watch and listen as experts show how to complete a task, they work collaboratively with expert support, they practice collaboratively with feedback without penalty, and they participate in independent practice with expert feedback (Fisher & Frey, 2012). It is important to note that the gradual release of responsibility is not linear; it is a two-way continuum that can be modified to provide the best levels of support possible (Kunkle, 2015).

Instructionally Focused Accountability

When translating how a support structure with a gradual release of responsibility will work with teachers, the first step is to determine teachers' individual needs in order to determine the best ways to help them moving forward. Therefore, teachers must be observed in their classrooms as they teach students in order to determine their strengths and weaknesses in instructional delivery. To fairly evaluate teachers' effectiveness, TAP utilizes the Teaching Skills, Knowledge, and Responsibilities Performance Standards, which are research-based standards that are evaluated using a rubric of twenty-six indicators, set to a five-point scale (NIET, 2015). However, the purpose of these observations is not to evaluate teachers solely to give them a score of their effectiveness. The real power behind the observation process is the mentored support that occurs after the observation while the teacher and mentor reflect on the teaching and learning occurring in the classroom with the purpose of establishing ways that the educational leadership team may support the teacher moving forward.

In order for teachers to feel supported during this process, mentors should be taught and should practice effective coaching skills to ensure that their support structures are perceived to be helpful (Holloway, 2004; Rowley, 2009). Mentors need to know and understand their mentees individually so that they can coach each individual to reflect on his or her learning styles and needs. By respecting their mentees' various learning and interpersonal styles, mentors can begin building relationships of trust and transparency to develop a culture of continuous growth and development. As schools work to build a culture of support and growth using structured mentor programs, staff and students alike will progress and benefit.

Performance-Based Compensation

The TAP system is structured to provide supplementary compensation to teachers based on their additional roles and responsibilities, their achievements in the classroom in relation to student growth, and the performance of their students and the students within the school (NIET, 2015). Research on performance-based pay is inconsistent in its findings (Lavy, 2007). Evidence suggested that performance-based compensation can generate gains in student performance and teacher effectiveness, but there is a lack of empirical evidence that the results are lasting and can be fairly implemented in public schools provided the current testing and pay structures in most schools. TAP does not base teacher pay according to student achievement but rather provides bonuses based on teachers' performance and their direct impact on students' ability to show growth using the Value-Added system (NIET, 2015).

The Impact on Student Achievement

Teacher effectiveness literature clearly defined teacher effectiveness' direct impact on student learning and achievement (Rice, 2010). Sanders and Rivers (1996) estimated the most effective teachers (teachers scoring in the highest quintile according to Education Value-Added

Assessment System [EVAAS]) had students make learning gains that were four times greater than students of the least effective teachers (teachers scoring in the lowest quintile according to EVAAS). Using this Value-Added scale, Marzano (2003) determined that there is actually a 54-percentile point difference in achievement gains between students with the least effective teachers as opposed to those with the most effective teachers. Other positive results for students included reduced dropout rates and fewer missed classes, greater academic achievements in math, science, history, and reading, and smaller achievement gaps between students from different backgrounds (Hord, 1997). Since teachers can vary in their own effectiveness throughout their careers, particularly within the first five years, it is imperative to provide support for these teachers as they work to build their capacity and effectiveness with students.

Summary

Given that educational leadership has a clear impact on school culture and teacher efficacy, and since teacher efficacy is directly linked with student achievement, it is apparent that effective leaders are critical to school success. Without strategic and purposeful planning, communication, and hands-on support, school goals cannot be realized, teacher development cannot be sustained, and student achievement suffers. Effective educational leaders work hands-on with teachers in order to support their professional development, increase their efficacy, and assist in their reflection processes to help them reach their fullest potential. This support, coupled with the notion that all individuals in the building can learn and grow, can help increase teacher effectiveness and can eventually lead to second-order change with the proper oversight and implementation by vested educational leaders. The question is, what kinds of hands-on support most assists teachers in their professional development, and how can those support structures be implemented in a way that is perceived as helpful? The goal of every educator

should be that all students grow: as educational leaders expand their definitions of students to include all individuals in the building, then student achievement and teacher satisfaction will grow, thus creating positive systemic change that lasts.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

As indicated in Chapter One, the overall purpose of this study was to construct a theoretical framework explaining the relationship between educational leaders' hands-on support methods and the implications of those support structures on second-order change. The central research queries of said qualitative study included the following questions:

- 1) What educational support structures are perceived by teachers to be the most supportive and effective?
- 2) How does the type of support provided to teachers influence their perception of efficacy?
- 3) How does this create second-order change?

The study was qualitative in design using the grounded theory research methodology (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; LaRossa, 2005; Lacey & Luff, 2009; Luckerhoff & Guillemette, 2011; Mello & Flint, 2009). The researcher gathered information through the use of semi-structured interviews with teachers that have been identified by their building-level administrators as individuals who have benefitted from the support structures implemented by The System for Student and Teacher Advancement (TAP). These semi-structured interviews allowed for the researcher to incorporate follow up questions in addition to the interview guide, which provided interviewees the opportunity to elaborate on their answers as

appropriate. Two teachers from six different schools were interviewed, with a total of twelve teacher participants being interviewed.

Description of Qualitative Research

Qualitative research aims to analyze data through the use of interviews, surveys, or participant observation (Lacey & Luff, 2009). Qualitative research is particularly helpful when trying to answer “why” or “how” questions, lending itself towards the analysis of complex topics. Denzin and Lincoln (2003) stated, “Qualitative researchers stress the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry” (p. 8). The research process helps researchers to note patterns and generate meaning through the analysis of data related to the topic of study.

Description of the Specific Research Approach

In 1967, Glaser and Strauss introduced a new method for analyzing data called grounded theory. The grounded theory method of research defined a systematic approach for utilizing data from social science to generate theory. Grounded theory encouraged students to generate their own theories, rather than simply verifying the theories of those who had come before them. The procedures outlined by Glaser and Strauss (1967) in their text, “The Discovery of Grounded Theory,” provided both novice and experienced researchers a guide for generating theory (LaRossa, 2005). Their procedures provided guidelines for a more systematic analysis of data for qualitative researchers (Mello & Flint, 2009).

The goal of grounded theory is to create a way for the subject to be accountable to the data being studied (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The purpose of generating theory is to explain a social phenomenon, so whether the theory is a well-organized coded analysis or a more theoretical discussion, the goal of utilizing the grounded theory method is to generate a theory

that is grounded in data relating to a topic (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The process of constant comparative analysis becomes cyclical, allowing the grounded theory researcher to continually test and modify hypotheses until a theory can be generated from the systematic study of the qualitative data that has been collected. As data are collected, the data are analyzed. The analysis impacts the collection of future data; thus the process continues until saturation has occurred (Luckerhoff & Guillemette, 2011).

Researchers using grounded theory aim to develop theories that are applicable in practice and provide hypotheses that can be verified with further study (Mello & Flint, 2009). Grounded theory is a method for analyzing the relationships of social participants to each other and their environment, thus examining how they construct reality through these interpretations (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Therefore, the grounded theory method is best utilized when the researcher wants to examine how individuals interpret reality or other situations where there are no existing hypotheses or the hypotheses are too abstract to test.

Data Collection Process

Qualitative research methods were used to conduct this study. The data were collected through interviews conducted with teachers who have demonstrated improvement in their instruction, morale, and efficacy since the TAP program's implementation of hands-on support structures in their buildings. The interviews were conducted with two teachers from six schools that were identified by the building-level administrator as teachers who have improved as a result of the hands-on support provided by educational leaders. The teachers were selected by their building-level administrator due to their ability to demonstrate teacher and student gains after the implementation of the TAP program (see Appendix A). Teacher and student gains were

measured using teacher observation data, teacher responsibility surveys, and student improvement data using the EVAAS system.

The teachers and schools were purposefully sampled in order to gather the most relevant data. According to Creswell (2003), “The idea behind qualitative research is to purposefully select participants or sites (or documents or visual material) that will help the researcher understand the problem and the research question” (p. 185). Merriam (1998) said, “Purposeful sampling is based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand, gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned” (p. 61). The decision to interview individuals who have demonstrated growth since the successful implementation of the TAP program, along with its related support structures, stemmed from the need to determine how hands-on support has impacted second-order change: without that transfer in place, it would have been unlikely to determine a link between the support provided and any subsequent lasting change. Therefore, the researcher chose to interview teachers who were able to translate their support into a change in their teaching practice and could reflect on that process in order to articulate how the support effected the aforementioned change.

Schools that were able to successfully implement the support structures associated with TAP, as well as, shift the support in their buildings as determined by improved teacher morale and student achievement were analyzed and compared. The population of the study included teachers from six schools in rural South Carolina. Five schools were in a small rural district that implemented TAP one year ago; one school was a charter school in a rural SC suburb that implemented TAP two years ago. The teachers represent varying age levels, years of experience, courses/subjects taught, and genders. The role of the research analyst was to conduct the interviews as well as generalize the findings. A pilot study was first completed in a separate

district of similar demographics in order to determine the limitations of the study to ensure the most accurate and unbiased data were collected. The pilot study was completed in an elementary and middle school in rural South Carolina in order to ensure accuracy and feasibility.

All faculty participants signed informed consent letters approved by Internal Review Board (IRB) for research involving human subjects. After participants were identified by the principal, an email was sent to each of them telling them how they were selected and asking them for permission to participate in the study (see Appendix B). After participants agreed, the researcher scheduled each individual interview for one to two weeks from initial contact. Before the interview began, the researcher verbally explained the study, asked again if the teacher would be willing to participate, and then asked for the participant to sign the consent form (see Appendix C). Interviews with participants were conducted through a semi-structured design. The semi-structured design included open and closed questions. Each of the twelve participating teachers was asked to participate in the interview in-person in order to note non-verbal forms of communication, such as body language, and ensure inter-rater reliability in regards to the delivery of the questions. An interview protocol was developed by the researcher to guide the process and provide consistency, thus creating inter-rater reliability. The Carson-Newman Research Committee reviewed and approved the interview protocol and interview questions developed by the researcher after evaluating the protocol and questions to check for any bias by the researcher. The interview protocol is included as Appendix D, and the interview guide is provided in Appendix E. The participant interview guide allowed the researcher to explore teachers' experiences with support structures in order to determine which structures provided the most support and increased efficacy and autonomy in order to create second-order change. The interviews were conducted individually. Each interview lasted approximately thirty

minutes, though there was no set time for the length of the interview. The researcher utilized prompts to probe for more detail when interviewees gave only brief answers. The interviews were recorded with permission of the interviewee. An external transcription company then transcribed the files, thereby minimizing the possibility of bias. Once the audio recordings were transcribed, the interviewee had the opportunity to review their transcripts and was asked to verify the information. At that time, the interviewee had the opportunity to remove anything from the record that he or she would not like to be reported (see Appendix F). Once the digital recording was transcribed, the recording was destroyed. Notes and all data analysis were kept on the computer of the principal investigator, which is password protected. The researcher used Nvivo qualitative software to help identify themes and their frequency.

Ethical Considerations

The ethical issue of protecting the identities of the schools and participants was considered, and steps were taken to ensure that the research was done in accordance to the principles of ethical research in education. After permission was obtained from the school system to proceed with the study, approval from the schools' administration was obtained in order to conduct the research. Participants' information was protected to ensure that unbiased information was gathered. All names and exact locations were changed to conceal identities and ensure confidentiality. In the report, number and pseudonym identified participants, and letter noted the schools. Each participant was asked to sign a consent document. Participants were told that their involvement in the study was strictly voluntary and that their answers and identities would be kept confidential and would not be used against them in any way. Teachers were provided the opportunity to opt out of the study several times and were provided the opportunity to read their transcripts in order to remove anything from the record that they would

not like to be reported. The IRB was also notified and approved in order to maintain anonymity and fairness.

