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An Autobiographical Study of My Beliefs, Attributes, and Practices as an Instructional Support Consultant

Jennifer Wilcox Dove
Andrews University

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AN AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL STUDY OF MY BELIEFS, ATTRIBUTES, AND PRACTICES AS AN INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT CONSULTANT

A Dissertation
Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Doctor of Philosophy

by
Jennifer Wilcox Dove
December 2002
AN AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL STUDY OF MY BELIEFS,
ATTRIBUTES AND PRACTICES AS AN
INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT
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ABSTRACT

AN AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL STUDY OF MY BELIEFS, ATTRIBUTES, AND PRACTICES AS AN INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT CONSULTANT

by

Jennifer Wilcox Dove

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ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Dissertation

Andrews University
School of Education

TITLE: AN AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL STUDY OF MY BELIEFS, ATTRIBUTES, AND PRACTICES AS AN INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT CONSULTANT

Name of researcher: Jennifer Wilcox Dove
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Date completed: December 2002

Problem

People ask what I do as an instructional support consultant. Over time, I have created my own approach to instructional support. This study uncovers the beliefs and attributes that drive my practices as an instructional support consultant, as well as those that comprise my model of instructional support.

Method

Using a narrative autobiographical approach, I analyzed early experiences that provided a foundation for beliefs I have about teaching and learning. With the help of close colleagues, I analyzed my current beliefs, attributes, and practices. I wrote stories
using my journals and conversations I had with close colleagues. I also presented my findings using stories, poems, readers' theaters, and metaphors so that readers can experience what I do and draw their own conclusions, as well as read about the results I found after doing this study.

Results

After analyzing my early experiences and stories about my current role as an instructional support consultant, I found six major beliefs, eight attributes, and five major practices that exist in who I am now. To help all students learn, educators believe that all people can learn. Linked to this driving belief is that all people are different, success breeds success, learning is situated and dependent upon need, learning is social, and learning is a process of risk-taking and problem solving. Bringing these beliefs alive requires educators to use curriculum-based assessment, differentiated instruction, cooperative learning, and incremental instruction while honoring and meeting people's basic human needs. The driving practice causing these practices and beliefs to be fluid and interacting is the need for constant reflection on our beliefs and practices. When we reflect, we see what we can do differently and what we can alter to continually bring our beliefs alive in the classroom.

Conclusions

To increase student achievement, I help teachers and students apply learning theory and implement the beliefs and practices stated above. Through continual reflective journaling and dialoging with close colleagues and people with whom I work in
the classroom. I constantly learn and grow in discovering how to bring my beliefs alive in my model of instructional support.
To my husband, William, for all of his love, support, and encouragement to pursue my dreams.
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I am eternally grateful to my mom who has played many roles in my life: my mom, my teacher, my writing partner, my editor, my devil's advocate, my supporter, and my sounding board. I would not be who I am today without my mom's knowledge, ability to teach, and continual love and support. My mom has been my writing coach since I first learned to write my name in the summer of 1975. She was mowing the lawn, and I was a determined 4-year-old running back and forth from my paper on the step to her in the middle of the lawn asking for the next letter. Through my school years, my mom served as my writing partner and eventually my 11th-grade English teacher. I learned much of what I know about effective teaching from my mom. My mom has been
with me every step of the way in my quest toward bettering education. This dissertation came alive sitting in our living room at home with my bouncing ideas off of my mom. She listened, asked questions, and offered feedback for my dissertation ideas, which quickly grew into an outline. She has read every draft since that point, has eagerly offered meaningful suggestions, and patiently has edited my work with me. For all of this time, interest, and energy, I am thankful.

I am grateful to my dad for the many skills I gained from him as well. My outlook on life and my approach to roadblocks definitely comes from my dad. My dad was also my music teacher throughout my years in school and has taught me much about what I know about good teaching as well. He allowed me several leadership opportunities at a young age where I was able to try out my teaching skills by working one on one with other music students and with the entire orchestra. My dad always looks for a way to solve any problem and has “thought outside of the box” during his entire teaching career. He also has a great way of seeing the positive side of people. This has helped him be the successful teacher he has been for 40+ years. I am most grateful to my dad for bringing me up as a spontaneous musician who is willing to take risks and perform without being polished. It is okay to make mistakes—we all do. How you handle yourself in these situations is what really matters. When I began my dissertation, I did not know much about the methodology, but had no qualms about jumping right in. If I had waited until I knew all there was to know about narrative and autobiographical methodology, I never would be where I am today. For your support, encouragement, and faith, I am grateful.
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Sometimes the heart sees what is invisible to the eye.

H. Jackson Brown, Jr.

Prologue to the Study

Someone can tell me facts, someone can give me examples, but until I live them, I will not understand them or remember them. I make sense of my world through experience. I am constantly telling, watching, and hearing stories of my experience as well as others' experiences. My older sister used to be highly entertained by my telling slightly exaggerated stories of my daily experiences in kindergarten. My mom has been the sounding board for my stories all the way through school and currently through my work in schools. For other people, my life seems to be a soap opera, which other people like to follow, waiting anxiously for the next update on the latest events in my life. I enjoy telling these stories, reflecting upon them, and living new ones. I often think about what might have happened if I had done or said something differently or if fate had simply taken a different course. I attempt to learn from my experiences and try new approaches when I get another chance. It is through the telling and the reliving of my stories that I realize I have made the same mistakes again or that something I did actually worked.
When struggling to find a dissertation topic, my advisor asked me what I really wanted to do. I told him I want to make a difference in education. I want to share what I do with others so that they may be able to implement a similar model of educational reform. I tried to find a clean, cut-and-dried topic that could be proven easily in a quantitative study. After muddling through several ideas, my advisor and I came to the realization that quantitative methodology was not going to show what I wanted to uncover in my dissertation. I cannot quantify what I do in my job as an instructional support consultant. I do not work with exactly the same type, number, and ability levels of students all of the time. Also, I do not work with the exact same content areas all of the time. Nor do I do just one type of instructional training. I simply could not design a quantitative study that would show what I do. To explain to my advisor the complexity of what I do as an instructional support consultant. I began telling a story detailing one day at school. He stopped me halfway through and said, "Every time you talk to me, you tell me stories. Maybe you should think about telling your stories in a qualitative study."

A light bulb went off. This was it! Analyzing my stories would be a great way to uncover and share the nuances, intricacies, and multifaceted aspects of my work as an instructional support consultant.

**Background of the Problem**

"Who trained you?" "What courses did you take to become an instructional support consultant?" "What exactly do you do as an instructional support consultant?"

These are among several questions that have been almost impossible for me to answer in a casual 2 minute exchange with an interested principal or superintendent after a presentation I have done for various districts. How do I answer these questions? I feel
people are looking to purchase a book I have read or hire the one person who "trained" me in all that I know and do as an instructional support consultant. The reason I struggle with my answer is because it is not that simple. I cannot give such an easy answer.

I have been acquiring knowledge about both the science and art of teaching for years, probably since I was in kindergarten where I had my own definite ideas about what instruction should look like or allow me to do. I have lived vicariously through my parents' experiences as teachers before gaining my own early experiences with teaching. My dad is a music teacher who taught strings for 37 years before retiring to work as an adjunct professor at a college. I was one of my dad's youngest students as I began learning to play the violin at age 3. My dad often created opportunities for his students to teach other students. I spent much of my childhood watching my dad teach students and teaching violin students myself. My mom taught high-school English for several years and now is teaching English as an adjunct at an area college. I listened to every story my mom had to tell after an exciting day at school or a discouraging one. I often dialogued with her about her experiences and offered my thoughts. Spending much of my time at school in her classroom waiting for her to be ready to go home. I saw much of what teaching entails. I spent many an evening watching her teach after-school review classes and SAT preparation classes. By the time I was in her class as a junior, I began working with some of her students as a tutor. I spent the next 2 years working with students in her classes on writing skills. As well as having these vicarious and direct teaching experiences, I also watched all of my own teachers closely every year. I analyzed the teaching or lack of teaching that occurred in the classroom, noticed the effects on myself.
as well as other children, and constantly dialogued with my mom about the problems with the current educational system.

What do I do? Many people ask me this, and I struggle to provide a simple answer that is easily understood. In my role, I am an instructional support consultant as well as a systems change agent. The sole outcome of my job is to improve classroom instruction that ideally will have long-term results for today’s students as well as future students coming through the system. The only way to do this is to work with teachers and administrators to affect their approach to instruction and assessment. This dissertation provides helpful information to anyone interested in becoming an instructional support consultant or anyone interested in making staff development more effective through the guided practice approach (Joyce & Showers, 1995). I hope to uncover the “how’s” and “why’s” of what I do on a daily basis in my role in order to answer better the question, “What exactly do you do?”

Statement of the Problem

Traditionally, teachers have been isolated in their classrooms (Karrer, 1996). Any training teachers receive in workshops does not tend to come alive in their classrooms because they do not have someone to show them how the training can work with their own students in their content areas. Practice, coaching, and feedback are missing in most current staff development programs (Joyce & Showers, 1995). When education preparation programs were separated into special education programs and regular education programs, the regular education teachers no longer received training in instructional strategies to meet various learning needs (Pugach, 1995; Tucker, 1985). I have the unique position of being the person who can offer support geared to teachers'
individual needs in their own classrooms. In this dissertation, I uncover what I do in my role and how I do my work so that others may implement similar roles. School districts interested in implementing this model of instructional support need to know how an instructional support consultant works in this unique leadership role. People also may want to know what beliefs, attributes, and training an instructional support consultant should have in order to put the practices of this model in place.

**Purpose of the Study**

This study uncovers the beliefs, attributes, and practices that shape my understanding of the concept of instructional support. First, I look at my early experiences with education to determine what experiences and knowledge have shaped my current understanding of education. Then, I identify recurring beliefs and practices that highlight my role as an instructional support consultant to define what and how I work as an educational reform agent.

**Significance of the Study**

This dissertation adds to the literature on instructional support, instructional consultation, and staff development by offering stories of what it is like to deliver such instruction. This dissertation also presents one way of implementing the instructional support model. Colleen Fairbanks (1996) states, “One of the most compelling interests in storytelling resides in the power that narrative generates to bring to life for readers’ classrooms and schools in all of their complexity” (p. 339).
Research Questions

1. In what ways have early experiences shaped my beliefs, attributes, and current practices as an educator?

2. What beliefs and attributes can be identified in my current practice as an instructional support consultant?

3. How do my beliefs interact with my practices?

Definitions of Terms

The following terms are defined in order to clarify their usage in this study:

 Attribute: A characteristic or trait that is associated with a person, often produced by the beliefs held by an individual (The American Heritage Dictionary, 1980).

 Belief: An opinion or conviction about a topic (The American Heritage Dictionary, 1980).

 Composite Story: A narrative story that is comprised of many different people and experiences to make a point more clear and instructive (Barone & Eisner, 1997; Richardson, 1990).

 Curriculum Based Assessment (CBA): A process of discovering prior knowledge and skill level in order to determine what help a person needs to be successful with a given learning task. This process is ongoing as the person works through and masters each new task that is attempted (Gickling & Thompson, 2001; Hargis, 1995; Tucker, 1985).

 Curriculum Casualty: When an assignment is not at the appropriate instructional level (Gickling & Thompson, 1985).
**Found Poem:** A poem created from data or text by extracting key words, phrases, and feelings to create a poem from the overall ideas of the text (Butler-Kisber, 2002; Lambert, 2002; Sullivan, 2000).

**Instructional Level:** The point where a person has enough background information and skills needed to be successful in learning the new material (Gickling & Thompson, 1985; Hargis, 1995, 1997).

**Instructional Match:** When a person has the prerequisite knowledge and skill to be successful with the new assigned task (Gickling & Thompson, 1985; Hargis, 1995, 1997).

**Instructional Support:** A model offering immediate help to students and teachers, enabling success with their learning endeavors within the regular classroom. Students and teachers learn about learning theory and its applications in order to be successful in learning any new content (Wall & Tucker, 1992).

**Instructional Support Consultant:** This person helps as many students and teachers as possible to determine learning needs and ways to meet these needs within the instructional setting. This person has no scheduled classroom responsibilities in order to have the flexibility to meet teacher and student needs (State of Pennsylvania, 1995; Wall & Tucker, 1992).

**KWL:** A strategy used for evoking prior knowledge about a topic, determining desired learned material about a topic, and then after the lesson or unit, processing the degree of learning which occurred: "K" stands for what a student already knows, "W" stands for what a student wants to know about the given topic, and the "L" stands for what the student has learned about the topic at the end of the lesson or unit (Buehl, 1995).
Learning Theory: Research-based principles about how people learn (Driscoll. 2000).

Magnet Word: A main word that attracts all of the supporting details in a piece of text (Buehl. 1995).

Metaphor: A comparison of something expansive and unfamiliar to something concrete and succinct (Miles & Huberman. 1984; Richardson. 1990).

Pocket Words: Flashcards small enough to carry in a pocket and used to play review games as a way of increasing the repetition that is needed in order to learn any drill and skill content (Gickling. 1999).

Practice: An action a person performs habitually or customarily, that is driven by a belief or a set of beliefs (The American Heritage Dictionary. 1980).

Readers' Theater: A presentation of a script which is written to represent different voices and perspectives (Konzal. 1995).

Red Dot/Green Dot Chart: A chart with sight words, vocabulary words, math facts, etc. placed in separate boxes in the chart so students can quiz each other and place a green dot in the boxes that their partners can say, define, or answer quickly and place a red dot in the boxes that need to be reviewed more (Gickling. 1999).

Strategy: A tool, skill, or vehicle that a learner uses in order to achieve a learning goal (Cunningham & Allington, 1999).

Structure: A Kagan Cooperative Learning vehicle such as “Fan-N-Pick” which can be used in any cooperative learning situation which builds in classroom management and the basic principles for learning in a cooperative setting: Positive Interdependence, Individual Accountability, Equal Participation, Simultaneous Interaction (Kagan. 1994).
**Word Wall:** Placed on a wall, important words from a unit, essential content vocabulary, and/or words that students will need to know and will be able to use when discussing and learning about a topic or concept of study (Gickling, 1999).

**Organization of the Study**

Chapter 1 presents a glimpse into who I am and why I chose to do this study. I explain the purpose and significance of this study. Then I present the research questions, the limitations of the study, and a list of important terms that are important for understanding the content of this dissertation.

In chapter 2, I share support for doing an autobiographical study and for using the narrative inquiry approach as a method of finding the connections and patterns in stories of my experiences as a child and as an educator. I explain my inquiry process by sharing the steps I used in this study to find the major themes that have emerged in order to answer my three research questions.

Chapter 3 looks at my early experiences that have shaped and created the foundation for the beliefs and practices that I hold today as an educator. I include four main stories with six found poems and weave in reflections throughout the chapter to model the reflective process that took place during this study. Then I have included a readers' theater to share some of the information concerning my beliefs and attributes that I gained during several conversations with close colleagues about my role as an instructional support consultant. I use their direct words in order to add outside voices and perspectives to my study. I close the chapter with some conclusions that I have drawn about my beliefs that stem from my early experiences and about the attributes that my colleagues have identified in my work as an ISC.
Whenever something new is introduced, people try to make meaning of the new information. Chapter 4 is a presentation of composite multiple perspective stories in which students, teachers, and the instructional support consultant try to determine who the instructional support consultant is and what this person does. The chapter closes with a readers' theater, which gives voice to the teachers who have discovered what I do in my role.

Chapter 5 presents a series of stories that attempts to capture the multiple layers of the role that the instructional support consultant plays within the instructional support model. Throughout the chapter, I reflect on the various layers as I see them unfold in the stories as they are presented. The chapter closes with another readers' theater in which my close colleagues discuss the metaphors they have thought about in order to describe what I do in my role.

After the analysis of my beliefs, other people's perspectives about who I am and what I do, and my own stories about what I do to show the complexity of the multilayered role I play. Chapter 6 brings the whole picture together by explaining what the model is and where it comes from. It answers many commonly asked questions about what the instructional support consultant does on a daily basis. This chapter also contains the scholarly literature supporting the model described and defined in this chapter.

Chapter 7 then returns to the research questions that began this study. Pulling from the data: my journals, the interviews and conversations with colleagues, and the stories I have written. I summarize the main themes that have emerged in this study.

Appendix A contains the theme charts I created to analyze the various themes from my stories and from the conversations I had with close colleagues. The last chart I
include shows the beliefs and practices I pulled from this study. I include a model of the TIES 14 Components in Appendix B. Appendix C contains a handout that outlines the role of the ISC as well as samples of my record-keeping sheets to show my work with teachers, students, and grade-level teams. Appendix D includes three statements about the impact instructional support has had on their teaching made by teachers with whom I have worked closely over the past 2 years.
CHAPTER TWO

LOOKING INWARD TO EXPLORE THE SELF ON

THE STORIED LANDSCAPE

One of the most salient characteristics of qualitative research, especially ethnography, is that the researcher is preeminently the research tool.

Harry F. Wolcott

Methodology for This Study

Who am I as a teacher educator? How did I come to know what I know as a teacher educator? How did I acquire my beliefs about education? What do I do as a teacher educator? An autobiographical study has the potential to answer these questions about my knowledge and about what I do in my job. When choosing a methodology, one looks at finding the best match for the research questions. As a reflective practitioner, I am continually attempting to make sense of my daily experiences. This reflective thinking has always helped me to connect what I have been learning with what I do in education (Dewey, 1910/1997; Loughran, 1996; Mahabir, 1993; Schon, 1983; van Manen, 1990). Dewey (1910/1997) defines reflective thought as “active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it, and the further conclusions to which it tends” (p. 6). Boud, Keogh, and Walker (1985) state:
Reflection is an important human activity in which people recapture their experience, think about it, mull it over, and evaluate it. It is this working with experience that is important in learning. The capacity to reflect is developed to different stages in different people, and it may be this ability, which characterizes those who learn effectively from experience. (as cited in Loughran, 1996, p. 19)

Mahabir (1993) discusses autobiography as a way of knowing and the importance of reflection on our past experiences. She states, “Reflection helps me weave the connections between my past experiences of education and present understanding of negotiating curriculum. As I write about and share these stories, I become aware of where I come from, where I am, and where I would like to be in the future” (p. 19).

Joyce and Showers (1995) state, “We acknowledge the link between beliefs and practice in the field of staff development and invite readers to examine their own beliefs as together we search for ways to design and conduct effective systems” (p. 23). Clandinin and Connelly (1995) discuss the difficulty of balancing theory and practice in the teaching profession. They state, “We work in an uneasy professional environment never sure of our position relative to theory and practice, constantly confronted by the conflicting claims of theory and practice” (p. 6). Reflection in action (Dewey, 1910/1997; Loughran, 1996; Schon, 1983) helps us to deal with the paradox of theory and practice and to work through the struggle that Clandinin and Connelly describe.

Reason (1988) argues for a process of working with other people when reflecting on practices and beliefs in a more “participatory universe.” Reason states, “Co-operative inquiry seeks knowledge in action and for action” (p. 13). When using co-operative inquiry as part of this reflective process, we come to a “high degree of self-knowing, self-reflection, and co-operative criticism” (Reason, 1988, p. 13). Reason goes on to state, “Good co-operative inquiry is both wholeheartedly involved and intensely self-critical.”
Schon (1983) explains that we often come to know while doing what we do on a daily basis. This is where theory and practice come together (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Lambert, 2002; Schon, 1983). Schon (1983) explains, "If common sense recognizes knowing-in-action, it also recognizes that we sometimes think about what we are doing. Phrases like 'thinking on your feet,' 'keeping your wits about you,' and 'learning by doing' suggest that we can think about doing while doing it" (p. 54).

**Autobiography as Research Model**

Using the key word *autobiography*, I found 1.870 examples of dissertations where authors conducted studies using some form of autobiography. When narrowing my search using the key words *autobiography* and *education*, I found 255 abstracts of research done in the field of education using autobiographical methods. The common research tools and methodologies most authors discussed were hermeneutic methodology, heuristic inquiry, phenomenological inquiry, narrative inquiry, and autobiographical narration.

Alex Nelson (1994) studied adult learning using autobiographical methodology. He found story-telling helps the process of autobiographical learning, and autobiography by its very nature is the making of a narrative. He says the researcher needs to use hermeneutical skills to identify the structures of meaning within the narrative. He also found that conversation is a major research tool for autobiographical learning because autobiographical learning involves both reflection and critical thinking. Engaging in dialogue about one's learning helps people to understand, reflect, and make deeper connections than they might have when only thinking. He refers to Socrates' process of questioning when talking about this type of dialogue. He also cites Merriam in stating,
"Adult learning requires collaborative methods for discovering 'how people make sense of their lives, what they experience, how they interpret these experiences, and how they structure their social worlds'” (Merriam, 1988, as cited in Nelson, 1994, p. 19). Nelson (1994) expands his point on conversation as a research tool by saying:

The metaphor of conversation appears to describe well what occurs in autobiographical learning. . . . The most obvious and ordinary way in which life stories are told and pondered is in conversation. This dialogue may be at times one’s interior reflection on significant events, or the keeping of a journal; at other times it may be shared with familiar hearers or strangers; or again, presented for public attention in some imaginative form. . . . The telling of the story does not in itself constitute autobiographical learning. However, in the presence of a critical friend whose imaginative knowing both receives and questions the narrative, the autobiography is progressively constructed through these interior and exterior dimensions of conversation. Conversation is, therefore, an everyday hermeneutical process through which narrators gain self-understanding. (pp. 400-401)

Clandinin and Connelly (1994) also endorse the use of conversation as a research method of gaining a more complete picture as well as working collaboratively with the people in the study where the researcher and the people in the study are equals in the relationship. They state:

Conversation entails listening. The listener's response may constitute a probe into experience that takes the representation of experience far beyond what is possible in an interview. Indeed, there is probing in conversation, in-depth probing, but it is done in a situation of mutual trust, listening, and caring for the experience described by the other. Once again, we see the centrality of relationship among researchers and participants. (p. 422)


To teach . . . is to engage as a person as well as a professional. Teaching is not a professional act divorced from the personal. That is not reality. . . . I value being
reflexive: I spend a lot of time thinking about my teaching, about my research, and about who I am and what I do and why I do, and its impact. ... Doing that is how I define my work. It has had a very powerful impact on me as a person and, hopefully, as a teacher. (p. 5)

As a basis for their study, they cite Pinar (1975) as stating:

It is important to understand what principles and patterns have been operative in one’s educational life, in order to achieve a more profound understanding of one’s own educational experience, as well as to illuminate parts of the inner world and deepen one’s self-understanding generally. (as cited in Trapedo-Dworsky & Cole, 1999, p. 389)

To determine these principles and patterns, Trapedo-Dworsky and Cole (1999) conducted a “systematic thematic analysis” of documents in order to uncover the main principles and themes driving Cole’s teaching today (p. 1). “In our interpretation, we trace themes to their personal history-based roots, and in so doing uncover the ‘domain assumptions’ (Pinar, 1981) that underlie Ardra’s teaching practice. This kind of analysis exemplifies the notion of teaching as an autobiographical project” (p. 2).

Giving further explanation of their study and rationale for using autobiography, they state:

In this focused personal history-based account of Ardra’s teaching practice, we reconstructed some of the elements of her personal history that find expression in her pedagogy—the beliefs, values, and perspectives firmly rooted in Ardra’s early experiences which gave shape and meaning to her adult self and her teaching practice. As we followed the narrative threads that emerged through our analysis, we became increasingly aware of the entangled nature of the personal and professional realms of our lives, and the importance of making those connections known to ourselves. Autobiographical or reflexive inquiry is one way of clarifying and comprehending the link between the personal and the professional. (p. 5)

Support for Autobiography

According to L. Smith (1994):
Autobiography is a special case of life writing. . . Autobiography suggests the power of agency in social and literary affairs. It gives voice to people long denied access. By example, it usually, but not always, eulogizes the subjective, the ‘important part of human existence’ over the objective, ‘less significant parts of life.’ It blurs the borders of fiction and non-fiction. And, by example, it is a sharp critique of positivist social science. In short, from my perspective, autobiography in its changing forms is at the core of late twentieth century paradigmatic shifts in the structures of thought. (p. 288)


What I make of these cautions [to take the self out of her writing] is to follow the traditional social science dictum to erase the human presence in the research. Although it might be the easier route to conform to the mandates. I find it antithetical to the nature of the endeavor of understanding our social worlds and unacceptable to trade a fuller understanding for approval. (p. 190)

Gloria Ladson-Billings (1997) explains. “I resist the notions of myself as ‘objective’ researcher when what I research is so intricately linked to the life I have lived and continue to live” (p. 52). Billings found that autobiographical research connected the unreal world of theory with the real world of experience (p. 55). Montero-Sieburth (1997) feels one becomes a “fragmented self” when one separates research from teaching. She states. “Research devoid of self becomes immobilizing” (p. 146).

Neumann and Peterson (1997) argue that the research of the 11 women they studied for their book Learning From Our Lives: Women, Research, and Autobiography...
in Education changed significantly when combining autobiographical study with their previous methods:

To mute the personal learning needs of these researchers, in their research, would not have created better studies; it would likely have obliterated areas of study. We suspect that what imbues these authors' research with social value—what makes their studies compelling to those for whom they write—is their framing of these studies from within their own experiences of the problems they pursue, as opposed to relying on the experiences of others. Their work then emerges as a more personal statement of their learning and thus as more open to personal connection with the learning needs of others. (p. 244)

It is through self-study that we learn or come to know much of what we do and how we react. By studying our own lives and realizing what has influenced our lives and our beliefs, we can see roots in our current beliefs. Neumann and Peterson (1997) explain that we can “learn authentically from our own experiences” through autobiographical study (p. 229). Clandinin and Connelly (2000), Elbaz (1983), Loughran (1996), and van Manen (1991) are well known for their studies on teacher thinking. Autobiography offers teachers a method for analyzing their thinking. In the field of education, teaching is so complex that empirical research has not been able to uncover all that is involved in the art and science of teaching. Many researchers (Bruner, 1996; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Hannabuss, 2000; Loughran, 1996; Russo, 1996; Schon, 1983; van Manen, 1991) today have found much value in reflective thinking as a way of knowing.

When teaching, teachers make many decisions based on the needs of the students with whom they work, the circumstances of the day, the content to be taught, the level of ability in the class, etc. We can learn much from teachers by knowing what they are thinking about when they make these decisions. Also, teachers can learn much about teaching by analyzing what they have done and what they could have done differently.
next time, instead of simply going through the process of what they have been told is
good teaching. This self-analysis is critical to improving teaching (Fullan & Hargreaves,
1996). No single approach to teaching works every time, and a formula cannot be
applied to good teaching. Teaching is much too complicated for this (Elbaz, 1983; Good
& Brophy, 2000; Kohl, 1976; Loughran, 1996; Stronge, 2002). Teaching is both a
science and an art, and one needs to apply principles of both in order to be an effective
is no simple matter. It is hard work, part craft, part art, part technique, part politics, and it
takes time to develop ease within such a complex role" (p. 13). Kathryn Au (1997)
concluded after her intense study of literacy instruction that "effective instruction may
take more than one form. Definitions of effective teaching need to be broad enough to
take into account a range of practices beyond those typically seen in mainstream settings"
(p. 88).

The Narrative Approach to an Autobiographical Study

Narrative inquiry has become a strongly supported research methodology
especially in the field of education. A discussion takes place about what exactly story is
and how it should be used in research (Bruner, 1996; Carter, 1993; Clandinin &
& Hawkins, 1988; Richardson, 1990; Witherell & Noddings, 1991). Story illustrates or
represents experience. In order to help people see and understand an experience, it is
sometimes necessary to use a story as the closest way of helping people experience a
phenomenon without actually being there. Witherell and Noddings (1991) explain.
"Stories can help us to understand by making the abstract concrete and accessible. What
is only dimly perceived at the level of principle may become vivid and affectively powerful in the concrete” (p. 279).