Potential limitations of the study included principal and teacher willingness to participate, varying levels of expertise within the building, and participants' ability to be honest and transparent. These limitations may have been compounded by the researcher's position within the TAP organization. As a regional master teacher, the researcher works with schools' leadership teams to assist in the implementation of the TAP system in order to effectively implement support structures. The researcher does not work directly with the participating teachers; however, the results may be skewed if teachers did not feel comfortable to provide accurate reflections or if bias occurred during the data analysis process. Additionally, the size of the data collection group may impact its validity since the study was conducted in one small, rural district as well as a small, third-year charter school in a rural suburb of South Carolina. The delimitations of the study include the sample group selection process and the data analysis process. Participants were selected with intentional criteria, and the data were analyzed using multiple methods to ensure control over reliability.

Data Analysis Procedures

The researcher conducted data analysis using a grounded theory, qualitative design to examine how hands-on support structures impacted teachers' feelings of efficacy and subsequent second-order change. The data collected were analyzed and summarized by the researcher after interviews were conducted. According to Creswell, (2003):

The process of data analysis involves making sense out of text and image data. It involves preparing the data for analysis, conducting different analyses, moving deeper and deeper into understanding the data, representing the data, and making an interpretation of the

larger meaning of the data. (p. 190)

Data analysis began with the researcher comparing notes to transcripts. During analysis, the researcher was careful to note things that the tape could not capture, such as reactions and environmental factors. After the notes were compared, the researcher coded the hard copy transcripts in order to streamline the data, analyze for trends, and determine themes. Coding consisted of highlighting the number of times a theme appeared in the interviews. Coding “involves taking text data or pictures, segmenting sentences (or paragraphs) or images into categories, and labeling those categories with a term, often a term based in the actual language of the participant” (Creswell, 2003, p. 192). According to Denzin and Lincoln (2003), “Coding helps us to gain a new perspective on our material and to focus further data collection, and may lead us in unforeseen directions” (p. 258). As coding was conducted, recurring themes yielded insight into the perceptions of the interviewees. A review and analysis of the data resulted in themes, and theories emerged as patterns were developed. An impartial Doctor of Education with IRB training who was familiar with the coding process then reviewed the coding and subsequent themes to enhance internal validity and ensure that there was a lack of bias on the part of the researcher.

Summary

Chapter 3 described the research methods used to gather data for studying the relationship between educational leaders’ hands-on support methods and the implications of those support structures on second-order change. The chapter presented a description of the qualitative research, a description of the specific research approach used, the data collection process, ethical considerations, and data collection procedures. The following chapter will present the analysis of these data.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

The qualitative study's intent was to explore the extent to which leadership members' hands-on support impacts second-order change. The theory developed provides an explanation of how the implementation of specific leadership hands-on support structures influence teachers' feelings of efficacy, subsequently resulting in second-order change. The study involved collecting data through open-ended, one-on-one, semi-structured interviews with twelve teachers who instructed students in grades pre-k through high school. Building-level administrators identified the purposeful sampling group in order to examine teachers that have made significant teacher and student gains since the successful implementation of TAP support structures in their buildings. The researcher analyzed teachers' responses related to the following research questions:

- 1) What educational support structures are perceived by teachers to be the most supportive and effective?
- 2) How does the type of support provided to teachers influence their perception of efficacy?
- 3) How does this create second-order change?

Participants

The participants represented a variety of years of experience, gender, and subjects or grade-levels taught. The participants included twelve primary, elementary, middle, and high school teachers. The disaggregation of teacher participants included three teachers who worked

with primary grades, one teacher who worked with primary and elementary students, three teachers who worked with elementary grades, three teachers who worked with middle school students, and two teachers who worked with high school students. The participants' experiences ranged from first-year teachers to teachers who had been in the profession for twenty-three years. The combined years of experience of the participants was 115 years, with an overall average of 9.5 years. The teachers interviewed represented core content-areas, with Science, Social Studies, Math, and/or ELA being taught by at least one of the participants. The researcher attempted to utilize maximum variation sampling in order to cover the varying perspectives of the same research problem. As cited in Merriam (1967):

Maximum variation sampling was first identified by Glaser and Strauss (1967) in their book on grounded theory. A grounded theory, it was reasoned, would be more conceptually dense and potentially more useful if it had been "grounded" in widely varying instances of the phenomenon. (p. 62-63)

Table 1 presents a summary of information about the participants in the study.

Table 4.1

Demographics of Teacher Interviews

Teacher	School	Current Courses	Experience	Gender
Teacher 1: “Jamie”	A- Primary	4-K All Subjects	23 years	F
Teacher 2: “Whitney”	A- Primary	1-5 Art	2 years	F
Teacher 3: “Mary”	B- Elementary	4 th All Subjects	6 years	F
Teacher 4: “Brandi”	B- Elementary	4 th Math	3 years	F
Teacher 5: “Claire”	C- Elementary	2 nd ELA	1 st year	F
Teacher 6: “Sally”	C- Elementary	5 th Math	9 years	F
Teacher 7: “Tom”	D- Middle	7 th SS	4 years	M
Teacher 8: “Kelly”	D- Middle	7 th /8 th ELA	9 years	F
Teacher 9: “Sam”	E- High	HS SS	6 years	M
Teacher 10: “Brad”	E- High	HS ELA	14 years	M
Teacher 11: “Sandra”	F- K-High	1 st All Subjects	3 years	F
Teacher 12: “Elizabeth”	F- K-High	6 th ELA/SS	17 years	F

Schools A-E were in their second year of TAP implementation. School F was a K-11th grade charter school that opened three years prior to the study and was in its third year of TAP implementation. Three of the teacher participants had worked exclusively in TAP schools with

the associated hands-on TAP support structures; the other nine teachers had varying work experiences that did not necessarily incorporate the hands-on support structures associated with TAP.

Findings

The researcher identified five major characteristics of effective hands-on support that led to teachers feeling open to new learning and efficacious to implement their new learning in their classrooms. These characteristics included creating a safe learning environment, establishing and communicating clear expectations, modeling as lead learners, facilitating reflective conversations, and maintaining a student-focus as the center of all conversation and reflection. The implementation of these characteristics during hands-on support led to teachers feeling more supported, increased their perceptions of efficacy, and ultimately generated second-order changes in their practices.

Research Question 1:

What educational support structures are perceived by teachers to be the most supportive and effective?

When determining how to create support structures that teachers will find helpful, one must first ask, “What makes the support feel supportive?” Creating a safe environment wherein all members can be transparent is key. Therefore, the participants cannot feel intimidated to collaborate and share their successes or failures. In order for this to occur, student growth must be the center for all conversation. The focus should always come back to student growth, and so reflections should begin with what students learned as a result of the lesson. All suggestions should be framed as recommendations, not mandates, for ways to help students learn. Teachers respond best to suggestions when they are designed specifically for them, and there are

numerous options from which to choose and implement. Suggestions should never be framed as “doing it my way,” but should be made clear as to how, specifically, the suggestion will impact student learning. Support members should work to build open communication and positive relationships with the people that they support. They must demonstrate that they truly care about each person individually by continually offering support and working collaboratively to create strategies. Support members should never appear as judgmental or hierarchical; rather they should be open to brainstorming and discussing strategies collectively. It is imperative that the mentors are available and take the appropriate time to support individual teacher development. Principals must be involved in the process as well because the support team should be viewed as a group of lead learners who practice what they preach by “going first” and modeling their expectations for staff. Being lead learners will reiterate the idea that the leadership team is focused on the common goal of growth for all students. The more that growth for students can be labeled and the expectations can be clearly communicated, the more likely it is that everyone will be working toward a common vision.

Research Question 2:

How does the type of support provided to teachers influence their perception of efficacy?

When answering this question, one must ask, “What leads to increased feelings of efficacy?” During the interviews, it became clear that teachers appreciated hearing positive comments along with suggestions for further development. As previously stated, suggestions should not be presented as mandates but rather as viable options. Reflective conversations should take place after teachers and leadership team members try the new strategies in order to debrief on how it went honestly and openly. Therefore, these conversations should not be high-risk but should instead work to facilitate teacher reflection. Perceptions of efficacy increase when there is

success; therefore evidence of growth in relation to student learning should be collected and labeled during these reflective conversations. The leadership team should also reiterate the idea that everyone can continuously grow to ultimately increase student development, so leadership team members should be focused on growth versus perfection in order to model efficacious behaviors. The leadership team should present themselves as lead learners while modeling efficacious conversations and behaviors in order to consistently communicate a vision for growth.

Research Question 3:

How does this create second-order change?

When analyzing how to create second-order change, one must examine how to transition the aforementioned shifts in cognition, behaviors, and practices into lasting changes. These changes become a non-linear chain of events, since different thoughts and behaviors may impact a broader understanding of the rationale behind what one is doing and why. With increasing clarity of expectations, a rationale for said expectations may begin to be built. A clear rationale will lead to a deeper understanding of the shifts. These shifts must be supported by a change in student learning in order for the changes to become permanent. Positive gains in student learning will motivate staff and lead to a new mindset for “how” and “why” things are done in specific ways. Such gains will be supported by observable progress results.

Throughout the interviews, it became apparent that systemic change occurred when teachers saw how the changes that they were making in relation to their instruction impacted student learning. Whitney clarified, “It works for me because it’s personally catered to me. They’ve lived it with me, and then they can tell me how to use this information and make [my teaching] better. It’s more like the real world versus theory, like real teaching versus college, and so it has

helped my kids.” Mary seconded that notion, stating, “I’m seeing the positives from it. That makes me want to continue with it. I would not want to go back: I’ve seen too much growth.” Brandi summarized her experience, stating, “I have grown so much with TAP. I could not go back and teach in the way even I did last year. It makes me feel more prepared, and I can now anticipate their learning difficulties before I teach. I just have loved everything. Is it stressful? Absolutely. Is it worth it? Absolutely.”

By working with support personnel to identify an area of need and formulating a strategic plan, teachers felt supported in their efforts to modify their current teaching practices. After implementing these instructional methods and reflecting upon the results to analyze the impact on student learning, teachers were able to see the direct impact that their strategies had on student achievement. Therefore, when teachers saw the benefits from the support provided as it related to student learning, they were much more likely to incorporate the new ideas into their regular teaching practice, thus creating second-order change.

Safe Learning Environments

Research repeatedly showed that new learning does not take place without a safe environment first being established. According to Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs (1954), if individuals did not feel that they were appreciated or that they belonged, they could not move into a place of learning or reflection. In order for teachers to feel safe to openly reflect, the leadership team must establish a sense of transparency to keep continual learning as the focus. The participants reiterated this notion throughout their interviews.

Whitney, a second-year elementary art teacher who has only ever worked in a TAP school, explained how the environment established by her leadership team has impacted her perceptions of support:

I feel like this year, they seem to have a more supportive role than a judgmental role. It's like, 'How can I help you get better at this?' or 'Let me know what you need here.' It doesn't feel intimidating; it feels more supportive. There isn't a feeling of supremacy. It's just support, and I appreciate that as a newer teacher because you are sort of hypersensitive to all that, so it's nice to not feel that. If I feel like I am really struggling with something, even if I feel like I had a really bad lesson, or if I'm just not doing well, I feel no discomfort in going to them about something that I need. A lot of it is personality, but they've also handled it the way I would want it handled.

Brandi, a third year teacher, reiterated noted that the effective support that she received has subsequently impacted her effectiveness with students. Brandi's shift has led to a systemic change in the way she planned for instruction:

I really go to others [frequently]. I have sat down with [my leadership team members] and just cried, saying, 'I just feel like I don't know what to do for these kids.' But it's okay to cry. It's okay to show frustration. They just tell me the same thing I tell my kids, 'You're frustrated because you're trying.' Just sitting down with them and talking with them, I really know that people are there for me whether I rise or fall. I really know that they're there for support in all aspects of my life. I'm a very personal person, and if I know that you care about me it just means the world to me. All of them are that way. I have a teacher-relative in another county, and she was saying, 'You don't know how lucky you are for that administration that you have.' I could not go back to the way I was before. I looked at my lesson plans from last year, and it doesn't even look like the same person wrote them just because I have grown so much with TAP. I could not go back and teach in the way even I did last year.

When asked what characteristics of the leadership team the teacher appreciated most, Claire, a first year teacher, explained that patience and understanding were the most important characteristics to her. These traits influenced her perception of support, which she explained:

They are very patient with me being a first year teacher. They know and they understand that I'm going to make mistakes or that I have to learn from my experiences. I'm not going to be perfect the first time or even 10 years from now. [But as they continue to work with me,] their consistency is great. I get face time with them every single week, even multiple times a week. Just from what I hear outside of the TAP system, a lot of people don't get that. I get that support every single week. They're very good at gauging how I'm feeling or what I need to offer me suggestions. Just somehow, they know what kind of support I need, like magically. They're always there and comforting.

Kelly, a teacher with nine years of experience, echoed the importance of the availability of leadership team members by explaining how her perceptions of support were influenced by her ability to connect with support members:

Being available is incredibly important. Having [my mentor] this year it is like I won the jackpot because she is so available compared to everybody else, and that's just huge. [My mentor this year] is caring, she wants to be there, and she wants you to do well. Those are all really important supportive qualities. I'm usually very shy around people that I've never been around before. [My previous mentor] and I had never really interacted much before, and because she wasn't available but for one of my planning periods, and I could see how overwhelmed the three [mentors] on my team were, I didn't want to go bother her. I think we all get that mentality sometimes, and then because I wasn't in regular friendly conversation with her, I wasn't seeking her out. That's my personality, I guess; it

is just really important knowing I have that kind of connection with somebody or can make that connection.

Elizabeth, a veteran teacher with seventeen years of experience, also mentioned the change that she had observed when working in different environments and how those environments have impacted her perceptions of support, growth, and efficacy:

My experience with other teachers, the administration, everyone at this school has all been positive. In a past school, I worked with others where if you were doing something different from the status quo, there was something wrong. I was like I can't do it that way because I'm not you. I teach differently; everybody's different. That's definitely not happened here. I was a little nervous about TAP in the beginning because the first time I sat down after an observation, I felt bad because I felt like they just picked up on everything I did wrong. But that's not how it works. I finally learned how TAP actually works, so I'm able to take what they tell me now, and I just realize that it's there to help me improve myself so I can improve how I teach my kids.

Clear Expectations

In order for teachers to accurately reflect on how they can improve their instruction to increase learning with students, clear expectations need to be established and communicated. Without a common language to focus new learning, miscommunication or misdirection can easily occur, thus making it difficult to create lasting positive change. When the expectations are made clear for teachers, the transfer of clear and demanding expectations can begin to translate to the classrooms.

Sam, a teacher with six years of experience, transitioned into his school when they first started implementing the TAP program two years prior to the interview. He discussed how the clear expectations established by the rubric have impacted his perceptions of growth and change:

I think the only feedback I've gotten here, whether positive or negative, has been feedback that I've taken and tried to work on. I've been in schools that weren't TAP, and the evaluation process has been a little different. Here, there is something to go back to: there is a rubric. There is something that says you didn't do this right and these were the reasons why; whereas before, if there's nothing for me to go back to look at, in my mind I was right because there's nothing for you to tell me why I was wrong. It sounded like it was just personal biases before because there was really no academic structuring. It was more or less, 'This is my personal bias. I think you can do this better.' We stress to our kids and our classroom that [this rubric] is how you're going to be graded, and this is what I expect from you. Now I have an expectation of this is what is expected [with the rubric.] I wasn't a proponent of TAP at the beginning. I was one of the guys that voted no [to implementing TAP,] but the more I work on it, the more I've seen it work, and now I appreciate what they do. You have the goal. You have something in front of you. You have a rubric, you have structure, and you've got something that you're working towards. You know I did this and I didn't do this because you can look back to the rubric. There's been a few times coming back from my evaluation on my post conference where in my personal bias I thought I did great in this aspect, but the rubric said I didn't. And I think that I can't argue that because it's in the rubric. If it's a personal bias, I could argue either way, but if it's in the rubric, it's right there. I would take this rubric with me [in the

future] or if I were to go somewhere else that does not have TAP. I'm going to teach very similar to this because I believe it works now.

Brad, a high school teacher with fourteen years of experience, clarified how the consistent expectations he's seen implemented in his school and in the professional development opportunities he's attended have shifted his perspectives of support and growth:

Because it's led by an administrator, a mentor teacher, or a master teacher, I think that's been better. Teachers have been more open. It seems less superficial, and it has more merit. I think teachers have bought in which I think is important to the process. I've gotten a lot out of it. I don't necessarily know that TAP is the reason [the professional development] is more authentic, but I think there is a name behind it. We've had consistency for a couple of years now. Whereas sometimes in the past I felt like when a new book came out, we would start doing that, then the next year another new book would come out, and we didn't talk about what we did the year before at all because we're on to this new thing. It got to the point where we would talk about at nauseam about one thing, and then we would not ever discuss it again. Now we've been doing [TAP] for almost two years, and it's constant. I think that helps since you know that it's not something we are going to talk about and then just move on from. I think that's given more merit to it, and so people have bought it. Like I said, I have bought into the process and know that it's something that is a little bit more purposeful. It is continuously worked on over a period of time. I think that is where I feel more supported. If you had previously asked me if my pacing was good in my class, I would have told you absolutely. That was not because I'm egotistical, but because by end of the class my kids weren't standing at the door ready to go, so I thought that was good pacing. I didn't really

understand what that entailed until I had a rubric, and then multiple people noticed that I needed to work on that, which allowed me to say, I need to work on this. Then I was given steps and ideas and those types of things on how to help do that in our cluster meetings and those types of things. I felt more supported by the fact that I was being observed by multiple people. [They are] people I trust. It's not that I don't trust all of my administrators, but it is good to have your peers observe you as well. There is a comfort level there that helps a lot, [which is compounded by] the fact that we continuously work on it.

Sandra, a first grade teacher in her third year of teaching, described how the clearly communicated common expectations in her building have unified the shared voice of the leadership team, thereby impacting her perceptions of support and growth:

I really appreciate how uniform they all are; I can find that same consistency throughout the whole building. It's been great to see that no matter if I have one mentor teacher or an administrator come in that they can see the growth that I was working on [on the rubric.] If I mentioned that I was working on something in my pre-conference, I was able, no matter who it was, for them to identify the area of weakness or growth in that indicator.

Sally, a fifth grade math teacher, elaborated on how the level of consistency across her leadership team has impacted her personal perceptions of support in addition to aiding in her professional development. She noted how her leadership team's collaboration has also increased their collective knowledge, thus building their bank of instructional strategies for her to try in her classroom:

I like the fact that they're very knowledgeable about what they are doing. They know the TAP rubric; they know what they're looking for. You also know that they have talked to

each other: they're all looking for those other things. They'll say, 'I know when so and so came and served you, we wanted you to work on this. And I saw this today, you're really working it out, and that's fantastic.' You can see their collaboration and that makes it more beneficial for me. Because you might not come in and make another observation and it's going to be somebody else but it needs to be fluid. It needs to be a continuous thing and it can't be unless they've talked about what they've seen going on and done their walk-throughs and things like that. [That way] they can also build a ton of different strategies. I like it more when they can give you a ton of strategies and you can have the freedom to go back and implement into your classroom and have the opportunity to sit down and discuss it. I like that better than just having one strategy that you have to go make fit: that puts a bad taste in my mouth when someone says, 'You have to go back and do this strategy.' I don't like that because the strategy might not lend itself to [my content or my teaching style.] It's not fair when I have other things that I could choose from. Now we have more to choose from with multiple people offering suggestions.

Mary, a teacher with six years of experience, noted how the clarity of expectations and support by her leadership team have translated into a change in the communication of her own classroom expectations, thereby transforming her students' learning:

It's like a 180 in my classroom. My teacher knowledge of students has grown: I can recite, almost verbatim, my students' scores. I keep going back from last year to this year because my attitude has been better and I have pushed more strategies in my classroom than I did last year: I can tell that I'm making gains based on their MAP scores and based on my class data; with my MAP testing, each child in my homeroom went up except one. That goes back to my environment in the class: the high expectations that I've set have

not allowed them to opt out. When they have to answer, they don't have a choice: it's not just for my higher kids, [but for everyone.] The help that I've received has made the difference. I can use the TAP rubric because now I know what's expected; I feel like that's where a lot of my growth has come from. I know what's expected, and I have support: if you can show me, I can learn better than if you just tell me.

Brandi also explained how the clear expectations established by her leadership team have helped her to become more focused and reflective, thus impacting her feelings of efficacy within her classroom:

TAP: so it just made me so much more aware of things that I haven't even thought of. Just knowing my kids and knowing the questions to ask them, I feel like it's where I've grown the most. It just makes me aware of the needs of each student, and TAP has just made me want to push every child: not just my high kids, not just my low kids, but also my middle kids, too. My middle kids' [group] is where I fell off before TAP: I didn't know what to do. Since TAP, it's helped me see that they can still be pushed. TAP sets the expectation that all kids can move. My middle kids may get it but aren't ready to move too far forward in the curriculum, but they still need to be pushed with different types of problems or examples. Really TAP has helped me a lot of with my middle kids that were just cruising by. They're excited and are learning more.

Lead Learners Model

In education, modeling may manifest itself in several ways. Teachers may model in the classroom to explain how and why to complete a task in a certain way. Model learners may be exemplars of how to go about specific tasks. Additionally, model lessons may be performed in classrooms to demonstrate teaching strategies and their impact on student learning. Regardless

of the scope, modeling is intended to show, rather than just tell, desired ways to think and act. In relation to support, leadership team members must model how to be lead learners in order to encourage others to be open to new learning and reflection. Ritchhart (2015) explained that modeling draws attention as an example for others to follow or imitate. Therefore, leadership team members must demonstrate their expectations for growth by modeling how to be life-long learners that are focused on development.

Janie, a veteran teacher who has worked in education for twenty-three years, explained how she reached out for assistance from her leadership team to get clarification and support with the rubric. Her outreach for support was perceived as beneficial due to the approach that the master teachers took. Master teachers presented themselves as lead learners during model lessons and the subsequent transparent reflective conversations. She explained:

The model lessons have been very beneficial because they're able to come in and demonstrate. It's just like what we're asking of ourselves to do for the children; we're modeling for the children during our instruction. Now we have master teachers who come in and model for us as well. Even with 22 years of [previous] experience, it's always nice to be refreshed on the current and more updated instructional techniques that they have now. The support that's given by the master teachers and the mentors [has been beneficial because] they are genuinely concerned. They make sure you don't feel threatened because they're here to help, not to come in and tell you, 'You're not doing what you're supposed to be doing.'