Clandinin and Connelly (1994) make a distinction between story and narrative by explaining that the story is the phenomenon while the inquiry is narrative. They state, "Thus we say that people by nature lead storied lives and tell stories of those lives, whereas narrative researchers describe such lives, collect and tell stories of them, and write narratives of experience” (p. 416). Reason and Hawkins (1988) state:

When we start to see storytelling as an aspect of inquiry, we discover an important new dimension: inquiry can work either to explain or express; to analyze or to understand. This is part of the realm of presentational knowing (Heron, 1981a) – knowing expressed in art, in poetry, in dance, and here in the telling of stories. (p. 79)

Historically, story and narrative have been accepted ways of knowing even though they have not received as much attention as the scientific method. Clandinin and Connelly (1991), two leading researchers in the field of narrative research, cite Novak (1975) as saying, “Story . . . is an ancient and altogether human method. The human being alone among the creatures on the earth is a storytelling animal: sees the present rising out of the past, heading into a future; perceives reality in narrative form” (p. 258). In Narrative Inquiry, Clandinin and Connelly (2000) trace the roots of narrative alongside the roots of scientific methodology. They explain that John Dewey and Thorndike were key people of these two differing beliefs. They state:

We see the competition between Dewey and Thorndike as competition between two stories of how to do social science research. . . . We found ourselves turning away from experience when involved in research. We found ourselves quantifying what interested us, and of course, as we quantified experience, its richness and expression was stripped away. . . . Narrative became a way of understanding experience. (p. xxv)
Bruner (1996) also questions the scientific method as being the only way of knowing when he says:

We devote an enormous amount of pedagogical effort to teaching the methods of science and rational thought: what is involved in verification, what constitutes contradiction, how to convert mere utterances into testable propositions, and on down the list. For these are the "methods" for creating a "reality according to science." Yet we live most of our lives in a world constructed according to the rules and devices of narrative. Surely education could provide richer opportunities than it does for creating the metacognitive sensitivity needed for coping with the world of narrative reality and its competing claims. (p. 149)

Bruner (1996) continues his comparison of story with the scientific method in the following excerpt:

What, in fact, is gained and what is lost when human beings make sense of the world by telling stories about it—by using the narrative mode for construing reality? The usual answer to this question is a kind of doxology delivered in the name of "the scientific method": Thou shalt not indulge self-delusion, nor utter unverifiable propositions, nor commit contradiction, nor treat mere history as cause, and so on. Story, according to such commandments, is not realistic stuff of science and is to be shunned or converted into testable propositions. If meaning making were always dedicated to achieving "scientific" understanding, such cautions might be sensible. But neither the empiricist's tested knowledge nor the rationalist's self-evident truths describe the ground on which ordinary people go about making sense of their experiences—say, what a "cool" greeting from a friend meant, or what the IRA meant by using the word "permanent" in its 1994 cease-fire declaration. These are matters that need a story. And stories need an idea about human encounters, assumptions about whether protagonists understand each other, and preconceptions about normative standards. Matters of this order are what enable us to get successfully from what somebody said to what he meant, from what seems the case to what "really" is. Although the scientific method is hardly irrelevant to all this, it is certainly not the only route to understanding the world. (pp. 130-131)

Others offer similar arguments. Sigrun Gudmundsdottir (1996) states, "Narrative structures are readily available in our culture, and people automatically draw on them in most meaning-making activities" (p. 293). In an article on paradigmatic knowledge, Polkinghorne (1988) states, "Narrative is one of our fundamental structures of comprehension" (p. 15). "The paradigmatic mode searches for universal truth conditions.
whereas the narrative mode looks for particular connections between events. The narrative organizational scheme is of particular importance for understanding human activity" (pp. 17-18).

Story has the ability to bring experience to life so that others too may share in these experiences. Science leaves out an element of humanness that allows us to connect personally with what we hear and read. Part of my struggle in finding a dissertation topic was in finding a way of showing others what I am talking about. The best way I found to share what I do is through stories. Ted Sizer (1984) does just this in his book *Horace's Compromise*. He carefully details one day in the life of Horace, a high-school English teacher, as he goes through his entire day of teaching. We get to see the whole picture of what it is to be an English teacher while experiencing the excitement Horace finds in teaching as well as the many frustrations he experiences. We, too, are frustrated about the system that keeps Horace from doing what he would like in order to be even more effective with student achievement. The frustrations generated from all of the little things that take place and are in effect because of the system cannot be known without a person having actually experienced some of them to see how they truly affect education. I did not have to know Horace in person to experience his life vicariously through story as we have had some common teaching experiences to provide a basis of understanding.

The best way to share life experiences is through sharing stories. According to Kathy Carter (1993), "It (Story) is now . . . a central focus for conducting research in the field" (p. 5). Carter (1993) states, "For many of us . . . these stories capture more than scores of mathematical formulae ever can, the richness and indeterminacy of our experiences as teachers and the complexity of our understandings is what teaching is and
how others can be prepared to engage in this profession” (p. 5). She continues to explain this idea by saying:

Stories become a way . . . of capturing the complexity, specificity, and interconnectedness of the phenomenon with which we deal and, thus, redressed the deficiencies of the traditional atomistic and positivistic approaches in which teaching was decomposed into discrete variables and indicators of effectiveness. (p. 6)

She also points out that at one level, story is a mode of knowing that captures in a special fashion the richness and the nuances of meaning in human affairs. We come to understand sorrow or love or joy or indecision in particularly rich ways through the characters and incidents we become familiar with in novels or plays. This richness and nuance cannot be expressed in definitions, statements of fact, or abstract propositions. It can only be evoked through story. (p. 6)

Stories are powerful for people, as humans are not only academic beings but emotional and social as well. Stories encompass all three. Eisner (1991) explains that people understand through their emotions. He advocates studying the whole person. Empathy is the ability to don the shoes of another human being. One experiences this in reading Elie Wiesel or Truman Capote. Good writers put you there. Empathy pertains to feeling or emotion, and emotion, interestingly, is often regarded as the enemy of cognition. I reject such a view. To read about people or places or events that are emotionally powerful and to receive an eviscerated account is to read something of a lie. Why take the heart out of the situations we are trying to help readers understand? (p. 37)

Polkinghorne (1988) also argues that narrative allows people to understand human existence.

Narrative is the fundamental scheme for linking individual human actions and events into interrelated aspects of an understandable composite. For example, the action of a narrative scheme joins the two separate events “the father died” and “the son cried” into a single episode, “the son cried when his father died.” Seeing the events as connected increases our understanding of them both—the son cares for his father, and the father’s death pains the son. Narrative displays the importance that events have for one another. (p. 13)
A study of the effectiveness of a teaching strategy really does not show the total picture. The study connected with seeing the effects on individual students and teachers that one gets to know through story means more. If a teacher reads a story about what a class was like before implementing a strategy, sees ways to implement the strategy, and then experiences the results vicariously through story, that teacher is more likely to implement such a strategy in his or her own classroom (Eisner, 1991).

According to John Dewey (1910/1997), life is experience, and the study of education is the study of life (p. 156). Clandinin and Connelly (2000), therefore, conclude that education equals experience (p. xxiv). Clandinin and Connelly (2000) use Dewey's metaphor as a foundation for their work in narrative inquiry. They state, "Experience is the stories people live. People live stories, reaffirm them, modify them, and create new ones. Stories lived and told educate the self and others, including the young and those such as researchers who are new to their communities" (p. xxvi). They also state "narrative inquiry is a way of understanding experience" (p. 20).

Polkinghorne (1988) defines narrative as "the kind of organizational scheme expressed in story form" (p. 13). Education is not a conglomeration of isolated facts; education is relational and relations are best captured in stories. These stories become an ideal way to analyze, uncover, and reflect on educational issues. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) explain that people can learn continually from stories as they read and relive them over and over again, finding more ways for understanding of lived experiences. Reason and Hawkins (1988) state, "Stories can also change how experience is gathered. Instead of asking 'Tell me about . . . .' which leads to an explanatory account. one can ask, 'Tell me the story . . . .' which invites more expression" (p. 100). Polkinghorne (1988) states.
"The realm of meaning is not static; it is enlarged by the new experiences it is continuously configuring as well as by its own refiguring process, which is carried through reflection and recollection" (p. 15). It is this reflection on story that leads to new ideas and new learning.

Smith (1994) supports this use of reflection in stating:

Several years ago, Donald Schon (1983, 1987) introduced the concept of the "reflective practitioner" into the professional literature. In one sense, his argument is simple. Professional practitioners, be they physicians, architects, or teachers—or one might add, craft persons or artists—face "situations of practice" characterized by complexity, uncertainty, instability, uniqueness, and value conflict. In my view, that is a formidable set of dimensions. In Schon's view, the problems professionals face cannot be solved by the formulas of "technical rationality." I would extend his view to social scientists in general and those doing qualitative case studies in particular. The problems and dilemmas confronting life writers as they practice some aspect or form of the craft of biography have the same quality. (p. 289)

Questions About Generalizing

Being able to generalize is a genuine concern many people have when they hear about a qualitative study, especially using autobiography. People are able to connect with other stories if they have had some similar experiences. Eisner (1991) explains this concept of generalizing.

All learning involves generalization. Since the test of someone's learning is the person's ability to display what has been learned in new situations, and since no two situations are identical, generalization must occur... Most generalizations are derived from life itself. A young child who touches a hot teapot generalizes, whether correctly or not, to the potential consequences of touching other teapots. ... Direct contact with the qualitative world is one of our most important sources of generalization. But another extremely important source (of generalization) is secured vicariously through parables, pictures, and precepts. One of the most useful of human abilities is the ability to learn from the experience of others. We do not need to learn everything first-hand. We listen to story-tellers and learn about how things were, and we use what we have been told to make decisions about what will be. ... Narratives are potentially rich sources of generalizations:
all contribute significantly to our lesson learning. All are in a sense, one-shot case studies. (pp. 202-203)

Humans have been learning through story from the beginning as we see in the Bible. Jesus taught with parables as a way of helping people learn and understand the basic principles he was teaching. Stories make the complicated easier to understand as we relate to characters within a story, and through our imagination we experience what the characters are experiencing. This is why using story in research can be so powerful (Greene, 1995).

Documents/ Information for the Study

I have been in the position of an instructional support consultant for 212 years. Over this period, I have written journal entries, philosophy statements, weekly summaries, reflective pieces, and stories about the teachers and students I have worked with in this position. I have 362 pages of raw data including a log that accounts for what I have done every hour of my professional working day for 2 years—letters and thank-you notes written to me from many of the teachers I have worked with outlining how I have helped them become better teachers, journal entries I have written, and e-mails I have written in conversation with others about what I am doing in order to make meaning of my role. My journal entries describe every step of the process I have taken to implement the model the way I have come to understand it. In these entries, I reflect on my work in the classroom, out of the classroom, with teachers, with teams, and with administrators. I also interviewed seven teachers and or family members who know what I do, have seen me in action, and have offered me valuable insight about the “what and how” of my role.
as an instructional support consultant. I transcribed the tapes I used during our conversations so I could analyze the discussions in detail throughout my research.

My Process

In this dissertation, I tell stories of my daily experiences with students and teachers both in and out of the classroom. I am affecting change on many levels in many different ways. My stories capture the essence of these nuances and intricacies so that others may see and understand what is necessary and how to go about delivering such instruction. In the process of this study, I have come to a clearer understanding myself of all that I really do as an instructional support consultant, teacher of students and teachers alike. In this study I uncover the stories of what I do every day, analyze them, reflect on them, and draw out common themes to share with others who are interested in educational reform.

In looking at the experiences that have led to my current beliefs about education, I have written about and talked about my earliest experiences in school. First, I wrote some stories that always come to mind when thinking back to my childhood. After writing these stories, I pulled out key words and phrases from each paragraph. I then put these words together to form found poems as another method of analyzing the data to draw out themes from my stories (Butler-Kisber, 2002; Lambert, 2002; Sullivan, 2000). These themes stood out as the essence of what I was trying to capture in my stories. Found poems are a way of getting at the core and then communicating this core to others. I was amazed at how one story held so many recurring themes in my life and held the seeds of some of my major beliefs about teaching and learning. I then made a chart to map out the beliefs I found in my stories and poems and conversations with close
colleagues. After doing looking for themes and patterns that emerged from all of my data sources, I found six major beliefs and five major practices that distinctly stand out in all of the data. I address these themes in discussion sections at the end of chapters 3, 4, and 5 as well as in my discussion about the model of instructional support in chapter 6. At the end of each story or set of stories, I include a reflective piece that models the reflection I do in my role as an educator and that I did while analyzing the data in this study. Another reason for reflecting, rather than telling what I see immediately, is that I first want to let the reader make meaning from my stories and make his/her own interpretations. This also adds validity to my study if the reader as researcher can see similar themes. When the reader brings other meanings to the study, then the study has gained more purpose and value (Barone & Eisner, 1997; Butler-Kisber, 2002). Barone and Eisner (1997) state, “The ultimate test of validity is the extent to which it facilitates the formation of effective educational policy or the improvement of some aspect of educational practice” (p. 86).

The Analysis Continues With the Help of Others

Conversation (Nelson, 1994) played a major role in my study. I dialogued with three people about my professional life. My mom has been my sounding board my whole life so she added an essential perspective to my research as she knows who I was as a small child, who I was in high school, who I was in college, and who I have become as an adult. She has been with me every step of the way and has graciously listened to every detail of my experiences regarding my thinking and understanding of the educational system. My husband has known me for 8 years as a colleague, student, and friend. He has worked with me as a peer and has had the experience of my working in his classroom.
as a staff developer as well as listening to all of my stories while traveling to and from work and being together in the evenings. His insight has added another valuable dimension. The third key person in my study is my office mate. He has listened to my stories, frustrations, and highlights of my job as well. Everyday, I come in with an incredibly exciting story to tell about what has happened or a frustrating story about what is not happening. Sharing an office for 2 years and working closely together in the field of staff development, he has come to a keen understanding of what it is I am trying to do and will let me know when I am doing something that he knows is not in keeping with my convictions. His advice and feedback have helped me learn and grow so much in staying true to my underlying beliefs and convictions. I would not be where I am today without the benefit of conversation with these three key people in my life.

I also engaged in conversations with four of the teachers I have worked closely with in my role as an instructional support consultant. I chose these particular teachers, as these are the ones I had worked with the most, thus would have had the most exposure and experience to draw from when answering questions about what I do and believe. I recorded and transcribed these conversations. I also asked these people to do some writing about my beliefs and practices. Getting insight from this variety of people added depth to my study as well as provided a form of triangulation of data for my study in that I have multiple sources of data (Merriam, 1998). According to Nelson (1994), we know much about ourselves from other people. This dialogue has helped me to see much of what I have not seen about my beliefs, attributes, and practices.

Reason and Hawkins (1988) give suggestions for this co-operative inquiry process of conducting research with others instead of alone. They explain that storytelling can
easily be applied to the co-operative inquiry process. They state, “People are grabbed by stories, and group members will create deeper links to the area of research if these grow out of their own expressed stories” (p. 100). They warn that it is important not to jump immediately to the analysis stage but to attempt to deepen these stories by talking about what the stories remind us of and what they make us wonder about. These reflections can lead to deeper meaning and understanding for all involved in the research process.

Reason and Hawkins state, “Stories are a powerful way of communicating the findings of inquiry to other people. The outcome of co-operative inquiry is often deeply personal and practical, as well as theoretical” (p. 100). For these reasons, I wrote my stories, asked others to tell stories about their work with me, and took time to reflect and dialogue about these experiences with other people close to what I do. When presenting my stories in my dissertation, I do not share my analysis immediately, but share some of my reflective process of asking questions and making connections to other stories I am reminded of when reading my presented stories (Reason & Hawkins, 1988).

**Interview Questions**

I engaged in several different conversations (Clandinin & Connelly, 1994; Nelson, 1994) as a way of collecting data and analyzing the data I already have. These questions guided the discussions I had with my mom, my husband, my office mate, and the teachers I work closely with in their rooms.

1. What do I stand for? What are my underlying beliefs about education? How do you know this?

2. What have you noticed about the way I work with other teachers?

3. When conversing, what do I tend to talk about the most?
4. What issues or concerns do I tend to concentrate on most?

5. Has anything changed about what I do or talk about since you have known me?

Additional questions for the teachers I work with were:

1. Could you briefly describe your involvement with me this year as an IST?
2. How would you describe my role? If you were to tell someone else, what would you say I do?
3. What stands out in your mind when you think about our work together?
4. Can you think of an example or a story that highlights our work together?
5. Describe your comfort level at first with having someone in your room. What feelings did you have? Did that change? If so, what helped you to change? If not, what would have?
6. Thinking about what you have learned this year, what areas have you grown the most in?
7. Is there anything else you want to say about our work together?

Data Analysis Continues

Mary Catherine Bateson (1997) states, "It is ... crucial to empower teachers to learn in their own classrooms. . . . `Everyday' is, after all, where much of learning takes place." Bateson also explains that "experience is a teacher from whom many fail to learn" (p. viii). I have been learning from my experience as well as helping others learn from my experience during my systematic analysis of my work, beliefs, and practices as a teacher educator and systems change agent.
Throughout the research study, I wrote interim texts as a way of interpreting my findings and continuing the research process (Butler-Kisber, 2002; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Richardson, 1990; Wolcott, 1990). Max van Manen (1990) explains that writing mediates reflection and action. He states, "Writing is a kind of self-making or forming. To write is to measure the depth of things, as well as to come to a sense of one’s own depth" (p. 127). Along the way, I continually conversed with the key people I mentioned in order to get their help in analyzing my findings. Multiple perspectives bring greater insight than just one perspective. This collaborative approach to my data analysis helped me uncover more than I realized existed (Butler-Kisber, 2002; Heron, 1988; Reason, 1988). After writing the stories to represent my findings, I looked for patterns emerging these patterns and key ideas using found poems and readers’ theater. The theme charts I created to synthesize and organize my thoughts are included in Appendix A.

Alternate Forms of Representation

I chose to use several alternate forms of representation in the presentation of my findings: both autobiographical and composite stories (Barone & Eisner, 1997; Richardson, 1990), found poems (Butler-Kisber, 2002; Lambert, 2002; Sullivan, 2000), readers’ theater (Konzal, 1995), and metaphor (Miles & Huberman, 1984; Richardson, 1990). No one method can represent and communicate every aspect of a phenomenon (Barone & Eisner, 1997). Since my role is multilayered and complex, I found it important to use a variety of representational forms to attempt to share as complete a picture as possible.
The Use of Story

As stated earlier, story is the chosen method for capturing the complexity of what I do in my role. Sullivan (2000) states, "Aesthetic vision is always from a specific point of view, filtered by a specific consciousness. It is personal and situational. It includes emotion, imagination, and paradox. It embraces complexity" (p. 221). Using story, I am hoping to bring my experiences to the reader by making them personal and situational. Barone and Eisner (1997) use the metaphor of the reader as astronaut to describe this phenomenon.

The journey away from one's own lived world into the realm of the literary text may thus be likened to that of an astronaut's voyage from Earth to moon and back again. In each case, the traveler visits a location near enough to a previously experienced object to recognize it but far enough to place it in a revealing (sometimes startling) new context. A new set of meanings and values suddenly adheres to objects and practices previously taken for granted. Back on Earth, the voyager is a changed person. Old ways of seeing are negated in favor of a fresh outlook, perspective, paradigm, and ideology. (p. 74)

I share stories from my perspective as well as the student and teacher perspective to help the reader enter into these worlds and perhaps see and experience education differently from the way they have before. Barone and Eisner (1997) state, "Through it [story, etc.], readers are brought to vicariously experience events from a different perspective" (p. 77). Barone and Eisner go on to conclude that when readers participate in this story of a new educational phenomena, "they may find that new meanings are constructed, and old values and outlooks are challenged, even negated. When that occurs, the purposes of art have been served" (p. 78).

The stories I share about students and teachers are composite stories for two purposes (Barone & Eisner, 1997; Richardson, 1990). One purpose is to protect the identities of individuals with whom I work. I also have collected so much data, that the
writing of composite stories seemed the best way to share the highlights of my findings without including hundreds of stories. Barone and Eisner (1997) support such use of composite stories stating, “In narrative research, for example, composites of individuals might be created in order to make a point more telling” (p. 89).

The Use of Found Poems

Found poems offered me a way of synthesizing and analyzing my data as well as highlighting the key ideas of my stories, which might be lost or go unnoticed by some readers (Allnutt, 2002; Butler-Kisber, 2002; Lambert, 2002; Sullivan, 2000). I learned this process of constructing data poems from texts from my Chair, Shirley Freed, who gleaned her knowledge from a presentation by Lynn Butler-Kisber at an AERA presentation in April 2002. The process immediately spoke to me and helped me move out of my mountains of data and writings to several brief, succinct statements about my findings. Greene (1998) states, “Poetry, particularly free verse, is a powerful tool for representing. Part of the power of poetry is effected through its brevity and unusual juxtaposition of images” (p. 63). Allnutt (2002) shares that “alternative ‘tools’ such as found poetry . . . serves to open the ‘reading’ of the data to a peripheral vision, to a more embodied, intuitive, and vulnerable interpretation. These more porous readings can be used as either interim and/or final representational forms” (p. 4).

The Use of Readers’ Theater

In attempting to capture the words of the people I interviewed and dialogued with, I chose to use a readers’ theater format to present some conclusions about what I believe, what I do, and how I do what I do. Readers’ theater also offered me another vehicle for
sharing my findings without my simply writing about them. Colleagues and family members added valuable perspectives and insight to this study about my beliefs and practices (Heron, 1988; Reason, 1988). Therefore, I looked for a method of presenting their voices so my voice was not the only voice heard in this dissertation. The different voices and perspectives are more poignant in readers’ theater form (Konzal, 1995).

Konzal (1995) states, “The presentation invites the audience to focus on what is said . . .” (p. 9). Konzal cites Henkin and Tyson (1991) when explaining that “readers’ theater can be a vehicle for helping people to more deeply appreciate the perspectives of others” (pp. 9-10).

Donmoyer and Yennie-Donmoyer (1995) define readers’ theater as “a staged presentation of a piece of text or selected pieces of different texts which are thematically linked” (as cited in Konzal, 1995. p. 8). Konzal (1995) explains, “Readers’ theater provides a vehicle for allowing parent and educator voices to be directly presented for interpretation” (p. 3). Konzal defines readers’ theater as presentational theater rather than representational theater where actors attempt to be the characters.

Presentational theater, while still relying on the voice interpretation of the actor, presents the text more directly to the audience, inviting them to co-construct meaning from the text. “The audience is . . . invited to create meaning with the performers in a transactional or communal experience.” (Donmoyer & Yennie-Donmoyer, 1995, as cited in Konzal, 1995, p. 6)

After coding the transcribed interviews from my colleagues and family members for salient themes, I created charts to lay out the themes with the direct quotes from each person. (See Appendix A.) I felt it was important to use direct quotes in the charts and in the actual readers’ theaters so the reader could hear from other people who have added perspective to my study. By using direct quotes, I felt that I would be able to present the
different voices and personalities of the people I included in my study. When using the charts to write the readers' theaters, I found I had to paraphrase quotes at times in order to reduce the length of the different responses to increase readability for the reader. I was careful to use the same language and voice of the person speaking when cutting and rephrasing some sentences.

Konzal (1995) states:

According to Donmoyer and Yennie-Donmoyer (1995) there are no hard and fast rules for the development of a reader's theater script. However, they argue that script construction is reminiscent of the work typically done by qualitative researchers when they do a content analysis of their transcripts. Text is coded, categories are created, and themes emerge from the analysis. (p. 11)

The Use of Metaphor

In the final readers' theater, which is presented in chapter 5, I use metaphor as a means of capturing the essence of what is and how I do my job. Metaphors are valuable as they pull together many different ideas, concepts, and pieces into one image that people can picture to help them understand what they are learning about (Miles & Huberman, 1984; Thogmartin, 1998). Richardson (1990) states, "Metaphor is the backbone of social science writing, and like a true spine, it bears weight, permits movement, links parts together into a functional, coherent whole—and is not immediately visible" (p. 18). In order to pull together all of the data presented in the various stories, poems, and readers' theaters about my role as an instructional support consultant, metaphors became the appropriate vehicle for capturing many of the findings in this study.
Conclusion

In this autobiographical study, narrative inquiry was the primary methodology used to analyze the lived experiences of myself as well as the students and teachers I work with on the landscapes of my middle school (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Conversation was a significant data-collecting instrument as well as a data analysis tool for me in an effort to better study myself by adding other people's perspectives to my own. Writing as inquiry became real for me as I collected data, wrote interim texts, collected more data, did more writing, etc., in a cyclical and recurrent cycle (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Richardson, 1990; van Manen, 1990). Found poetry became a valuable tool for me in analyzing and representing my data. Readers' theater and the use of metaphor were helpful in summarizing my findings presented in this study.
CHAPTER THREE

EARLY EXPERIENCES

There comes that mysterious meeting in life when someone acknowledges who we are and what we can be, igniting the circuits of our highest potential.

Rusty Berkus

In this chapter, I present four stories and three representational poems about my childhood experiences that give the reader a glimpse into who I am, what experiences have shaped my beliefs, and what these beliefs are. I also wrote three found poems to analyze and capture key ideas that I see in these stories and the reflections written by people helping me analyze what I do and why I do what I do. After each story or poem, or set of stories and poems, I pause to ask questions that come to my mind and comment on some connections I have made. Reflecting on our experiences and practices to see our underlying beliefs is not something we always take time out of our lives to do. I have found this reflective practice to be powerful, and I reflect all of the time either in writing or in dialogue with others. I hope to lead the reader in such reflective thinking by pausing periodically in the presentation of my stories (Heron, 1988; Loughran, 1996; Reason, 1988; Schon, 1983). I close the chapter with thoughts about the major themes I found emerging and the experiences I saw shaping the beliefs I have today about teaching and learning.
Family Stories

I grew up in a small, rural town in Upstate New York. My dad was a string teacher who had a love of teaching others to play and enjoy music. My mom was an English teacher who had a passion for helping all students be the best they could be while under her care. I had an older sister and a younger brother, so I always had someone to play with. One of our favorite games to play was school; however, I quit after my brother took on the role of teacher and demanded that we sit in our seats and fill out pretend worksheets.

Christmas Day

“Remember, no one goes downstairs until we are all ready to go down together.” my mom called out as she heard my brother and me going in to wake up my sister on Christmas morning.

“Wake up, it is Christmas!” we whispered to my sister as we pushed her and climbed up on her double bed. She has the biggest bedroom of the three of us, so we often convened in her room. Her room also happens to be right at the top of the stairs, so it was a convenient place to be while waiting for our parents to get up on Christmas Day.

“Okay, I am awake. Are Mom and Dad up yet?”

“I think they are getting up soon!” my brother eagerly replied.

We decided to go sit on the top steps to wait for the moment when we could go downstairs to see what Santa Claus had left for us.

“Okay, you can go downstairs now. How did everybody sleep?” my mom asked as we went downstairs.

“Fine.” my sister shared.
“I have been up since 4:00 a.m.,” my brother piped in.

“I have been awake since 6:00 a.m., and I decided to get up at 6:30 a.m. to see if anyone else was up.” I added.

The living room was overflowing with presents around the tree, and our stockings that we had hung on the mantel the night before were lying on the floor full of goodies. The middle of the floor had three big lumps covered with old tablecloths Santa had found in our house to cover up the presents he brought for us. He had labeled each cloth with our names. Santa has very shaky handwriting. I checked the mantel next to see if Santa ate all of the goodies we left for him. The cookies and milk were gone, and only the crust from the peanut butter and jelly sandwich was left.

“I told you that you didn’t spread the peanut butter around far enough. Santa does not like plain bread,” my sister chided me.

“Yeah, yeah.” I replied and checked the floor to see that the hay and carrots we had left for the reindeer were gone too.

My brother opened his stocking first as he was the youngest. We all sat and watched what he pulled out and commented on the unique items that Santa was able to make in his workshop. He had been a good boy this year too because he pulled out an orange from the bottom of his stocking instead of a lump of coal. My turn was next, and then I watched my sister, my mom, and finally my dad open their stockings. Then we got to uncover our presents from Santa Claus.