Sam reiterated how the clear modeling presented in cluster has impacted his planning and teaching in his classroom. He now exhibits more efficacious behaviors to proactively help all of his students learn:

I think I've grown a lot in questioning and making questions beforehand, or pre-planning questions. Going through in my mind and writing them down has helped out a lot. The questions that I ask my students [whether it be] verbal questions or just something that they have to answer quickly, I'm planning them beforehand instead of trying to come up off the top of my head. I think my [pre-planned] questions have improved the level of questioning that I do use. In cluster, one of the things we have been focusing on was questioning and using purposeful questioning. That was something that I kind of took in my head and said I need to write these questions down. I need to be a purposeful with the questions that I'm asking and try to make connections with my questions from prior knowledge and to where we're going to next. During cluster, someone gave an example of some questions they asked their kids and some of the activities that they have used, and that really helped me. Just seeing how people have done things in their class: that sharing aspect of things that we do in TAP has really helped out.

Brad expanded on how modeling during the weekly cluster meetings, along with observing other teachers in the building, has helped him grow professionally and influenced his perception of support:

I think the collaborative teacher talk during the [professional development] cluster meetings for me has been the most beneficial. I think in the past we've tried different things, but it seemed like we were just in there to hit our time or whatever. I really think through cluster, because it is more structured, it lends itself to things that we really need as teachers. I think that's been really good. We've had some really good conversations where it wasn't like everybody was just in there being quiet until our 25 minutes were up and we could leave. I think it's really opened up some good questioning. So I think a lot

of my growth has to do with the structure of our professional development and some of those things we've talked about over the last couple of years. Then just talking to other teachers and doing some observations of other classes has been really beneficial. I have really enjoyed the aspect of being able to talk to other teachers outside of your subject area weekly. In the past, we haven't always done that. But now [after seeing that modeled] I am doing more formative assessments through questioning and closure activities so I know what to work on. So that's been a big help. I've had more opportunities to talk and discuss and really open up my own thinking to those types of things, and I've seen definite growth in my student work.

Tom explained how the modeling in his classroom has improved as a result of the modeling support provided by his leadership team. His growth has impacted his perception of support and self-efficacy:

Modeling would be the area where I've grown the most. I can see the importance of modeling as I set a standard for my students to hopefully have arrived at the end of the class period with an exit pass or a formative assessment. I wasn't aware of it at first. That's the beauty of professional development, and I consider TAP to be a professional development opportunity that helps me to grow professionally. I wasn't aware of modeling before because I was used to coming in, setting the hook for the kids, and letting it go at that. Now I can see where modeling aligns the learning target as well as the activities that are going support that learning target for the day. It kind of gives them a visual of your thinking, and hopefully they will apply the same thinking once they are reading the text and using the other various activities that day to complete the lesson.

Elizabeth expanded on how her master teacher assisted her development by modeling in cluster and then following up with individual support. Elizabeth explained how the follow through support translated to her classroom, thus changing her perceptions of support:

Actually, after our TAP training, I just recently started bringing in the 5 steps, and going through that during our cluster meetings has helped a lot. I looked at it at first, and I tried what I thought was correct, and she said, ‘Well, no. Let me show you.’ Then she helped me break it up a little better and showed me how to do it. I really like doing that now. It makes it so much easier to follow along throughout the day. This is what I'm doing: I need to identify the need, and these are the steps that I have to follow. She's always very helpful in answering our questions about the planning and showing us what to do.

Reflective Conversations

Berger, Rugen, and Woodfin (2014) stated that, “Skillful reflection is at the core of becoming a self-directed learner” (p. 9). Therefore, it is essential that teachers reflect thoroughly and deeply in order to improve their own craft as well as assist their students to become more reflective and self-sufficient learners. Reflective conversations can help empower teachers and enable them to move from fixed mindsets to growth mindsets, which will allow them to continue to grow and develop throughout their careers. Deep reflection is vital for changes to become lasting; therefore leadership team members must take an active role during the facilitation of reflective conversations.

Brad explained how the open reflective conversations that he has had with his leadership team have influenced his perceptions of growth and support:

We just have a lot more support through the TAP program. I think part of that is just because you hear it from different people through the TAP program: the mentor teachers,

the master teachers, and then your administrators. Because you are being observed so many times and you are getting your feedback through multiple people, I think that you see what you need to work on, and there is evidence there. Our leadership team is also very professional. They all have many years of experience, and they understand what you're going through. I have friends in other TAP schools, and I've heard problems where the mentors or masters overstepped their bounds. I think ours have been very professional, and they haven't been authoritative over us. I think they understand the process, our stake in it, where we stand, and the structure of everybody's authority. I don't think anybody oversteps those bounds. They understand; they come from where you are, and their overall professionalism and the way they have gone about the support is good. I don't hear people complaining about it because I don't think it's a gotcha. People thought that might be what it was just because it was something new, and you are going to get observed more. I used to freak out when I heard the key hit my door and somebody was coming to observe me, but it's just a part of it now. I don't change anything I'm going to do; I just keep going with what I'm teaching, and I think they understand that some days they are going to come in and are not going to see everything that is on the TAP rubric because you can't do everything on the TAP rubric everyday. Which is why I think the walk-throughs have been important. The multiple visits from multiple support people with the feedback helps. I think it has worked well in our school because of the people we have in place.

Tom reflected on how the reflective conversations have helped reduce the isolation that many teachers feel, thus impacting their perceptions of support:

I believe the observations are good, and I think it has a lot to do with my maturity as a teacher and actually seeing the value of ability to collaborate. At one time you see yourself isolated and it seemed like when someone came into your area, you felt a little intimidated with your guard up. Now as you start to learn more about the TAP program, and you see the benefits of the TAP program, and you listen to what the TAP program has identified as approaches to instructional strategies and you hear the people who have researched these strategies like Carol Ann Tomlinson and Whitaker, for instance. You can see that these people who are influential in the field of education, they're approaches and ideas align back up with the TAP system. Seeing the individual is important, and seeing the opportunity to collaborate is great for reinvigorating the teacher; it eliminates the isolation.

Sam explained how the collaborative conversations with multiple leadership team members have allowed him to become more open to growth suggestions:

Teacher collaboration and conversation has been the most beneficial to me. I like to listen to people because I hear new things, so the conversations I've had with other teachers have really helped me. They can give me examples of things they've done, I can give them examples of things that I've done, and then we can really collaborate together and just pick each other's brains. Also, we've done walk-throughs in different rooms and then put all of those ideas on the board to gather ideas from what other people have done as well. It is really good to know that we have a good support system in our school.

Administrators are not there to reprimand you, but they're there to help. I think that's one thing that's great about this program: it gives you specific areas to work on and areas where you did well. With some observations in the past, there's no structure. I think

having mentor teachers and a master teacher [has created] a family environment here that's really helped. Just having an open classroom and having open conversations with our administration about how observations went starts those reflections. If I want feedback, I can say to them, 'Hey I'm doing this today, can you come in to observe me?' They'll come in and use a rubric to tell me, 'This is what you did good... This is what you did that you can tweak...' I think TAP has helped them become better at the observations because they give you a list of what you need to work on, and then they explain it. You could look back at the rubric and say [to yourself] I didn't do that. These were the areas I could work on. In the past, I wouldn't call it support, but I've had criticism where the way that the individual spoke to me, the tone, made me shut down. I think we as human beings, when someone talks down to you, you tend to not listen. And I've had that happen in the past where administrators have spoken to me in an unprofessional way. But here, the people are open, honest, and helpful in general. They're just great people, honestly. You come to appreciate it when you work for people who aren't the same. Here, they are honest, truthful, and supportive, and they do it in a way like they're on your side because we're all in here trying to get students to learn. That is our goal. We want to create successful students and successful individuals, and so we all should be on the same side. We are not enemies. And I think we've kind of gotten that here because administrators are extremely supportive of what I want to do, and I just think it's a great school. I really do. I'm not just saying that because I'm here. Here you have people who are in it to empower students and to get them where they need to be by all means necessary: not just because they're getting paid for it.

Whitney explained how the openness of the leadership team members allowed for her to feel open to reflect and grow during reflective conversations, thereby enhancing her learning:

Having that safe place to bounce ideas off of another person is how I learn the most because I've read the rubric before, I know it can apply to my content, but having somebody just say, 'Well, what about this? Part of that could work, but what about this?' Just that bouncing back and forth and the support of working out ideas is how I have learned the most. I interpret the way it's supposed to be done, they interpret it, and then we find that happy medium. That's helped me tremendously.

Mary explained how the feedback and suggestions provided by her leadership team have impacted her teaching and feelings of efficacy:

My [master teachers] have been in to observe me, and the feedback that I've gotten back from them [this year] has been exceptional. They've given me specific feedback where I've then gone back and worked on whatever it was I needed. If I can have specific, honest feedback, then I can grow more than if you give me generalized feedback. My first observation, I needed to work on modeling. Because I got that feedback from them, during my second observation, that was my strong point. Last year, the feedback I was given I didn't necessarily agree with. This year reflecting back on last year, I didn't have I guess you would say the right attitude to accept that feedback: it was probably good feedback; I just didn't recognize it at the time. [But reflecting on what has changed,] I feel more competent now, as opposed to before when I didn't feel comfortable in getting into a conversation with someone. Now I feel like I have the confidence, too, whereas before I didn't. This year, I'm taking that feedback and actually applying it instead of just taking the feedback and throwing it out of the window. If I have an issue, I feel

comfortable going up to them and [telling them] I have an issue with this. Then they come and help. I could not have asked for a better year because of the support I've received. And because my attitude has changed and the way I look at things has changed, that has made my kids and my student learning soar.

Claire, a first year teacher, reiterated the idea that reflective conversations supported her growth by sharing how the feedback that she received led to increased expectations for herself and her second grade students, thereby increasing her sense of efficacy:

Coming into teaching, I really thought it was all about the "I do," thinking [that] they're children; they don't need to do anything: I can handle it for them. I very quickly realized that they are not going to learn to think for themselves or do for themselves if they don't take responsibility for their own actions and their own learning. Here we are supposed to be captains of our learning ships, and I really think that that rings true because I cannot think for 47 children; I just can't, and I shouldn't have to. Really that striving to help them be independent is probably just the biggest thing I have learned, period, from teaching. Everyone says, "Oh, they're so young." Yes, but those have been the expectations since they've started school in kindergarten. Really, they should be accountable, and they know that. So the academic feedback that I provide now is really specific: I'm not just saying, 'Great job' or 'Let's fix this.' [This change in my academic feedback] happened after my first post conference with my principal. She came in and was very supportive, saying, 'These are all great, but let's bump it up a notch by doing this,' or 'Have your students take ownership by doing this themselves or writing or talking about this.' Because she sat there and gave me specifics and would not just say, 'Good; that's a great objective,; I felt like I had tools to do something different. This is

different than when I went to a [professional development] session recently. We had to critique each other's assessments, which I think is effective, but I don't know that the feedback I received was helpful. I don't know how to take the feedback to see if I could use it to change the lesson or assessment or if I just need to throw the assessment out. Obviously there's going to be something wrong with every assessment. I didn't feel like there was enough background information given on what the assessments were or what the good assessments were really supposed to look like, [so] I didn't know where to take that feedback or what to do with it. [Comparing the assessments professional development to the academic feedback] there was a difference because of the specific feedback and background knowledge. [My principal] had my formative assessments, my student work, and my reactions to the student work, and so she could be more specific for what, exactly I could do differently next time, and I could then go make changes based on her suggestions.