“Ice skates!” I exclaimed. “I was hoping I would get ice skates, so I can skate on the brook this year. I am trying to learn how to do figure eights like Ann Margaret does.”
Then it was time to go help with breakfast. Everyone had a job to do. “Jennifer, you can toast the English muffins and put butter on them when they are done. Then put them on a plate and cover them to keep them warm.” I liked this job because I could be in by the tree looking at all of the unopened presents while I was waiting for the muffins to toast. The suspense was incredible, and I loved trying to guess what was in all of the presents.

My mom made the cream sauce and fried the Canadian bacon while my sister poached the eggs. My brother poured the juice and got out the oranges and grapefruit for my dad to cut for everyone. My mom’s special homemade stollen was already warming in the oven, and we could smell the fresh bread baking. Christmas breakfast always tastes so good. This is the only time of year we have eggs Benedict and stollen which makes it that much more special.

Breakfast was always special, but it seemed to drag on forever. We all talked with each other and enjoyed eating stollen while my mom drank her coffee. Sometimes we had hot chocolate as well. Finally, after everyone had eaten the last bites, we cleared the table and headed back into the living room where we all took our seats. My mom had a piece of paper out to record our gifts so we could all write thank-you notes later.

“Jennifer, you can pass out the gifts if you want.”

I handed out the gifts one at a time. I decided to give my dad the first gift. I couldn’t wait to see his face when he opened my present. “Oh, great! Thank you!” he said as he saw the shirt I had picked out for him. I enjoyed picking out clothes for my dad to wear and hoped he would like the new style.
I continued passing out presents for the next 4 hours. We took mini-breaks here and there to get a drink or to let my mom put the food in the oven for dinner. It was always fun to see if we could break our record from the previous year of seeing how long we could spend opening presents. When we finally finished, we all sat around looking at our gifts, reading our books, and playing any games we received while my mom got dinner ready. After dinner, we sat around the tree enjoying the moment and nibbling on the candy we had gotten in our stockings. When it was time for bed, we all hated to see the day end.

"This has been a very nice Christmas! Thank you everyone for all of our gifts." my mom said. "I am afraid it is time now for us to go to bed. We can continue celebrating tomorrow."

After reading this Christmas Day story and pulling out key words, ideas, and feelings, I wrote the following found poem:

Traditions
Sitting together around the fire
Taking turns
Telling stories
Listening
Sharing
Laughing
Togetherness
Making breakfast,
all taking a part
Believing in the magic of the moment:
Santa Claus is real if we believe
Suspense
Shaking
Rattling
What could it be?
Watching for delight in each other
The perfect day

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Reflections

What role do traditions play in my beliefs today and my expectations about how life can be? How does the aspect of going downstairs together and making breakfast together play out in my beliefs and actions? I wonder how much of my childhood I take for granted. What do such family experiences do for a person and how does this affect the way a person treats other people?

Learning Experiences

Saturday Night

It was a typical Saturday night. My mom was sitting in her favorite chair wrapped up in our incredibly soft, fuzzy blue blanket. My brother was reclined on the couch, and my sister and I were sitting on the floor in front of the fireplace warming our toes. We were watching our favorite television show while my dad sat in a chair reading the paper.

When our show was over, my dad asked me if I wanted to play my violin in church the next day. I said, "Sure," and got up to find my violin. My brother grumbled a few words about my not playing too loudly, so he could still hear the television. I simply ignored him and went to get my violin. My dad had already set some music on the wooden stand that his father had carved for him as a present when he graduated from college as a music major.

I panicked a little when I saw what he wanted me to play. He noticed the look on my face and assured me that I would be able to play it just fine. "No one in church will
know the difference. Just smile and play like you mean it, and no one will ever know if you miss a note or a beat,” he said reassuringly.

“Okay.” I replied still a little unsure. I had not played songs in third position very often, and I was still a little awkward with my shifting. Oh well. I guess maybe my dad was right, I thought. I will give it a whirl.

My dad began playing the introduction and then nodded his head at me when I was supposed to come in. Still thinking about tomorrow. I, of course, missed my cue and did not come in. “Okay, let’s try it again,” my dad said. “On three, ready, one and two and now.”

I sight-read through the piece fairly well. My body cringed when I got to the part where I had to shift into third position. I didn’t quite make it into place, so the notes sounded hideous. My brother, being a typical brother, shouted out some comment about maybe playing a little quieter. My dad assured me that I was doing just fine and said, “Let’s try it again. This time we will take it a little slower, so you can get into position in time. Just make sure you bend your wrist and let your hand pull your fingers up.”

Okay, this sounded simple enough I thought. We ended up playing it over and over again for about an hour. By this point, my fingers were getting tired, and my arm muscles were sore from holding up my violin. My dad said we should call it a night. He told me I sounded great and that everyone would really appreciate my playing. He reminded me that I should keep playing no matter what happened, that he could find me and adjust his playing to match mine. He also told me that if I looked confident, I could make anyone believe that this is how the song should be played.
My mom had been listening for the last half-hour of my playing and added that she thought it was wonderful. “Just play your best. You sound great, and everyone else will think so too.”

The next morning, I got my violin out before church to warm up my fingers and arms. I practiced the shifting part over and over again and then decided this was it. For better or worse, I was ready. My dad’s advice was replaying in my head. I would put on my poker face and fool them all. My stomach wasn’t so sure about this, but I was working on convincing my brain.

When it was time for me to play, I stood up, fixed my music stand, checked the pitch of my strings, and then looked at my dad. He began the introduction, and I counted very carefully in order to come in on time. I focused on my music instead of on the audience and remembered my dad’s advice of looking confident. Thinking about this helped me to forget how nervous I was. I made it through the whole song, with just a couple of mistakes. I actually lost my place one time, but I simply jumped to the next part. My dad followed me with no problem, making it sound as if it should have happened.

“Whew.” I breathed a sigh of relief as I held onto the last note until my dad ended the accompaniment. The audience immediately broke into applause, and everyone showed beaming smiles. Well, I guess maybe my dad was right. They did not seem to notice I had messed up royally. I smiled and thought, “I can do this.” Performing is not that bad after all. Look confident, act like you can, and you can!

Again, after reading this story several times, I identified key ideas, words, and phrases to use in writing a found poem to capture the key thoughts found in this story.
Performance Time

Will you play for us?

But.

I might make a mistake…

Mistakes are natural
No one will know
Remember
count.
hold your hand high.

let your wrist drag your fingers

You can do it:

I know you can

You are doing it!

Keep holding up your hand.

Raise your elbow.

It is time.

You know what to do.

Smile.

Look your audience in the eye.

Remember,

think about the notes,

keep your hand high.

Play like you know what you are doing.

Don’t let them know if you miss a note.

You are on.

You will be fine.

You did it!

Will you play for us again?

Reflections

What is the role of my dad here in this learning experience? What does he do to help me feel comfortable taking a risk to perform a piece I have not yet mastered? This makes me think about how nervous I was about playing my first solo for competition. My dad assured me I would be fine and helped me to practice it over and over again. I had practiced it so much that I had memorized the song. I played it flawlessly and with such confidence. I will never forget that day. My dad’s face beamed as the judge raved about how impressed she was that I played it by heart. I had such experiences as this solo
competition to hold onto as I attempted my other challenges in my life. Once I was successful with a solo, I was motivated to get started on learning my next piece. I had learned that I really could do this. Thus, success breeds success (Hargis, 1997). What does this mean in my practice as an educator of students and teachers? How does this play out in what I do? What else can be seen about the teaching learning process in this violin story?

Kindergarten Story

We were sitting at our tables when my teacher handed out a coloring sheet. We had been working on our colors that week and were going to practice coloring the various shapes with the colors written in the shapes.

"Now, don’t start until I tell you exactly what you are supposed to do," my teacher said before explaining the directions. "I want you to wait until I am sure I know that everyone knows what to do. I will come around and show you what crayon you need to use for each shape. Once I have checked with every one of you, I will tell you when you can get started."

My teacher repeated these same directions because a couple of students had been talking instead of listening to her. This time she explained the directions even slower and a little louder. Then she reminded us that she would be coming around to help each of us get the correct color before we could begin.

I was getting impatient. I knew exactly what to do, so I decided to start anyway. I was so proud of knowing what the colors were that I did not want to wait for her to show me. I wanted to show her that I could read and that I figured it out on my own. She was furious when she got to me and saw that I was already half way done with my sheet.
I showed her what I had done, and she saw that I was right, but she told me I should have waited. She did not want everyone starting without waiting for help, so I could not start on my own.

I went home so upset about this incident that my parents decided to ask for a parent conference to find out what they could do to help me feel better about school. They explained my situation for me, and together, the teacher and they figured out something that gave me the challenge I needed and something to look forward to each day. I was to read a book to the class during story time when I felt I was ready. I was so excited about this opportunity and spent much time practicing reading aloud so I would be ready. The first book I read included the line, “Pink eye, wink eye. I see someone’s pink underwear.” This tradition carried on into first grade where I continued reading stories to the class.

Reflections

How many times have I felt like this while sitting in a class? I wonder why this memory sticks out in my mind so vividly. I was only 5 years old. What does this say to me as an educator about the students in my room? Do I remember this story when I am teaching? I wonder if my need for freedom and choice stem from these experiences or if I remember this story so well because my need, possibly my strongest need, was not met in this classroom. How often do I think about people’s basic needs when dealing with them? What do I do to meet people’s need for autonomy (Glasser, 1998; Graham, 2002)? I wonder if I always meet this need or if sometimes I find another need is standing out and needs to be met instead. Did my teacher struggle with this same issue? What need did she think was standing out for me, I wonder? I despised the lock-step instruction, and
I did not want to be treated as all of the other students. I wonder how many other students felt this way too?

The following poems represent my experiences in elementary school and in high school. These poems were written in attempt to capture some of the memories that stand out for me. After analyzing these poems, I can see several of my beliefs about learning emerging.

Elementary School

Wait
Stop
No. don't use that color
Wait
No. not that color either
Wait
Don't mix those colors
Take a red crayon
Stop
Wait
You cannot go ahead
I said wait.

Lines,
Worksheets.
Sitting in rows
Idle threats
Hurry.
Finish
But don't make a mistake
What are we doing?
Why are we doing it?
I don't know
Hurry.
finish.
No mistakes!
Carelessness means no recess
Don't cheat--
No talking
Don't make a mistake.
Are you trying?
Try again.
Harder this time
Should I call your parents?
You don’t seem to care.

High School

What do I write?
The page is blank—
150 words!!
On what?
I’ll show you . . .
Watch
Writing doesn’t just happen
First.
Start thinking
Anything will work
Jot a list
Make a web
Great, you have something!
Now, make a plan
What will you keep?
What will you delete?
Make an order
From one to three
Really
Writing can begin
at any stage
Read it aloud
Does it say what you want?
Can you add more details?
What about the five senses?
Entice your reader
This is how authors write.

Reflections

What are the threads that weave throughout these school stories? Does everyone have such school stories? What drives my desire to change the way schooling is done today? How did I know it could be different? Are any threads from my family stories beginning to weave through these stories? How does the next story add to the woven
fabric of my life story? We often live experiences vicariously through other people, which makes story such a powerful learning tool (Carter, 1993; Clandinin & Connelly, 1994; Reason & Hawkins, 1988). I experienced many school stories through my parents, thus learning much about the realities of the school story that I wanted to become a part of when I was old enough to begin my career as a "real" teacher.

A Vicariously Experienced School Story

"You are never going to believe what happened today!" Mom exclaimed. "Well, actually, I guess I shouldn't be so surprised every time this happens. I guess I would just hope that he would learn from the last experience. This must be asking too much. Maybe I am a terrible teacher and he knows better how to teach."

"Yeah, right, Mom." Jennifer pipes in. Dad looks over to see that Jennifer has been sitting in a chair in the corner of the kitchen listening. "You know you are an excellent teacher. My friends tell me that all of the time!"

"Well, I just wish for once that he would come to me to find out what I am doing in my classroom. Once again, he has taken the student's side, completely ignoring the fact that there might be another side to the story. I am sorry, but I am not going to let this student down by saying he does not have to read the book and take the test just because he supposedly has learning problems. I have offered to help him after school and during his study hall, but he refuses to come. If he would just listen to what I am saying in class and do the exercises I am asking the students to do in class, he would be just fine. I know this because he has done excellent work for me before. I know he is capable of doing the work. That label is just a cop-out excuse for him not to have to try. I am sorry, but I
can't let this happen. I have the responsibility of educating all of my students to the best of my ability," Mom said in exasperation.

"And then, to have the principal tell me I am not being understanding and that I need to cut this student a break. No way. What break am I cutting this student by letting him get away without learning the skills he needs for life from my class? And, to expect me to give him a passing grade when he has not completed the work is insane. Where is the credibility of grades? I cannot consciously pass this student when he has not completed the work and shown me that he has mastered the material. That would be a complete injustice to this student. Where is his head? Does he really care about students or is he simply concerned about looking good in the eyes of the parents? I am telling you, if you want to change anything in public education, you need to simply call the school as a parent because, boy, do they listen to the parents."

"It is always the teacher's fault," Dad glibly stated. "When they decide that the teacher might know something and decide to support their teachers, we might see some change. Until then, it is awfully hard to continue trying as we do."

"But you have to know that you are making a difference and that you are doing the right thing. Maybe you won't reach every student, but you will never know how you actually are reaching these students. Also, you are not the only teacher they will have, so you have to have faith that someone will reach the ones you don't. You can't castigate yourself over this. You know what you are doing is right and you care about all of the students. What is so wrong about that? How can they fault you for this? Don't they care whether or not their students are getting an education?" Jennifer asks.
Reflections

What themes come to mind after reading this story? Again, I wonder if any threads are crossing the threads of my previous stories. What have I learned about life and education from living my mom’s school stories as she relived them again and again in our kitchen after long, hard days at school? What have I learned about the challenge of teaching from this and other such stories (Kohl, 1976)? Maybe my concern and care for teachers stems from living these stories as my mom retold them.