Sally, a fifth grade math teacher, explained how the hands-on support that she received changed her perceptions of support, thus resulting in her reaching out for support more frequently:

I don't have a fifth grade math team: I am the fifth grade math team. I don't have anybody to bounce ideas off of. I feel like at our cluster meetings we are provided strategies and provided modeling and all kinds of things that we could bring into our classrooms. It's like, 'Take this. If it doesn't work for your classroom, don't use it. But try some of these things to get going.' I like the reflective conversations and the observations with feedback. If they sit and talk with me and they say, 'Maybe you can try this,' I'm going to try it. It might not work, and I might go back and say, 'Okay I did

this, and it either didn't fit my teaching style or I didn't see the benefits of it.' But I mean the people we have to support us are there, and I can say, 'That didn't work.' I mean I'm not afraid to go in and say that; I'm not going to do that if it didn't work. And that's okay; they're going to help us to find something else. They're very positive: positive about everything. I've never had an observation, even before we started TAP, in which everything was negative. It was always 'Thank you for doing this,' and 'I saw this going on,' and 'that was just fantastic,' and 'I also saw this so maybe you can...' And when you have an observation and you have feedback like that, you are so much more apt to say, okay you know, I've got a lot stuff going on, so let me try some of this other stuff and see if that helps. It makes a difference that I have relationships with the individuals supporting us. To have people that you trust, that you can be honest with and can talk freely with, and that they are there to help your kids: it makes a huge difference. I appreciate their willingness to sit down and talk with you and be honest. And I appreciate their willingness to provide the constructive criticism. I love their willingness to sit down and brainstorm with you because some of the ideas they come up with [I think] Oh I never thought about it that way. I like that time together, because, ultimately, my students benefit.

Sandra explained how the reflective conversations with her leadership team have benefitted students in her classroom and impacted her feelings of efficacy:

I think the reflective conversations [have been the most beneficial for me.] I think that I've become a much more of a reflective teacher. I'm more aware of what I'm doing in the classroom, and so I think it's been so helpful to have somebody sit down afterwards with me and really reflect on my lesson. They can maybe point out some of the things

that I didn't see or really just notice that we're going on in the room. It's sometimes hard in this position to really see the full picture when I'm teaching. I feel like I'm trying to focus on doing so many things, and my head's going a million ways during the lesson, so I miss a lot of things that the students are doing. So the reflective piece is really nice.

[On one occasion, an observer sat] down with me, and she had scripted and highlighted my lesson to show me how my students were at the verge of questioning each other, and I was really working on that in that particular lesson, so it was really neat to see that they were almost there. Reflecting with her, with her highlighting and everything that she did, it was so easy to see what I needed to do to push them to that next level. We've had a big push for data lately, and we've been given a lot of different resources to pull data from, and I think with that I can see how we have a lot of control within our own classroom about how we can make instructional decisions for students based on their current levels.

Elizabeth elaborated on how these conversations impacted her feelings toward support: I feel more supported here. I feel like my opinion matters with things. I have been to different people around the building, 'This isn't working. What do I do?' They're willing to help, and they give positive feedback, 'You can do this; have you tried this? Let me help you with this.' They're actually willing to come in and help. They'll ask, 'Do you want me just to set it up? Would you like me to come in and model this?' It's been a much more positive, pleasant experience. I feel like if there is something I could have done better, I'm not being criticized for it. Somebody's always there to try to help me make it better. Their willingness to be a part of a team has made me feel appreciated. We're all in our classrooms teaching by ourselves, but we're not alone. I like the feeling

of it being a team. Even if it's not someone on your cluster, it feels like you're working as a team

Student-Focused

DuFour & Mattos (2013) explained that the most imperative support that leaders can provide to teachers is helping them use evidence of student learning in their classes to improve their teaching. “When members of a team make the results from their common assessments transparent, analyze those results collectively, and discuss which instructional strategies seem most effective based on actual evidence of student learning, they're using the most powerful catalysts for improving instruction” (DuFour & Mattos, 2013, para. 25). During the interviews, teachers reiterated the importance of having a student-focus, and all participants reflected on how their learning has impacted student growth.

Janie noted how her learning impacted her students’ development, saying that her students were able to learn more at a quicker pace. The improvement in student learning impacted Janie’s perceptions of efficacy in relation to what can be accomplished in a Pre-K classroom:

The designing and planning of instruction is the area I feel like has been my biggest growth this year. We're doing more with assessments with the preschool-aged students than we have done before: doing pre-testing and post-assessments. By gathering this information or data, I have been able to better provide individualized instruction for my students: putting them into small groups within their levels for differentiation, [heterogeneous] small groups, as well as one on one instruction, and intervention. This year has been the first year I have seen such a drastic growth prior to April and May. I'm actually seeing the growth I would have seen in April and May now early on in January and February, so we're just taking them further by doing as much as we can with

individualized instruction for those who are not gaining as quickly and then for those who are, we continue, moving on into teaching them sight words since they know all their letters and letter sounds.

Whitney saw significant changes in her students' end art products in addition to an increase in their motivation, which she attributed to her new learning. The growth in her students' learning and behavior increased Whitney's perceptions of efficacy:

I feel like I've learned a lot in the Instruction Portion [of the rubric.] [Having the instructional focus] has helped me hone in on what I want to develop in my program and focus on based on the standards. I've seen a large amount of growth in relaying what I want them to learn and honing them in on a specific task that we're learning instead of just: here, we're making this today; have fun. It has made them more aware of what we were getting out of [the lesson] in addition to just making something... They're able to be more successful daily because the goals are attainable in one day, where instead I think [before] I would make the goal seem like too much for them, and it would discourage them if they couldn't get to that end product that I was showing them. Instead, they find [now] that it's just step-by-step [process,] and they can achieve this goal one day at a time. They feel more successful from that...I know sometimes they would get discouraged, and then just kind of shut down and wouldn't complete it, or if I kept encouraging them, they kind of already checked out and they're like, "Yes, well, here' [with their work] Then, their craftsmanship would not be as good and the end product wasn't [either.] When it's just [like] okay, here, we're just going to work on the background: that's all we're working on. Here's how to make it look the way you want it to. Here's why we're doing it. Then they could do that. It didn't seem so overwhelming

to them, and then I think once they could see me breaking it down that way, they can meet the goal for that day, and then the next day we build up on that for the next step... They just seem to be more successful that way. I have less people shutdown on me. There are fewer criers... I do find that they are less discouraged, and it makes for a much happier environment for everybody. We still have some [people get discouraged,] but it's reduced tremendously along with better end products.

Sally also saw an increase in her personal efficacy as a result of the support that she had received. Sally clarified that the shifts made in her classroom will become lasting changes since they have positively impacted her students' growth:

I did not realize how hard math was for kids until I started teaching. Math was kind of always easy for my family and me... and I've always, since I was little, wanted to be a teacher... Then I did my student teaching... then it hit me: it's not [easy] trying to get them to understand. I spent seven years struggling in teaching the lesson and then going around and having to reteach a classroom full of kids individually. And no one person can do that... And then you [still] have this whole group that is still down here. And now with some of these strategies, making sure I'm doing the formative assessments, knowing where they're at, being able to pull them back and hitting [missed skills] real quick and getting that under control, making sure they have a solid model to work with... those things have made a real difference in my classroom. [With a clear model] all they had to do was listen, answer questions, ask questions, and get that cleared up before it was their turn and I set them off. And now, they can do it. So that has been a very powerful change. Just building that awareness in the classroom is great. The "I do, we do, you do," is such a huge component. And I remember in one of our cluster meetings I stopped

and it was like kind of an "aha" moment, it was like, I thought that's what I was doing. Like I really thought that's what I was doing in my classroom and I'm like oh no, that's not what I'm doing in my classroom. The I do part that I thought was an I do, really in my classroom was more of a we do, and I was losing those kids. They weren't listening to what I was doing and what I was talking about because they were trying to copy everything that I was writing. So when I take that out and they're not writing, they're not responsible for doing anything but listening, I mean I noticed a huge difference. And what they were able to do independently without me at the end having to go around and answer the same question seventeen times... that has made a tremendous difference.

Stephen also noted how his learning has changed the environment in his classroom:

We talked about modeling and our master teacher did a modeling exercise and I really wasn't a proponent of modeling. I didn't like it. I thought it was... I just didn't like it. I thought it was weird. But I said I would try it because she did it in class one day and I thought well, I understand it a little more, so maybe it will help my students. So I've been working on modeling in a few lessons and it really helped students out. One particular lesson I remember doing... The day before I explained the lesson and I did it and the kids didn't understand it. And we went to TAP, I looked back into my TAP, in the notes I had taken at TAP and I said well maybe I'll try modeling this. I thought it was something I can do and when I tried it, the students just told me, 'This is great. I understand it now. When we do something like this again can you explain it this way?' So I thought that was great feedback from them. I knew it worked. And then I saw a lot of grades improve on that particular lesson that we did. We gave a test on it. So it was something that they understood. They gave me feedback on which I thought was great because sometimes

you don't get honest feedback from your students. They would say, 'Coach we enjoyed this. Can you do it like this again?' And then for me to see the actual work that they did to see how their grades have improved, that's helped a lot as well. It's now okay to be wrong in my class. It's okay for you to ask a question and be wrong and I'm not going to be upset with you or no one else is going to be upset with you because you're practicing. This is something we've been talking about lately in cluster: it's okay to allow kids to fail when they are practicing. They can learn from their failures.

Tom elaborated on how the student-focus of his leadership team has impacted his willingness to be open to their suggestions:

You want to stimulate innovation instead of stagnate innovation. Over time it felt good to do the same old strategies over and over every day, but then again you realize you're not reaching everyone. I've got a classroom: I'm meeting some kids' objectives, but some kids are not getting it all because you failed to develop yourself. You failed to grow. TAP again has taught me that I am a teacher, but I'm also a learner. So now I'm learning and teaching which is going to help my students. I want them to have input; I love to hear them talk. Sometimes during the whole class discussion, I can now see that, although I may have shared a concept with them, they're confused. I've learned now that when I put them in groups and let them talk about it, now they have a clearer understanding. One of the best words I can think about for how to describe it is transformational. The answers are not going to be the way you may have said it, but if you can see that the concepts are there, then you can see that they are getting it. You can look at your end of the year assessment scores to see where maybe reading comprehension wasn't their strong point, but now you see them starting to close-read text. Now when you ask them to paraphrase

it, they can do it. They can share, they can discuss it, and they can even argue with you about it, and that's pretty good. It goes to show that they have grasped it; they have control of it.

Brad summarized how the support he has received helped him to become more intentional and reflective with his practice. He described how his students have benefited from his new learning:

I just think I've taken a look at myself. I think I have always been a good teacher; I have never been a slacker. But now, I think I have become a better teacher because I've really had to look at some of the things I'm not good at. I think by doing that, it's helped me to change in the way I teach. I'm really trying to figure out ways to differentiate. I am no longer giving everybody the same thing and saying I'm just doing my job because I am covering the standards. It has really made me look in the mirror and ask: how can you really do a little bit more to help this student who might be struggling in this area or this student that might be an ESOL student? For example, in the past, I would just change what we were doing into Spanish for my ESOL students. Well, that sounds great and all, and you think that you are going above and beyond, but some of the students that we have speak a different dialect of Spanish, and they can't read Spanish. It's been even more tough to really help those students. But now I have more strategies to help all of my students. Most of everything I have changed, I would continue to do. I think I will continue to grow as long as I am doing this. Whereas at some point I might have gotten stagnant just because every time I was getting observed, I was doing okay and my kids were doing okay. Now there is constant reflection, which I used to do with my other

hobbies, but not with teaching. So now I think I will be intrinsically motivated, even if we didn't have TAP, to try to continue to do that, because it's helping my students.

Discussion

Through the interviews, it became apparent that the support structures associated with TAP might help to create opportunities for teacher reflection and development. However, the aforementioned TAP Elements of Success, i.e. professional development opportunities, ongoing applied professional growth with mentored support, instructionally focused accountability, and performance-based compensation, do not automatically grant a supportive environment that guarantees an increase in perceptions of efficacy and a likelihood to implement lasting change. Additionally, the types of support structures provided do not have as significant of an impact as the way that the support was implemented. The study revealed that regardless of gender, years of experience, or courses taught, the support needed to feel helpful and not as if it had been mandated. Safe learning environments, clear expectations, modeling by lead learners, reflective conversations, and student-focused conversation were essential to help teachers feel open to change. Male interviewees generally focused on how clear expectations empowered them to make changes in their classrooms, which, along with reflective conversations, allowed them to observe noticeable student gains. Females primarily focused on how safe learning environments allowed them to feel comfortable in order to have reflective conversations which focused on changes in their practice as it impacts students' growth. Teachers who have taught three years or less also focused on the importance of safe learning environments, whereas the teachers who have been teaching longer, generally nine years or more, focused on how lead learners modeling growth behaviors helped them to feel open to new changes. There were no discernable trends amongst content areas. However, all interviewees reiterated how through the discussion of how

their changes positively impacted student learning, they were more likely to continue with their modifications.

The theoretical framework derived from the interviews revealed the following characteristics:

- **Safe Learning Environments:** Support was presented in a non-threatening way that focused on growth versus perfection. Transparency was encouraged and reciprocated as support members were viewed as approachable and vested members of a team working together to support student learning.
- **Clear Expectations:** All support members set clear and specific expectations using a common language to focus on growth. These clear expectations were presented whole group in addition to being discussed on an individual basis in order to meet the needs of the teachers and students using explicit and actionable solutions.
- **Lead Learners Model:** Leaders presented themselves as lead learners that modeled how to set clear and demanding expectations for themselves and others. These lead learners were transparent and non-judgmental as they proactively supported new learning.
- **Reflective Conversations:** Conversations were facilitated soon after support visits to discuss positive observations as well as possible suggestions. Suggestions were not posed as mandates; rather, two-way conversations were utilized to discuss potential growth options and considerations for implementation.
- **Student-Focused:** Leaders kept all learning focused on student learning and development. Systemic shifts occurred when there was observable and measurable student growth.

Summary

Only through trust can reciprocal relationships be built which can focus on growth and student achievement. Leadership team members must work collaboratively with teachers to

empower them and help them to become open to new ideas and reflection. Through an atmosphere of mutual respect, a common vision for improvement can be established, and lasting change therefore becomes possible. Ultimately, students will benefit from this collaboration and growth. Chapter 4 described the findings from the interviews and the subsequent themes derived. The research questions have been analyzed using grounded theory and will be used in the next chapter to determine the conclusions and broader theoretical issues in relation to this qualitative study. The following chapter will present the conclusions of these data.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study was to construct a theoretical framework explaining the connection between hands-on support and its impact on second-order change. The theory developed provides an explanation of effective leadership practices and how they impact teachers' openness and willingness to change. The theoretical framework revealed the following characteristics:

- **Safe Learning Environments:** Support was presented in a non-threatening way that focused on growth versus perfection. Transparency was encouraged and reciprocated as support members were viewed as approachable and vested members of a team working together to support student learning.
- **Clear Expectations:** All support members set clear and specific expectations using a common language to focus on growth. These clear expectations were presented whole group in addition to being discussed on an individual basis in order to meet the needs of the teachers and students using explicit and actionable solutions.
- **Lead Learners Model:** Leaders presented themselves as lead learners that modeled how to set clear and demanding expectations for themselves and others. These lead learners were transparent and non-judgmental as they proactively supported new learning.
- **Reflective Conversations:** Conversations were facilitated soon after support visits to discuss positive observations as well as possible suggestions. Suggestions were not posed as mandates; rather, two-way conversations were utilized to discuss potential growth options and considerations for implementation.

- Student-Focused: Leaders kept all learning focused on student learning and development. Systemic shifts occurred when there was observable and measurable student growth.

These characteristics help to answer the research questions:

- 1) What educational support structures are perceived by teachers to be the most supportive and effective?
- 2) How does the type of support provided to teachers influence their perception of efficacy?
- 3) How does this create second-order change?

Research Question 1:

What educational support structures are perceived by teachers to be the most supportive and effective?

When determining how to create support structures that teachers will find helpful, one must first ask, “What makes the support feel supportive?” Creating a safe environment wherein all members can be transparent is key. Therefore, the participants cannot feel intimidated to collaborate and share their successes or failures. In order for this to occur, student growth must be the center for all conversation. The focus should always come back to student growth, and so reflections should begin with what students learned as a result of the lesson. All suggestions should be framed as recommendations, not mandates, for ways to help students learn. Teachers respond best to suggestions when they are designed specifically for them, and there are numerous options from which to choose and implement. Suggestions should never be framed as “doing it my way,” but should be made clear as to how, specifically, the suggestion will impact student learning. Support members should work to build open communication and positive relationships with the people that they support. They must demonstrate that they truly care about

each person individually by continually offering support and working collaboratively to create strategies. Support members should never appear as judgmental or hierarchical; rather they should be open to brainstorming and discussing strategies collectively. It is imperative that the mentors are available and take the appropriate time to support individual teacher development. Principals must be involved in this process as well because the support team should be viewed as a group of lead learners who practice what they preach by “going first” and modeling their expectations for staff. Being lead learners will reiterate the idea that the leadership team is focused on the common goal of growth for all students. The more that growth for students can be labeled and the expectations can be clearly communicated, the more likely it is that everyone will be working toward a common vision.

Research Question 2:

How does the type of support provided to teachers influence their perception of efficacy?

When answering this question, one must ask, “What leads to increased feelings of efficacy?” During the interviews, it became clear that teachers appreciated hearing positive comments along with suggestions for further development. As previously stated, suggestions should not be presented as mandates but rather as viable options. Reflective conversations should take place after teachers and leadership team members try the new strategies in order to debrief on how it went honestly and openly. Therefore, these conversations should not be high-risk but should instead work to facilitate teacher reflection. Perceptions of efficacy increase when there is success; therefore evidence of growth in relation to student learning should be collected and labeled during these reflective conversations. The leadership team should also reiterate the idea that everyone can continuously grow to ultimately increase student development, so leadership team members should be focused on growth versus perfection in order to model efficacious

behaviors. The leadership team should present themselves as lead learners while modeling efficacious conversations and behaviors in order to consistently communicate a vision for growth.

Research Question 3:

How does this create second-order change?

When analyzing how to create second-order change, one must examine how to transition the aforementioned shifts in cognition, behaviors, and practices into lasting changes. These changes become a non-linear chain of events, since different thoughts and behaviors may impact a broader understanding of the rationale behind what one is doing and why. With increasing clarity of expectations, a rationale for said expectations may begin to be built. A clear rationale will lead to a deeper understanding of the shifts. These shifts must be supported by a change in student learning in order for the changes to become permanent. Positive gains in student learning will motivate staff and lead to a new mindset for “how” and “why” things are done in specific ways. Such gains will be supported by observable progress results.

Throughout the interviews, it became apparent that systemic change occurred when teachers saw how the changes that they were making in relation to their instruction impacted student learning. Whitney clarified, “It works for me because it’s personally catered to me. They’ve lived it with me, and then they can tell me how to use this information and make [my teaching] better. It’s more like the real world versus theory, like real teaching versus college, and so it has helped my kids.” Mary seconded that notion, stating, “I’m seeing the positives from it. That makes me want to continue with it. I would not want to go back: I’ve seen too much growth.” Brandi summarized her experience, stating, “I have grown so much with TAP. I could not go back and teach in the way even I did last year. It makes me feel more prepared, and I can now

anticipate their learning difficulties before I teach. I just have loved everything. Is it stressful? Absolutely. Is it worth it? Absolutely.”

By working with support personnel to identify an area of need and formulating a strategic plan, teachers felt supported in their efforts to modify their current teaching practices. After implementing these instructional methods and reflecting upon the results to analyze the impact on student learning, teachers were able to see the direct impact that their strategies had on student achievement. Therefore, when teachers saw the benefits from the support provided as it related to student learning, they were much more likely to incorporate the new ideas into their regular teaching practice, thus creating second-order change.

Broader Theoretical Issues

This study will be used to examine how hands-on support can be applied and conducted. The participants repeatedly reiterated that the way in which the support was applied influenced their perception of that support. Therefore, their experiences with the support that they received, or how it felt to them, had a major impact on how the suggestions were taken and applied. The implementation of these support structures has major implications on the way that support can translate into classroom practice, which determines whether second-order change is possible. Teachers responded best to support structures when they felt that they were in a safe, collaborative, and trusting environment that was focused on student learning above all else. Relationships had to be built and maintained with clear expectations and a vision for growth and reflection for all. With these support elements in place, change can be applied and analyzed, and second-order change can begin to take place.

Implications

The qualitative grounded theory research focused on how hands-on support impacts

second-order change while providing an in-depth look at how the implementation of the support being provided impacts teachers' likelihood to apply the suggestions provided. The implications of said research provided an understanding of how the implementation of the hands-on TAP support structures impact teachers' perceptions of support, efficacy, and lasting change. The study has added to the limited empirical research on how hands-on support impacts second-order change. Data obtained have implications for various stakeholders in education including policymakers, administrators, teachers, and leadership teams currently working with TAP or prospective TAP schools. The implications of this case study will increase the support that is available to teachers and students in all schools, not just SC TAP elementary schools.

For Policymakers

According to the results of this study, providing authentic hands-on support wherein leadership team members are available, knowledgeable, and trustworthy is beneficial for all teachers, regardless of age, experience, gender, or subjects taught. Hands-on support fosters professional growth and increases perceptions of efficacy, thus generating lasting change. Therefore, embedding support structures into all schools should be considered when developing educational policy. Job-embedded professional development, observations, and assessment analysis are all valuable tools, but without the support necessary to follow up during teacher implementation after the initial meeting, much of the new learning may be lost or misunderstood. Support personnel is necessary to ensure teachers receive the assistance required to accomplish positive second-order change.

For Administrators

Based on the data gathered, shared leadership is the most effective way to ensure that teachers receive the level of support that is most beneficial. Availability is necessary in order to

build a trusting relationship that can focus on support and growth through coaching and reflection. That being said, the teachers were appreciative when the leadership team spoke through a common voice. Therefore, it is critical that principals are active participants in the development and delivery of the support in their building. When administrators are the lead learners in the building, teachers and staff can feel safe to be transparent as they reflect and grow in their own professional development.

For Teachers

Through the data analysis of the study, it is evident that there is a strong need for teacher support in schools. Teachers have an ever-increasing list of demands, yet there is little time set aside to reflect on how their practices evolve and influence student learning. By incorporating differentiated hands-on support structures, leadership teams can collaboratively work with teachers to assist them in their individual professional growth and reflective practices. If teachers can have clear expectations that are consistently focused on student development, they will be more likely to develop their craft, and will hopefully be more inclined to stay in the profession.