Bringing These Reflections Together

Perhaps it is a blend of the violin stories with these teaching stories that have formed my approach to teaching. I believe anyone can learn with proper guidance and foundational skills needed to be successful with a given task. I also see that one person can only do so much. If a note gets missed, it is okay. No one will notice, and I can always try again next time. I am a perfectionist who is determined to get it right, and yet I am okay with the fact that it may not be right every time. The process is so much more important than the product, and the belief in myself and the acceptance of myself are keys to my approach in life.

I was vulnerable in elementary school and did not gain this secure sense of self until I entered high school where I had super teachers who taught me the skills I needed in order to be successful as an independent learner. In elementary school, much of what I remember was doing worksheets and being afraid of making mistakes for which I would be chastised in front of the class, or worse yet, lose recess time. In college, experiencing low grades for the first time brought me back to this vulnerability. I was so embarrassed at not knowing what to do that I would not ask. I had not learned how to write literature...
papers in the format that was required, and no one taught me how in college. Professors simply assumed I knew how and assigned papers after every book I read. I finally figured out how to write papers the way they wanted me to with the help of my mom. It is easy to forget that new tasks need to be broken down and taught, and that just because I cannot do something does not mean that I have limited intelligence. I have to remind myself of this all the time when I am not successful at a task. It doesn’t mean I cannot do it; it simply means I have not figured out the best way yet. How many times have I faced such a challenge?

Much of what I have learned about education and much of my concern for the teacher as a person stems from living my mom’s stories as she retold them at the end of every day. My mom had this incredible drive of moral purpose to educate all students to the best of her ability. If they were not learning, she took it as a reflection on her teaching and would not let down until they were successful. I used to feel her pain and her anguish with each and every struggle. Many students had no desire to learn by 11th grade, and yet she would not let down. Parents called to complain. The principal said she might be asking too much. Perhaps she could require less and not have such high expectations. The constant battle was not easy to live. And yet, today, many of her students come back and tell her how much they remember from 11th grade English. They hear SAT vocabulary words all of the time and think about her class. They attribute their success with their college and careers to the reading and writing skills they learned in her class. I too attribute much of my success with teaching and reading and writing to what I learned in her class. Never did she give up on a student even if it meant hours of parent conferences and confrontations with the principal. I listened to these stories day after
day, trying to reassure her and help her to accept the fact that she could not take
responsibility for every problem. Maybe some students simply were not ready to learn,
and they would have several other teachers in their careers from whom to learn.

The following poem expresses my thoughts about becoming a teacher. This poem
captures what I had heard about being a teacher and what I already felt about becoming a
teacher.

My Career Choice

So, you want to be a teacher
Are you sure about that?
Do you really know what you are getting into?
All of the work
All of the time
All of the hassles
All of the problems
Do you really want to do this?

Yes, I want to be a teacher
I know what I am getting into
I have seen the time,
the frustration,
the energy
And the joy and the reward of hard work and belief
In every student

I want to make a difference in this world
Education doesn’t have to be a drag
It can be exciting
if we are shown how
Uncovering the mystery
and helping all students
Acquire the skills they need
to be successful in life
is what I want to do

When I was in seventh grade, I could not think of anything else I could do that
would be worth my time. I knew education could be different from the majority of my
own experiences. I knew this intuitionally, but I also had experienced it differently so I
had models to follow. I was determined to make a better life for the people I worked
with by teaching people how to do the most important skills in life: read, write, listen,
and speak. The field that made the most sense to go into was English. I have now found
that these skills are essential in any subject and that all teachers need to teach their
students these skills if they want them to learn anything and to be successful. Classes do
not have to be boring, painful experiences to sit through for the student or the teacher. I
knew too many teachers who had given up and felt stuck in the system because they were
too old to change jobs or whatever. I went into education hoping to help these teachers as
well to see that it does not have to be this way. This idea can be seen in the following
poem.

I wrote this poem after reading the reflections people have written following
several explanations and stories about my philosophy of instructional support, learning,
and helping all people be successful in the educational setting. I pulled out key words
and feelings from the reflections to create this found poem:

A Better Way

Believe it!
There is a better way—
Frustration leads to failure:
Failure leads to doom.
Success leads to motivation:
Motivation leads to learning.
Learning is living!

I wanted to help people come alive and feel the excitement and joy of their full
potential. I had found out that learning could be very exciting and rewarding, and I
wanted to help others have these experiences and draw similar conclusions.
Readers’ Theater: What Are My Beliefs?

Characters:  Mom, Emily (officemate), William (teacher/husband)

Setting:  Dining room table in Jennifer’s house

Jennifer:  Thanks for coming today to help me again with my dissertation.  I have done some initial analysis of my beliefs from the writing I have done about my childhood and educational experiences.  Now, I would like to hear from you as to what you see are my underlying beliefs so I can see if the beliefs I have uncovered play out in my role as an instructional support teacher.

Emily:  Well, I would say that you believe that education can always be improved and that there are simple ways to help all students learn.  You are always looking for and talking about what teachers can do to help every student succeed.

William:  I agree.  You believe that every student has the ability to do it, and you try to figure out what we aren’t doing to get at this student’s knowledge and way of learning.

Mom:  This is true.  You have always been very interested in how people learn and have had very strong feelings that anybody can learn.  I think you have been quick to note that there isn’t one right way of teaching or of learning, but that if things are maneuvered the right way, anyone can learn.

Emily:  In every conversation I have overheard in our office that you have with visitors who have come to find out how you are doing your job, you have mentioned the need to look for the best ways to educate every student.  You strongly believe that the system is not meeting all students’ needs right now and that there are better ways out
there. You explain that we simply need to find them and figure out how to best implement them.

William: I see this determination when you are working with me and other teachers. You are always very positive, taking a positive approach to everything. “How can we fix this? How can we resolve this issue? How can we improve our standards? How can we raise the students to this level? When other teachers might say it can’t be done, you say. “We can make a difference, we can improve this, don’t give up.” You are never in a hopeless situation; you always believe you can do something to improve it and that we all can.

Mom: Yes, the glass has always been half full with Jennifer. You have always been very passionate about improving education and have always believed it can be done. It has been fun to watch you and hear your stories about what you are doing.

Jennifer: I agree. I would say my belief that all people can learn is a major belief of mine. It is interesting to note that you have noticed my determination and dislike of thinking certain people can’t learn. I came to the same conclusion when analyzing my childhood memories and educational experiences.

What have you noticed about my work with other people? Already you have mentioned my positive attitude when working with others. What else do you see that might highlight more of my underlying beliefs about teaching and learning?

William: I would say that you truly care about people. You want everyone to learn, and you are spending your life trying to help people reach this goal. The students and teachers you work with see how much you care about them and want them to be successful because you are so serious, excited, and passionate about what you are doing.
This passion can't help but wear off on those around you. They can see how genuine you are and how much you care.

**Mom:** Yes, and I would also say that you are a student and teacher advocate. When no one else might be supporting a student or a teacher, you are there to be the needed supporter. We all need to be valued and appreciated for who we are. You do just this, making a connection and building a relationship.

**Emily:** I see you doing this with the teachers who come into our office. You start where they are and try to help them in determining where they want to be and how to get there by first finding out where they are, what they know, where they need to be, and what they need in order to get there. After you do some initial assessment, you share this with them by asking, “Is this what you want?” And then saying, “Okay, here are some ideas about how we can get there: what do you think?”

**Mom:** Yes, you do a nice job of understanding where the teacher is coming from and sharing similar frustrations or experiences. You don’t tout yourself as the expert who is better than we are: you see yourself as a teacher like us and are very open about what you have tried and what has failed. You then share how you turned these failures into successes, giving us hope that we too can do the same. We are excited about working with you because you might be able to help us do the same. We all want to be successful in our classrooms.

**William:** I am reminded of the movie *Erin Brockovich.* Erin was so successful with the 600 clients because she got to know each of them personally and took the time to listen to their stories, and talk to them later about how their individual problems were, etc. You do the same thing with the teachers you work with. Most of us are so busy with
our daily lives that we don't really stop to talk to people. You do though. You see people in the hall, stop them, and ask them how their lessons went or their assignments turned out. Both the teachers and students really respond to this caring, listening ear that you offer. This is why you have a quality relationship with everyone in the building.

**Emily:** I want to go back to something your mom said about your not touting yourself as the expert. I see this too in your interactions with the teachers you work with. You always try to maintain a positive focus with them. You do not come across as trying to belittle anyone, but you are constantly trying to make everyone feel the potential of his/her own power. I can see this because teachers eagerly come to you for advice and ideas for doing something differently. They never seem ashamed that they don't know something. You are helping them to understand that we all need assistance from time to time and that it is not a bad thing to seek improvement and resources that exist.

**William:** This is true. You have a way about you that never makes me feel like I am wrong or that I am not a good teacher. This is why team teaching with you is so much fun. We are in a partnership where we are both looking for ways to improve what we are doing. You never come across as the expert or as having the "right" way of doing something. You have a nice way of making me feel good about what we figure out together, even though sometimes I know I did not have much to do with our success. You always make me feel like I do though.

**Mom:** Sitting here listening to both Emily and William, it strikes me that you also believe in sharing your own learning process. You model your own learning either through the stories you share or the actual learning you are doing while trying out a new strategy or lesson with a teacher in a classroom. By sharing your risk taking with the
teachers you work with. You put them at ease to take risks too. If you as the consultant are comfortable making mistakes and sharing these mistakes, the people you work with see it is okay to make mistakes. You show that we can learn from our mistakes and that we can tweak something and then try it again. In a sense, we are in a society where you have to be perfect and right all of the time or you are a failure. You create a type of atmosphere that does not always exist in school and in our society.

**Emily:** You are constantly questioning yourself about what you are doing, what you could do better, differently, etc. This self-reflection is something we should all be doing. I hear you sharing your own self-reflections with teachers, which then gets them thinking about what they could do differently. I am afraid to self-reflect as I know I am not doing all that I should be doing.

**William:** Yes, and in workshops you are always modeling your own learning for us. You share a lot about your personal self, and you don’t come across as the expert. You are yourself, you interact with everyone, share stories about yourself so that the participants can see that you have made mistakes, have fallen on your face sometimes, and you have gotten right back up and tried something else.

When you are working with us in the classroom, you do not come in as the authority who is going to cut us down or whatever, but as someone who has made mistakes before. This helps us feel comfortable with you in the classroom, as your mom was referring to earlier.

**Jennifer:** Wow, you have said so much. Now I need some think time to process all that you have said and to begin an analysis of my stories that I have written. Once I have done this, I would like to run my thoughts by all of you to see if you see what I am
seeing and what you see that I may not be seeing. I really appreciate your help in this inquiry process of figuring out what I do in my role as an "in-the-classroom" staff developer.

**Attributes That Have Been Identified in My Practice as an ISC**

As attributes are a reflection of beliefs, I also asked my close colleagues and family members to think about 8 attributes that characterize me in my role as an instructional support consultant. I sorted all of the words into categories to find eight common attributes from all lists. These attributes are: being positive, persistent, knowledgeable, creative, risk-taking, energetic, caring, and possessing a clear vision. The following explains my connection to these attributes as was explained to me during several conversations on the topic.

I have a **clear vision** of the big picture and attempt to know who needs what at the appropriate time in order to help students and teachers reach the end goal of success. While helping people learn, I am **positive**, **persistent**, and **energetic** in discerning the best approach for each individual (both student and teacher) with whom I work. I am also **knowledgeable** and **creative** while applying learning theory and using various instructional techniques in order to meet all learners' needs. It is impossible to know exactly what to do to meet all needs in every situation; therefore, I have to **care** about the people I am working with and problem-solve using the information I gain by observing and listening carefully. **Taking risks** is fundamental to my role as I am constantly learning and adjusting while trying various approaches to help people learn.
Conclusion

Many of my beliefs about teaching and learning have emerged from my early experiences. My beliefs that all students can learn and that success breeds success stem from my violin story and my high-school poem. My dad was there to guide me and offer instructional strategies to help me be successful. Once I was able to play one piece successfully, I was anxious to take on the challenge of learning a new piece. In high school, when I learned about the writing process, I was able to see that writing was not difficult if I did each step of the process. Learning was simply a process of problem-solving and taking risks. My dad helped me to feel comfortable taking the risks I needed to learn new pieces to perform on my violin. I learned what I needed to learn when he was practicing with me, helping me and showing me what to do as we went along. Here I can see my beliefs that learning is social and learning is situated and dependent on need.

It was not until Saturday night, when I knew performance time was soon, that I applied what my dad had told me many times during our weekly lessons. My belief that we are all different stems from my kindergarten story where I did not want to be treated as everyone else in the classroom. Caring about people and being concerned about their feelings and needs stems from my Christmas story as well as my mom's school story. These beliefs become visible as attributes, which are observable by other people and can be seen in the stories in chapters 4 and 5.
CHAPTER FOUR

MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES

_Sometimes our light goes out but is blown into flame by another human being. Each of us owes deepest thanks to those who have rekindled this light._

Albert Schweitzer

I find that when I am implementing anything new, people tend to be leery if not afraid of what may happen as a result of the change. This chapter looks at how students, teachers, and myself as an ISC have dealt with this new approach to helping students be successful in school and the conclusions these characters have drawn about what this model is really all about. The stories are written from the point of view of the student, the teacher, and myself as ISC to capture what people are thinking and experiencing within the instructional support model.

Who Is She (ISC)? A Telling of Mike’s Story

Mike has a history that all of the teachers seem to know. As a fourth-grade student, he was placed in a classroom for the emotionally disturbed and has been in and out of other special education rooms since that time. Moving into the district and away several times in the past 4 years has not helped his academic progress either. Mike’s mom lives with a boyfriend who gets drunk quite often, spending all of the money they have. Mike’s older brother burned down part of their house. Since they have not done
much to fix it. Mike's bedroom window is covered with plastic. In school, Mike is older than the other seventh-grade students as he has repeated several grades in elementary school. His clothes are tinged with a brownish glow as if he had been walking on a dirt road. He does not smell of body odor, but has a slight smell of plain dirt, which may have come from his clothes that never look quite clean. Not having a lot of money, his clothes are not brand names, and thus he does not fit in with the "popular" crew at school. Mike has only a few friends and spends much time hanging out by himself. He generally sits in the back of the classrooms if teachers do not give assigned seats.