For Leadership Teams

Leadership teams can gather information on the most effective ways to incorporate hands-on support structures as a result of this study. It is imperative that leadership teams clearly communicate a common vision for improvement. Support should be continuous, non-threatening, reciprocal, and mutually respectful. Teacher interviewees reiterated that an atmosphere of trust and respect must be built and maintained wherein teachers feel free to ask questions, express their thoughts, and voice frustrations. Teachers appreciated empathetic mentors who were actively listening and responding with suggestions for improvement rather

than mandating policies or making ‘gotcha’ observations. Teachers also stated that it was critically important that they could trust their mentors knowing that all support was focused on improving student learning. They needed to feel safe to take risks and reflect on what they would like to continue in order to increase perceptions of efficacy and promote positive second-order change.

For TAP or Prospective TAP Schools

This research can assist current and future TAP schools by deciding how to implement the TAP Elements of Success, i.e. professional development opportunities, ongoing applied professional growth with mentored support, instructionally focused accountability, and performance-based compensation. The data can also assist schools as they prepare to hire leadership team members to ensure that the prospective candidates possess the qualities necessary to provide effective hands-on support that feels supportive. When conducting interviews, it is important to note the personal and professional characteristics necessary to be an effective leadership team member. If the goal of the leadership team is to instill lasting change within the building, the support must be provided in a way that encourages efficacy and promotes second-order change.

Limitations of the Process Used

Limitations of the study include the size of the data collection group, the regional location, and the variety of participants since the study was conducted in one small, rural district as well as a small, third-year charter school in a rural suburb of South Carolina. Additional limitations involved the purposeful sampling group: schools that were effectively implementing the support structures associated with TAP were selected, and only teachers who were demonstrating growth were asked to participate. Further limitations may include the

involvement of administration and the TAP System since principals made the teacher recommendations and the researcher worked for the TAP organization.

Recommendations for Further Research

This was a small case study; therefore, it may not be possible to generalize the findings to larger institutions with larger populations. Efforts to replicate the research in the future can benefit from including larger populations in more diverse educational settings. Additionally, it remains unclear whether the level of coursework being studied has an effect on the results, therefore the effects of hands-on support on faculty and students in college level course work may be analyzed to examine the relationship between the coursework and the effect of the hands-on support on second-order change. It is also unknown if the support structures implemented would have an impact on teacher retention or reduce teacher dropout rates, so the relationship between hands-on support and the retention rate for teachers to analyze how long teachers remain in their schools or in the profession with hands-on support may be examined. Additionally, the principal's perspective was not considered. The relationship between the leadership team's support and their perceptions of second-order change should be considered when examining the relationship between their hands-on support and its impact on change. Future research should be conducted to examine the principal and leadership team's perspectives. Finally, the study was conducted in TAP schools with TAP leadership teams, which include principals, master teachers, and mentor teachers. It remains unclear how hands-on support could be applied without the assistance of a leadership team. Future research should be conducted to examine how to provide hands-on support without the structure of a leadership team.

Summary

This study has examined how educational leaders' hands-on support impacts second-order change. The way that the support is provided has surfaced to be the most important theme identified in the study. The perception of the educational leaders within the building as well as the way that their support is perceived impacts the way that teachers take and use their recommendations. Without clarity and safety to make changes as well as "how" and "why" to use the support in relation to how it impact students' learning, changes will not be made, and systemic shifts will not occur.

REFERENCES

- Adelman, H., & Taylor, L. (2007). Systemic change for school improvement. *Journal of Educational and Psychological Consultation*, 17(1), 55-77. Retrieved from <http://www.smhp.psych.ucla.edu/publications/systemic%20change%20for%20school%20improvement.pdf>
- Barlow, A. A. Frick, T. M., Barker, H. L., & Phelps, A. J. (2014). Modeling instruction: The impact of professional development on instructional practices. *Science Educator*, 23(1), 14-26. Retrieved from <http://connection.ebscohost.com/c/articles/97393906/modeling-instruction-impact-professional-development-instructional-practices>
- Bass, B., & Avolio, B. (1994) *Improving organizational effectiveness through transformational leadership*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Bass, B., & Riggio, R. (1995). *Transformational Leadership*. New York: Taylor & Francis Group.
- Bayar, A. (2014) The components of effective professional development activities in terms of teachers' perspective. *International Online Journal of Educational Sciences*, 6(2), 319-327. Retrieved from http://www.iojes.net/userfiles/Article/IOJES_1314.pdf
- Berger, R., Rugen, L, Woodfin, L. (2014). *Leaders of their own learning*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Birman, B.F., Desimone, L., Porter, A.C., & Garet, M.S. (2000). Designing professional development that works. *Educational Leadership*, 57(8), 28-33. Retrieved from http://www.ascd.org/ASCD/pdf/journals/ed_lead/el200005_birman.pdf
- Blackorby, J., & Wagner, M. (1996). Longitudinal postschool outcomes of youth with disabilities: Findings from the National Longitudinal Transition Study. *Exceptional Children*, 62(5), 399-413.

- Calder, B. (2006). Educational leadership with a vision. *The Community College Enterprise*, 12(2) 81-89. Retrieved from <http://www.schoolcraft.edu/pdfs/cce/12.2.81-89.pdf>
- Council of Chief State School Officers. (1996). *Interstate school leaders licensure consortium standards for school leaders*. Retrieved from www.ccsso.org
- Creswell, J. (2003). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2003). *Strategies of qualitative inquiry* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- DuFour, R., & Mattos, M. (2013). How do principals really improve schools? *Educational Leadership*, 70(7) 34-40. Retrieved from <http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/apr13/vol70/num07/How-Do-Principals-Really-Improve-Schools.aspx>
- Fisher, D., & Frey, N. (2012). *Improving adolescent literacy: Content area strategies at work* (3rd ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- Fullan, M. (2011). *Change leader: Learning to do what matters most*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass/Wiley.
- Glaser, B., & Strauss, A. (1967). *The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research*. New York, NY: Aldine de Gruyter.
- Hallinger, P. (2003). Leading educational change: Reflections on the practice of instructional and transformational leadership. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 33(3), 329-346. Retrieved from <https://www.aisnsw.edu.au/Services/EmbeddingExcellence/Reference%20list/Leading%20Educational%20Change%20-%20reflections%20on%20the%20practice%20of%20instructional%20and%20transformational%20leadership.pdf>

- Harrison, J. (2011). Instructor transformational leadership and student outcomes. *Emerging Leadership Journeys*, 4 (1), 82-136.
- Henson, R. K. (2001). Teacher self-efficacy: Substantive implications and measurement dilemmas. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Educational Research Exchange, College Station, TX. Retrieved from <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED452208.pdf>
- Hipp, K. A. (1996). Teacher efficacy: Influence of principal leadership behavior. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, NY. Retrieved from <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED396409.pdf>
- Holloway, J. (2004). Research link / Mentoring new leaders. *Educational Leadership*, 61(7), 87-88. Retrieved from <http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/apr04/vol61/num07/-Mentoring-New-Leaders.aspx>
- Hord, S. (1997). Professional learning communities: What are they and why are they important? *Issues About...Change*, 6(1), 1-8. Retrieved from http://www.sedl.org/change/issues/issues61/Issues_Vol6_No1_1997.pdf
- Houston, P., Blankstein, A., & Cole, R. (2008). *Spirituality in Educational Leadership*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Hoy, W. K., Sweetland, S. R., & Smith, P. A. (2002). Toward an organizational model of achievement in high schools: The significance of collective efficacy. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 38(1), 77-93. Retrieved from <http://eaq.sagepub.com/>
- Institute of Education Sciences. National Center for Educational Statistics. Retrieved from <http://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=16>
- Jerald, C. D. (2007). Believing and achieving (Issue Brief). *Washington, DC: Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement*. Retrieved from <http://www.centerforcsri.org>.

- Kunkle, A. (2015). Mentoring for lifelong learners. *ASCD Express*, 11(7). Retrieved from <http://www.ascd.org/ascd-express/vol11/1107-kunkle.aspx>
- Lacey, A., & Luff, D. (2009). Qualitative data analysis. *National Institute for Health Research*. Retrieved from https://web.rds-yh.shef.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/9_Qualitative_Data_Analysis_Revision_2009.pdf
- Lambert, L. (2006). Half of teachers quit in five years. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved from <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/05/08/AR2006050801344.html>
- LaRossa, R. (2005). Grounded theory methods and qualitative family research. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 67(4), 837-857.
- Lavy, V. (2007). Using performance-based pay to improve the quality of teachers. *The Future of Children*, 17(1), 87-109.
- Luckerhoff, J., & Guillemette, F. (2011). The conflicts between grounded theory requirements and institutional requirements for scientific research. *The Qualitative Report*, 16(2), 396-414.
- Marzano, P. (2003). *What works in schools: Translating research into action*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Maslow, A. (1954). *Motivation and personality*. New York: Harper.
- Mayer, J., Salovey, P., Caruso, D., & Sitarenios, G. (2001). Emotional intelligence as a standard intelligence. *American Psychological Association*, 1(3), 232-242. DOI: 10.1037///1528-3542.1.3.232.
- McLeod, S. (2014). Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. *Simply Psychology*. Retrieved from <http://www.simplypsychology.org/maslow.html>
- Mello, J., & Flint, D. (2009). A refined view of grounded theory and its application to

- logistics research. *Journal of Business Logistics*, 30(1), 107-125.
- Merton, R. (1948). The Self-Fulfilling prophecy. *The Antioch Review*, 8(2), 193-210.
- Merriam, S. (1998). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Nettles, S., & Herrington, C. (2007). Revisiting the importance of the direct effects of school leadership on student achievement: The implications for school improvement policy. *Peabody Journal of Education*, 82(3) 724-736.
- NIET (*National Institute for Excellence in Teaching*) Retrieved from <http://www.niet.org>
- Onorato, M. (2013). Transformational leadership style in the educational sector: An empirical study of corporate managers and educational leaders. *Academy of Educational Leadership Journal*, 17(1) 33-47. Retrieved from <http://www.alliedacademies.org>
- Prive, T. (2012, December). Top 10 qualities that make a great leader. *Forbes Magazine* Retrieved from <http://www.forbes.com/sites/tanyaprive/2012/12/19/top-10-qualities-that-make-a-great-leader/>
- Protheroe, N. (2008). Teacher efficacy: What is it and why does it matter? *Principal Research Report*. Retrieved from http://www.naesp.org/resources/1/Pdfs/Teacher_Efficacy_What_is_it_and_Does_it_Matter.pdf
- Rice, S. (2010). Getting our best teachers into disadvantaged schools: Differences in the professional and personal factors attracting more effective and less effective teachers to a school. *Educational Research Policy Practices*, 9 177–192 DOI 10.1007/s10671-010-9085-2
- Ritchhart, R. (2015). *Creating cultures of thinking: The eight forces we must master to truly transform our schools*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Rosenholtz, S. (1989). *Teacher's workplace: The social organization of schools*. New York: Longman.