For the most part, Mike is pretty quiet, and the teachers seem thankful for this as they have heard what trouble he can cause. Most teachers seem to have made a silent pact that they would ignore him if he would simply keep quiet. This is usually the case. Once in awhile another student in the room will egg Mike on before class gets started, and Mike, not knowing how to deal with his anger, will blow up by yelling or knocking over a desk. This will obviously alarm the teacher, and Mike will be sent out of class to ensure the safety of everyone else.

"Who are you?" I asked a strange lady who just walked into the room. The teacher said, "Hi. my name is Mrs. Dove" as she walked past me to the back of the room. She did not stop to talk. How rude. I wonder when this class gets over? Oh no. here she comes.

"Are you following me?" I asked.

Mrs. Dove assured me that she was not. She explained that she was simply there to work with all of the students and see where she could be of help.
“Well, I don’t need any help.” I barked at her. I can’t believe she didn’t react to that. Hmmm. She is different from Mr. Jones who would have kicked me out of class by now. Mrs. Dove simply said, “Fine, then get started” as if nothing was wrong.

I don’t need her help. I am not stupid even though the school used to think I was when I was younger. I still can’t believe they made me go to those retard classes. Finally, I am back with all of my friends. I don’t want them to see me talking to her, or they might still think I am stupid. I wonder why she is really here? She is talking to Joe, the smartest kid in the class. She just helped him get started on his homework. Hmmm. Now she is talking to Jessica who is another smarty pants. Jessica had a word mispelled, and Mrs. Dove showed her a way to remember how to spell it. Oh no, she is coming my way. Hmmm, she stopped to help Jake. Yes, class is finally over! I am out of here.

“Oh, it is you again. What are we doing today?”

“We are going to learn how to write well-developed paragraphs.”

“Oh, that sounds like fun, not!” She is just smiling at me. I wonder what I have to say to get her to react? Oh well. I wonder what that poster is there for in the front of the room? “Mrs. Dove, what is that poster for?”

“Great question, Mike. We are going to use it today in class. See if you can figure out what the shapes might represent while we are waiting to get started.”

“Okay.” She remembered my name. “Hey Mrs. Dove, I shot a rabbit last night.”

“Did you? Wow, you sound like you are a talented hunter. How long have you been hunting?"

“Since I was 12. My dad used to take me with him when I was really young even though my mom got mad at him. Now I have my license.”
“Great, well, it is time to get class started. You will have to tell me more about your hunting adventures later. I would like to hear more. By the way, did you figure out what the shapes might represent on the poster?”

Well, you said we were going to be writing a paragraph, so I guess it looks like an indented paragraph.

“You figured it out! You are right on the ball.”

“Good morning class.” Mr. Jones said as we all stopped talking. “Today Mrs. Dove is here to help us learn how to make writing easier. Give her your full attention. We are all going to learn from her today. and then she will be back periodically to help us use the tools she is teaching us today.” Hmmm, so Mrs. Dove is a teacher. Neat. She seems pretty nice.

“Good morning everyone.” Mrs. Dove said. “Can anyone tell me what you think the shape on this poster looks like?”

“Oh, I know!” I shouted.

Mrs. Dove looked at me with the look which reminded me to raise my hand.

“Yes, Mike, what do you think it might be?” she said with a smile.

“A paragraph, because the top left corner is indented.”

“How many people agree with Mike?”

“You are right on, Mike. I am glad to see that you remembered paragraphs are always indented.”

“Today, we are going to learn about writing a well-developed paragraph using a paragraph model or a graphic organizer that reminds you about what you need to include and where all of the parts of a paragraph belong.”
A couple of days later . . .

"Mrs. Dove, look at my paragraph!!! I have never written anything as long as this before in my life! Do you want to read it?"

"Of course I want to read it," said Mrs. Dove. I hope she likes it. She is taking a long time. She is smiling. Wow. I must have done something right. I wonder what she is going to say? I can’t wait to show Mr. Jones. He is going to fall over when he sees this.

"This is very well written, Mike. You have your three main points and your supporting details very well organized. I really like the way you described your hunting dog here. Great work, Mike!"

Wow, I can’t wait to show my mom.

"Mrs. Dove, can I have another copy of the paragraph model? We are doing a research project in science, and we have to write a paragraph."

"Sure, Mike. What a great idea. Maybe I will come into your science class tomorrow to see if anyone wants to use a graphic organizer. Thanks for letting me know."

"No problem, Mrs. Dove. Thank you. This is the most fun I have had all year. I can’t believe I am actually saying that something in school is fun. Don’t tell anyone."

"I won’t, Mike. I won’t. Just keep up the great work."

Who Is She? A Telling of a Teacher’s Story

"What is she doing in here?" is what a furtive look cast at Mrs. Dove said as she walked to the back of an eighth-grade classroom. She did not tell me she was coming in today. Why is she here? She had said something at team meeting in the beginning of the
year about being in all of our classrooms as often as possible to help students be successful. She also said she wanted to work with us in helping large numbers of students by using various learning strategies and methods that she would be sharing with us teachers throughout the year. This is what she said, but I wonder if it is really true. Is she spying on me? Is she here to really see what I am doing wrong so she can share it with the principal?

As soon as I finished checking the assignment books and got my students started on their quiz, I went right over to her and asked her what she needed. She said she was simply observing the students to see how she could help out next. Mrs. Dove said, “I had heard your students were having trouble with multiplying fractions and wondered what I could do to help.”

“Yes, they are having trouble. I am so frustrated. I have tried everything I know, and they are still failing the quizzes miserably. Do you have any ideas?”

“Well, I guess I need to just see what you are teaching the students and see what the students are not getting first.”

Mrs. Dove watched me teach the next lesson and walked around asking various students questions. I was so nervous the whole time hoping I was saying everything correctly and that I was remembering to call on all of the students equally and such like we learned in our methods classes. The period finally ended and Mrs. Dove left. Whew, she is gone. I wonder what she thought? What is she going to say to everyone else about my class?

Later, during my planning period, Mrs. Dove walked in with a smile on her face. She always looks so happy. It must be nice not to have to worry about the state tests.
grading papers every day, and making parent phone calls. I wonder what she really does with all of her time?

“That was a great lesson!” Mrs. Dove said.

Wow, I thought. She liked it? I did something right? Hmm. I wonder what she liked? “Well, what did you think? I mean, I tried to get all of the students engaged.”

“Yes, they all seemed very engaged. When I talked to Brian, at first I thought he was way off in la-la land, but after asking him some questions, he was right with you. He was simply subtracting first instead of adding. I asked him to explain why he was doing that, and his answer really did make sense. I simply re-routed him by reminding him of the third step which he had forgotten. Then he was able to finish the problems before you were done talking about them.”

“Wow, yes. Brian can do it when he is paying attention.”

“I really think he is very bright. We just need to keep checking in with him to find out how he is thinking and attacking each problem. Anyway, I am wondering what you have already taught in this unit so I can get a better feel for what I can create that may help some of the students grasp these concepts. What is the essential learning for this unit that you really want them to know and remember all year? Math is certainly not my field of expertise, so I need you to tell me if what I suggest makes sense and will work with what you are trying to teach. Together, we can map out some strategies and an instructional plan that might help the students gain these concepts.”

I agreed and told her what I really wanted the students to know even though I was still skeptical of how she could help me. She used to teach English. What did she know about teaching math? Math is very different, and people don’t realize how hard it is to
incorporate all of those fancy strategies into math class. I wonder what she will come up with that I have not already tried in my 17 years of teaching. I hope it doesn't take too much time because I have to finish this unit next week.

“Good morning! I created a couple of review strategies to use this week while you are checking homework and assignment books. I will explain them the first time so you can see how to set them up. Then, you should be able to get the students started next time. The students have already used these cooperative learning structures in social studies and science classes, so they should know exactly what to do. We just need to explain how we are using them in math and what we want them to do with the content they are going to be reviewing.”

“Okay, great!” This will be interesting to see. “Okay, class. Mrs. Dove is here today to help us review the order of operations. Please get out your homework and open up your assignment books. The homework you need to write down is on the board as usual. While I am coming around to check your homework and books, please listen to what Mrs. Dove is asking you to do.”

I hope the students all listen to her and are on their best behavior. I don’t want her to think I have classroom management problems. So far, they seem to be doing what she is asking. I am almost done checking homework. Oh no, she just got them into teams of three. This is going to ruin my whole lesson. I won’t have time to finish what I need to teach today because of this review activity. This is why I don’t like these strategies for math. I have to pull her aside and tell her that this is not working for me.
My voice was shaking, and I could tell my face was a little red as I said to her. "I am not going to have time to finish my lesson now. This is why I don't use these review techniques."

Mrs. Dove cut me off right there asking me if I was done checking homework. I told her I was, and she then very quickly raised her hand signaling the class that it was time to change activities. Apparently, she had already taught the students the quiet signal in their other classes as they all raised their hands and immediately got quiet. She asked the number 1's in each group to collect the cards they had been using for Fan-N-Pick while everyone quickly put their desks back into rows with their notebooks open for class. I was amazed at how quickly they were ready to start taking notes. Mrs. Dove explained to the class that tomorrow when they came in, they should get back into the same groups to finish where they left off today with their cards.

When Mrs. Dove came in the next day, I felt the tears brimming in my eyes. I felt so inept. I had been teaching much longer than Mrs. Dove had been. I should have been able to figure out how to incorporate Fan-N-Pick into my classes. And, the cards she printed from her computer . . . I should know how to do that. Mrs. Dove must have sensed something was wrong because she asked me if I was okay. I told her that I simply felt like I should have been doing what she did this week all along.

"This is the beauty of my role as the instructional support consultant! I have the flexibility and time in my schedule to create lessons and materials that you as the classroom teacher don't always have time to do with everything else you need to do. I can take time to do some research or ask other people for ideas to help students learn difficult concepts. You are doing a great job in your classroom. I am simply here to add
to what you are doing and give you some ideas for instruction that you can now use on your own."

"I guess you are right. I am very busy with everything I have to do."

"Yes, and really none of us can think of every different way of teaching by ourselves. The power of collaboration is phenomenal. and I experience this all of the time in my role. I have enjoyed working with you this week. I learned a lot about math and am excited to see how we were able to figure out how to use the "Red Dot Green Dot" charts in math class. I had never thought of using them for anything besides reading before. It really is fun to have someone with whom to discuss my ideas and to generate new ones in order to help students learn the content better and, thus, be more successful in school."

"Yes, the more I think about it, I am really glad you just came in. I never would have asked you to work with me because honestly I didn’t think you would be able to help me with teaching math. Now, I am so glad you did, and I will be asking you to come in all the time. You are going to be sorry you ever came in."

**Who Am I? A Telling of My Story as an ISC**

Knowing that people were questioning who I was, what I was doing, and whether or not it was working was not easy to deal with. While others were trying to figure out who I was. I too was trying to figure out what I should be doing, how to reach my goals of affecting instruction in every classroom, how to work with teachers without them thinking that I thought what they were doing was wrong, and how to help students who did not want help from years of emotional scarring. I was no longer "one of them" even though I worked very hard to have teachers believe that I still was just one of them. I had
no higher position, nor extra money. I explained that I simply had the flexibility in my schedule to do things they did not have time to do such as research a new way of teaching, design a new lesson, or create materials for a lesson. I worked hard to help them feel at ease with who I was and what I was doing.

“Hi Jessica, how did your lesson go today?”

“It went great. Thanks for telling me how to use the KWL with cooperative learning teams. Whenever I have used it in the past, it has taken me 2 days to finish just the first two columns. I know you told me that we need to connect all new learning to prior experience, but I was beginning to think I should cut that part at the beginning of my units.”

“Excellent. I have seen the KWL drag on too, so I thought this might work.”

“Scott, how are you? How is everything going?”

“Okay, I am really struggling with getting my students to read the articles for their Document Based Questions. I gave them questions to answer at the end of each article, and they are answering them, but when I ask them to write about them, they look at me as if they have never read them before. What am I doing wrong?”

“Hmmm, I am sure you are not doing anything wrong. Maybe we could try to use the magnet word strategy before they answer the questions. If we combine this with quad reading, they would have a chance to verbalize their thinking about why they chose a certain magnet word. This way they can hear each other and have discussions about the main ideas in the articles. Then, we can conference with all of the students one-on-one while they are in their teams to see if they can tell us brief summaries in their own words. If they can, then we will know they are ready to write. This is how we can do some
curriculum-based assessment to find out if what we have tried has worked or if we need
to try something else."

"Okay, it is worth a try. How do you know so much?"

"I don't really know that much. I have just been fortunate to have taken some
great graduate classes on effective instruction, assessment, learning theory, and
curriculum design. Now, I am getting a chance to apply what I have learned and to share
it with other teachers. That is the fun part about this job."

Emerging Ideas From Perspective Stories

As a way of analyzing these stories, I looked for key words, phrases, and
emotions that stood out for me. I wrote these in the margins of the text as I read through
the stories and then used these words and ideas to write the following found poems:

I don't need your help
I am not stupid
Please don't talk to me
People might think I am different
What are you looking at?
Am I doing something wrong?
I just want to belong

I am okay!
She liked it.
I can write.
I thought I was stupid
But, I just didn't know how
Thanks for your help
It went really well
Learning can really be fun!
Why is she here?  
What will she see?  
Am I doing everything right?  
I have tried this and that.  
Why isn't it working?  
What else can I try?  
You liked what I tried!  
You want me to do what?!  
But...  
Oh, I see...  
Wow, can you come back tomorrow?  

Labels are harmful.  
They call people stupid.  
No one wants to be stupid.  
We just need to show them how--  
everyday, in every class.  
This cannot be a one-time shot.  
I know this is true:  
So I carry on  
helping students and teachers  
become the best they can be.

Three common ideas have emerged upon doing an analysis of these stories told 
from the perspective of the student, the teacher, and the ISC. The first idea is that no one 
wants to be different or seen as inferior by his or her peers. Society and education have 
spent years classifying, sorting, and labeling people anyway. The student is worried 
about being singled out. "I don't want them to see me talking to her, or they might think 
I am stupid" (Student Story). The teacher wonders what the observer will tell other 
people about her teaching and her class. I, as the ISC, want teachers to see me as another 
teacher, a colleague, who is just another pair of eyes and hands.