- Rowley, J. (1999). The good mentor. *Educational Leadership*, 56(8), 20-22. Retrieved from <http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/may99/vol56/num08/The-Good-Mentor.aspx>
- Sanders, W. L., & Rivers, J. C. (1996). *Cumulative and residual effects of teachers on future student academic achievement* (Research Progress Report). Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Value-Added Research and Assessment Center
- SAS EVAAS (SAS Institute Inc.) Retrieved from http://www.sas.com/content/dam/SAS/en_us/doc/overviewbrochure/sas-evaas-k12-104570.pdf
- Shapiro, J., & Stefkovich, J. (2005). *Ethical leadership and decision making in education*. New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group.
- Shaughnessy, M. F. (2004). An interview with Anita Woolfolk: The educational psychology of teacher efficacy. *Educational Psychology Review*, 16(2), 153-175. Retrieved from <http://www.uky.edu/~eushe2/Pajares/WoolfolkEPRInt.pdf>
- The National Academy for Academic Leadership. Leadership and institutional change. Retrieved from <http://www.thenationalacademy.org/ready/change.html>
- Transformational leadership (2015). *Changing Minds*. Retrieved from http://changingminds.org/disciplines/leadership/styles/transformational_leadership.html
- Tugend, A. (2012, March 23). Praise is fleeting, but brickbats we recall. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/03/24/your-money/why-people-remember-negative-events-more-than-positive-ones.html>
- Turan, S., & Bektas, F. (2013). The relationship between school culture and leadership practices. *Eurasian Journal of Educational Research (EJER)*, 52, 155-168. Retrieved from <http://www.ejer.com.tr/0download/pdf/eng/turaneng52.pdf>

- Ubben, G., Hughes, L., & Norris, C. (2011). *The principal: Creative leadership for excellence in schools*. New Jersey: Pearson Education, Inc. Upper Saddle River.
- Vanderhaar, J., Munoz, M.A., & Rodosky, R. (2006). Leadership as accountability for learning: The effects of school poverty, teacher experience, previous achievement, and principal preparation programs on student achievement. *Journal of Personnel Evaluation in Education*, 19(1-2), 17-33. Retrieved from <http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007%2Fs11092-007-9033-8#page-1>
- Wagner, T. (1993). Systemic change: Rethinking the purpose of school. *Educational Leadership*, 51(1) 24-28. Retrieved from <http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/sept93/vol51/num01/Systemic-Change@-Rethinking-the-Purpose-of-School.aspx>
- Wang, C. (2011). Multi-level modeling of principal authority and teachers' trust and engagement. *Academy of Educational Leadership Journal*, 15(4) 125-147. Retrieved from <http://www.freepatentsonline.com/article/Academy-Educational-Leadership-Journal/263157472.html>
- Wood, T., & McCarthy, C. (2002). Understanding and preventing teacher burnout. *Eric Digest*. Retrieved from <http://www.ericdigests.org/2004-1/burnout.html>

Appendix A

Email to Principals Regarding Research Collection

Hello Principals,

As many of you know, I am currently working on my dissertation for my Ed.D. through Carson-Newman University. For my study, I'm examining the relationship between educational leaders' hands-on support methods and the implications of those support structures on second-order change. To gather information for this qualitative study, I am planning on conducting semi-structured interviews with teachers who have benefitted from the support structures associated with TAP and have demonstrated student and teacher gains as a result of the support provided. These teacher and student gains can be measured using teacher observation data, teacher responsibility surveys, and student improvement data using the EVAAS system. Ultimately, I'm hoping to conduct interviews with teachers who have demonstrated improvement in their instruction, morale, and efficacy since TAP has been implemented and can reflect on how those gains were made. This is where I need your assistance. Could you please send me the names and emails of two (2) teachers in your building that you see as having benefitted from the support structures associated with TAP and who would be willing to discuss how, if at all, those structures have aided in their ability to grow professionally? These interviews will be conducted individually, will be kept confidential, and will last approximately 30 minutes each. I'd like to conduct the interviews in early February, so I'm hoping to reach out to teachers next week to see if they'd be willing to participate if that would be amenable with you. Please let me know at your earliest convenience who you think would be viable candidates.

Thanks,

Amy Kunkle
SC TAP Regional Master Teacher
(***)***_*****

Appendix B

Email to Teachers Regarding Research Collection

Dear (Teacher),

I hope you're well and that the year is running smoothly. I have a favor to ask of you. (Your Principal) identified you as someone who has demonstrated growth and made student gains since the implementation of TAP, and so I was wondering if I may set up a short interview with you regarding the support that you've received since the implementation of TAP in your building. I'm gathering this information for my dissertation through Carson-Newman University, so it is not affiliated with TAP in any way. I'm examining how hands-on support impacts second-order change, and so I'm conducting the interviews to gather qualitative data in order to determine trends amongst educators. This interview would last no longer than 30 minutes, and all information discussed would remain anonymous and confidential with no information being used against you in any way (please see the attached consent form for further information regarding the protection of all participants). If you would be willing to participate in this interview, please let me know a time that you'll be available between x/x-y/y to sit down together. I appreciate your time and consideration, and I look forward to hearing back from you soon.

Thanks,

Amy Kunkle
SC TAP Regional Master Teacher
(***)***_****

Appendix C

Research Consent Form: Teacher Interviews

- **Study Title:** Effective Educational Leadership Support Structures and their Implications on Second-Order Change
- **Performance Site**
The performance site includes six schools in rural South Carolina. Five schools are in a small rural district that implemented TAP last year; one school is a charter school in a SC suburb that implemented TAP two years ago.
- **Contact information**
The following investigators are available for questions about this research study:
 - Name: Amy Kunkle ***-***-****
 - Her Advisor, Name: Dr. Brenda Dean ***-***-****
 I may address any questions about my rights as a participant in the study by contacting:
 - The University of Carson-Newman Office of Research Compliance
- **Purpose of the study**
The purpose of this study is to construct a theoretical framework explaining the relationship between educational leaders' hands-on support methods and the implications of those support structures on second-order change. The study will add to the current research by further exploring the ways that educational leaders, including instructional coaches, building-level administration, and instructional leaders within the building, can support teachers and impact their perceptions of support and growth. Considering the significant turnover rate amongst new teachers, coupled with the increasing demands on teachers, the need for teacher support continues to grow. This study considers the ways that effective educational leaders support teachers in addition to the implications of those support structures as they relate to second-order change. This study will contribute to the knowledge base of specific support structures that lead to second-order change in schools.
- **Study procedures**
I understand that I am participating in a study of how hands-on support structures influence teacher self-efficacy and subsequent second-order change. I am aware that I have been identified by my principal as someone who has benefitted from such support structures and have agreed to be interviewed about how my experience with TAP has impacted my effectiveness as an instructor. I understand that the interview will be recorded using a digital recorder. My interview data will be then be qualitatively transcribed and coded to yield patterns and trends. Once it is transcribed, I will be provided with a copy of the transcript and asked to verify the information provided. At that time I will have the opportunity to remove anything from the record that I would not like to be reported. Once the digital recording has been transcribed, the recording will be destroyed.
- **Risks**
Due to the nature of this study, I understand that there may be some risk to those who participate in this study. Every effort will be made to ensure the confidentiality of participants; identification of respondents will be notated by number and the schools by letter. My participation in the study is strictly voluntary and my identity and answers will

remain confidential and will not be used against me in any way. However, the nature of the research may not provide for complete confidentiality as descriptions of the process and school characteristics provided through the interview process may cause the data to be recognizable to other members of that school staff. Notes and all data analysis will be kept on the computer of the principal investigator that is pass code protected.

- **Benefits**
Potential benefits from participation in this research include a greater understanding of how educational leaders, including instructional coaches, building-level administration, and instructional leaders can support teachers and impact their perceptions of support and growth.
- **Right to refuse**
I understand that I may choose not to participate and I may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. I also understand that I have the right to refuse to answer any question without penalty.
- **Privacy:** Results of the study may be published but no names or identifying information will be included in the publication. Subject identity will remain confidential unless disclosure is required by law.
- **Signatures:** This study has been discussed with me and all my questions have been answered. I may direct additional questions regarding study specifics to the investigators. I am 18 years of age or older. I freely consent to participate in the study described above and acknowledge the investigator's obligation to provide me with a signed copy of this consent form.

I agree to participate in the study.

I withdraw from the study at this time.

Signature of Participant

Date

Signature of Investigator

Date

Appendix D

Semi-Structured Interview Protocol with Teachers

Interviewer:	
Interviewee:	
Date:	
School:	
Length of Employment:	
Courses Taught:	

“The recorder is recording now. I would like to first say thank you for taking the time to speak with me today about the support you’ve received and how that’s impacted your work with students. My first question is...”

Appendix E

Interview Guide: Interview Questions

1. In what areas of the TAP rubric do you feel proficient?
2. In what areas of the TAP rubric do you feel like you have grown?
3. To what do you attribute this growth?
4. Your principal has identified you as someone with positive personal and student gains since the implementation of TAP. To what extent have the changes that you have made impacted student learning, and how can you tell?
5. There are several types of support in this school, such as model lessons, team-teaching, co-planning, observation with feedback, and/or reflective conversations. Which support structure have you found to be the most beneficial and why?
6. Thinking back to a specific time that someone effectively supported you, can you share what the person supporting you did that made that experience beneficial for you?
7. Tell me about a specific example of when you received support that you did not find helpful.
8. You have talked about two different types of support visits; what about the beneficial support visit made it different and more helpful than the second experience?
9. What characteristics of the educational leaders within your building, such as administrators, master teachers, or mentor teachers, do you appreciate most?
10. We all know that there are certain things in education that you cannot control with your students. What do you believe is within your realm of control in relation to student learning?
11. How, if at all, have these beliefs changed?

12. Do you feel like you are better equipped to teach a variety of students (i.e. advanced, proficient, struggling, ELL students) since the implementation of TAP? If so, how? If not, explain.
13. If TAP was not in your school, has your learning changed your teaching practice for years to come? What is one thing that has changed in your practice that you will continue to do?
14. What support were you provided in that area?
15. Of the following support types: model lessons, team-teaching, co-planning, observation with feedback, and/or reflective conversations, which type of support would you like more of in the future and why?

Is there anything else you'd like to add or any other questions?

Appendix F

Email to Teachers Regarding Transcriptions

Dear (Teacher),

Thank you again so much for agreeing to meet with me to discuss the growth you've received and how it's impacted your work with students. I've included a copy of the transcription from our interview since I wanted to provide you with an opportunity to review your answers to see if there's anything that you'd like to be added or taken off the record. These transcriptions were completed by an external company using the audio recording, so please do not feel as though you need to read for grammar or spelling, but if there is anything content-wise that you would like to clarify or change in relation to your responses, I wanted you to have that opportunity. As we discussed previously, all identifiable information will be deleted/changed from the final dissertation. If you have any questions about this, or anything else, please do not hesitate to contact me.

If I do not hear back from you with any specific items you'd like to revise, I'll plan on using this information in the final two chapters of the dissertation.

Thanks,

Amy Kunkle
SC TAP Regional Master Teacher
(***)***_****

VITA

Amy Kunkle currently resides in Hilton Head, SC. She completed her Bachelor of Arts at the University of Tennessee in English Literature with a Minor in Elementary Education. She also completed her Master of Science in Elementary Education at the University of Tennessee in the Individualized Instruction Program. After working in industry for several years, she returned to higher education and earned an Educational Specialist Degree in Educational Leadership from Carson-Newman University. She is currently a Regional Master Teacher with South Carolina TAP in the South Carolina Department of Education and is pursuing an Ed.D. in Educational Leadership: Curriculum and Instruction from Carson-Newman University. Upon completion of her studies, she will continue to work with educators and educational leaders to further support student learning and development.