Another idea that emerged is that students, teachers, and I as ISC, all want to be 
acknowledged. They all want someone to care about them and take an interest in who 
they are and what they are doing. I see this amazement in the student who says, "She
remembered my name!” (Student Story). Many people, like this student, are not used to such relationships in their lives and are not accustomed to being treated this way. In general, people are not great at really listening to each other. As I have been fortunate to have people who listen to me, care about me, and show genuine interest in what I do, I have developed a love for listening to other people’s tales, adventures, and challenges. By incorporating this tendency into my relationships with teachers and students (as well as others), I have been able to develop good working relationships as a consultant.

The third idea is that success creates excitement, which fosters a desire to try something more. The student cannot wait to try the graphic organizer in science class now since it worked so well in English class. The teacher wants me as ISC to come back so she can try more ideas after seeing how well the review strategies worked for her students with learning the order of operations. I love hearing success stories from teachers about methods that have worked and seeing the joy on students’ faces when they have been successful with a learning task in class. This success and excitement is contagious and creates a fun-filled atmosphere where students actually think learning is fun. This is new for the student who says, “Don’t tell anyone I said this was fun!” (Student Story).

Reflections

“What is she doing here? Who is she? What does she want? Why is she here? Is she following me? Have I done something wrong?” These are among several questions that went through the heads of both students and teachers as I first came into classrooms in the beginning when my position was completely new to everyone. The fear behind these questions makes sense because, in general, humans are afraid of the unknown.
Many people have had poor experiences and thus are very closed and non-trusting of those they do not know as these people might hurt them in some way. I probably was having some of the same thoughts. Obviously, I knew who I was, but I didn’t really know exactly what I was doing. I was comfortable walking into the various classrooms because I knew all of the teachers and students. However, this scenario is not the norm, so it was obviously something to get used to. I remember the feelings I had when someone came into my English 8 classroom for one reason or another. I also was very self-conscious and prayed that my students would be on their best behavior. I wondered if I sounded acceptable and what the visitors were thinking about the lesson. Knowing how I felt as a teacher with a visitor, I am always conscious about how other teachers might feel when I am in their rooms, and I work hard to help them feel at ease. I also work hard to put students at ease. Too many students have been labeled, pulled out of class for one reason or another, and have been scarred as being “stupid” or not capable of doing what the students who were able to stay in the classroom could do. I am sensitive to students’ need to “save face” in front of their peers; therefore, I am careful to work with all students rather than working with only a targeted few. Also, all students benefit from the learning strategies I teach and the enrichment I can offer. All students need to know how to learn because, at some point in their education, they will be faced with difficult material or learning experiences. The skills and strategies I either teach in the various classrooms or help the teacher teach and incorporate into daily lessons help all students learn the content they are being taught.
Multiple Perspectives as the Unknown Began to Be Known

"Mrs. Dove, I have figured out who you are. You are the help lady who is in all of our classes helping us be successful with our work." Mike eagerly pointed out while he was working on his science lab.

"You are right. I had never thought of that label before but I like it."

Mr. Blaire piped in. "You are my guardian angel who helps me teach better, and you help my students be more successful in my classroom."

I told the students who were listening nearby that I was simply looking for better ways of teaching and learning. "We all learn in different ways," I said, "so we constantly need to be looking for different ways to teach and learn."

Mr. Blaire added. "My teaching has changed so much, thanks to you. When I first started teaching, I lectured every day and students took notes. I didn't know anything about cooperative learning and getting students actively engaged in the learning."

"Yes, we hated taking so many notes last year. This year has been so much more interesting because we get to move around the room more when we work in stations, and we do more fun review games where we get to talk in our teams. The pocket word games have really helped me do better on the tests this year."

"The graphic organizers help me write my lab reports. They make writing so easy now. We know exactly what to put in our reports. I don't have to worry about what to write now. I never used to do my reports because I just sat staring at a blank piece of paper whenever I tried to write."
The principal had walked into the room just then, and Mr. Blaire said, “Welcome, we were just talking about instructional support and Mrs. Dove.”

“Oh, what were you saying?”

“It was all very positive. What do you think about instructional support?” asks Mr. Blaire.

“Well, I have to be a realist. I am a data-driven person so, when the state test scores go up, I will believe instructional support works. So far, I have to be honest. With the results for the first year, I am skeptical about the benefits of instructional support. Perhaps we should be looking at other options. No offense, Mrs. Dove. I am not criticizing you. Sometimes, I think we need to spend more time working with students and less time focusing on training and planning. That’s all.”

I was discouraged to hear this. I knew that what I was doing was working. I could see it in the student performance I was seeing in classes now and in the changes in instruction I saw. When I first started working with one grade level, 30 students were failing. As I observed them in classes, I saw it was basically because they were not even trying. They sat quietly in the backs of the rooms with their notebooks closed or with no notebooks at all. The teachers were frustrated with trying to get them to work and had given up on them. Now, these same students are eagerly participating in class and doing their work for the most part. Obviously, they are not going to change dramatically over night, however.

As far as the state tests go, I worried that they would not show the results the principal wanted to see. Some students are so far behind in their reading and writing skills that no matter what we do in class this year, they will probably not show
improvement in their test scores. If I could get every teacher to intentionally work reading and writing instruction into their classes on a daily basis, we would see quicker results. This is something I am still working on. Most of the teachers see the value in the strategies I share, but it is still hard for them to balance all of the content they need to deliver with teaching the various strategies. Many also need examples of how to use strategies while teaching the content. I also need to combat the prevalent notion that there may be a magic textbook series or program that will “fix” students, increase test scores, and improve test scores overnight. I know that creating and enhancing effective instruction takes extended time and commitment.

Reflections

The themes found in this section are best represented in a reader’s theater where colleagues share what they have discovered about my role with the principal who is also struggling to understand what I do and should be doing. The characters highlight my activities that have been illustrated in earlier stories and in stories found in chapter 5.

Readers’ Theater: Who Is She and What Does She Do?

Characters: Scott, social studies teacher; Brian, math teacher; Linda, English teacher; Pam, science teacher; Ralph, principal

Setting: Team meeting

Situation: The principal is coming to the team meeting to ask the team to share what the ISC has done and to discover more about how this has been done. The ISC usually attends these team meetings, but is at another meeting this day.
Ralph: Thank you for letting me come in today to talk about ISC. It is a new concept for us, and I am trying to figure out what it is so I can support it and also answer any questions I might get from board members and other teachers who are not directly involved with the new model. What would you say to people who ask what ISC is and what the ISC does?

Scott: Jennifer helps us to think about the teaching and learning process. She reminds us that we need to meet students where they are and teach them strategies that will help them learn the content we are trying to deliver. Jennifer is great at coming into my classroom, watching the lesson, talking with individual students, and then figuring out what I am missing in my instruction. She finds out what the students need in order to be successful with my assignments. Usually I have skipped several small steps that I took for granted that the students would know.

Brian: Yes. Jennifer has a way of breaking assignments down into small pieces and then has strategies to help students tackle each piece. We tend to ask students to complete the end assignment without making sure they can do every part of it first.

Pam: I also see Jennifer as another brain to help percolate ideas. I am trying to teach differently because I have learned that my lecturing is not the only way or the best way to teach seventh-graders. Jennifer has told us we need to change gears every 10 minutes and that students need to be actively engaged in the learning process. I go to her all of the time to get ideas for how to make my lessons more interactive. She helps me with management ideas for keeping all 24 students busy and on task even when they are out of their seats or talking with each other in their teams. I have been afraid to try any cooperative learning because I thought my room would be chaos.
**Linda:** As a brand-new teacher, Jennifer has given me so much support. I never feel like she is coming in my room and criticizing me. She has a way of sharing ideas that I can take if I like. Every idea she has given me has been great. I have learned so much about teaching from her, so much more than I ever learned in my methods classes such as the writing strategies. They have helped the students know exactly how to get started and what they need to include in a well-developed paragraph and essay. I had no idea how to help students write. She creates these great lessons and materials, teaches them in my class, and then helps me teach the lessons. I love team teaching with her because I can see how she does something and then I can try it. It is so nice to have her there watching me because if I forget something, she can add it.

**Brian:** Yes, Jennifer doesn’t teach as many lessons in my room as I have been teaching for 14 years. But, she helps me plan lessons that incorporate curriculum-based assessment, cooperative learning, and basic learning strategies. She thinks of creative ideas that I can use to change my routine every once in awhile and to help me reach all students as I have learned that students have many different ways of learning. I know I am not reaching all of their learning styles.

**Scott:** Yes, sometimes Jennifer comes in and sits next to targeted students to help them with the lesson. She asks them questions to see what they are understanding about the lesson and what they are not getting. Then, she lets me know what she has found out after class. Usually, several students are having the same struggles, so we brainstorm some ideas that I can add to my next lesson to help these students get back on track with my assignment or material I am teaching.
Linda: Jennifer also comes into my study hall to work with students who are struggling with writing assignments or who are simply way behind in their work. The students respond well to her I think because they see her as someone who cares about them and wants to help them. She is in a unique position because she is not one of their teachers and many students do not like their teachers, so they won’t work for them. They see Jennifer as someone who is there to help them be successful, and they don’t always see their teachers this way, which is sad, actually. I try to make sure my students know I care about them by talking with them before and after class, etc.

Scott: I have learned so many great ideas and strategies from Jennifer for making my classes run more smoothly and so I am not wasting any instructional time. I use a kitchen timer to keep the students on task when working in small groups. I have a warm-up on the overhead that focuses on a skill we are teaching the students so class starts as soon as students walk in the door.

Brian: Jennifer has helped me get into a routine of checking assignment books every day to make sure students write down their assignments. We have found that getting students to use their assignment books has helped our homework rate. She also has helped me see that I have been wasting student learning time while I am busy checking homework. She showed me how I can have the students reviewing with partners using Fan-N-Pick (Kagan, 1994) and review charts while I am busy talking with individual students.

Pam: Yes, she has helped me implement pocket words to help the students learn the key vocabulary they need to know. Science has so many important terms, and the students are lost if they don’t know what they mean. My students are able to play all
kinds of review games with their pocket words during downtime in class. I have found
that they don’t study out of class, so Jennifer is helping build study skills into my class to
help students learn the material and learn study skills at the same time.

**Ralph:** So, Jennifer shows you different ways of teaching and helps you plan
lessons. Does she work with any individual students?

**Scott:** Yes, she does this in my class all of the time. I let her know who is
struggling and that I don’t know how to help them. She then comes in to assess the
situation and figure out what the struggling students need. Then, she lets me know how I
can help them.

**Linda:** Yes, and she also shows me how she works individually with them so I
can do this too. She has a process of questions she asks them to find out what they can
do, what they are thinking, and how they approach what they are unsure of so she can
figure out what help they need.

**Ralph:** I see. So she works with students but does not pull them out of class.
Interesting.

**Brian:** She has found that what she would do with one student will help many
more students in the class. So, she helps us implement the strategies that will help. She
does meet with students outside of class if she needs more time to talk and figure out
what the real problem might be. I have seen her do this in my study hall a lot.

**Ralph:** Well, that helps me a lot. I have a much better picture of what ISC is all
about. Thank you for sharing your team time with me.
Conclusion

As can be seen in the various stories and in the readers’ theater, I do not do the same thing every day with every person. Everyone has his or her own set of experiences, prior knowledge, and needs. I work with each person individually depending on the need. Also, I address the fear factor by helping people feel comfortable taking the risks needed to problem-solve in order to alter their instruction to meet all student needs. The attributes my colleagues have described highlight the care that I have for people in trying to help them be all that they can be by valuing them, being sensitive to their needs, and being determined that, together, we can make a difference.
CHAPTER FIVE

MULTIPLE LAYERS

One of the beauties of teaching is that there is no limit to one's growth as a teacher, just as there is no knowing beforehand how much your students can learn.

Herbert Kohl

“What do you do?” This is such a good question that is so hard to answer. I can share a quick answer fairly easily, but people will not get the full picture of what I do. In reality, there are many layers to what I do, and every day is different depending on the need that arises. I have come to the conclusion now that people need to experience what I do, either in person or vicariously through story, in order to really understand what I do. This chapter contains stories and poems that may shed some light on my role: the skills needed in my role and the complexity of the job.

Getting Started . . .

I walked into the room and started getting my materials ready. As students came into the room, they looked at me, and one outspoken student asked, “Are you our substitute today?” “No, I am not.” I replied frankly with a smile. Mr. Brown came in shortly and reminded the students to look at the board if they hadn’t already. Getting the students trained in the routine was taking a little longer than he had expected this year, but he patiently reminded them to read rather than telling them what to do. I was pleased
to see that he was still using the agenda on the board and was insisting that students read
rather than telling them what to do. We started focusing on this last year when teachers
were complaining because students were not ready to get started when the bell rang.

The students who had not already gotten their journals did so and soon the room
was quiet. The students were all reading the journal topic on the overhead and thinking
about what to write. "You have 2 minutes left to finish your entries," warned Mr. Brown.
Within 3 minutes or so all of the students had quietly taken their journals back to the
crate they had found them in at the beginning of class. The class was unusually quiet, so
Mr. Brown did not have to use the quiet signal to get started. He introduced me to the
class by explaining that I was here to teach them an easier way to write paragraphs. He
explained that I was the instructional support consultant and my role was to help students
and teachers find easier ways of learning and doing well in school. The students seemed
to like this idea and were anxious to discover what I had to share.

Uncovering the Beginning Layers

Often I first look to establish a sense of order and routine in a classroom. Writing
the agenda on the board sets the frame for the class, and students know what is expected
from them. When students know the routine, they can be self-directed, leaving the
teacher free to meet with individuals and get class started on time.

Observing a Class to Find a Starting Place . . .

What a class! I guess I should focus on the positive aspects I saw and build from
there. I walked into seventh-grade English 10 minutes into the period. The teacher was
reading aloud to the class the rest of the short story "One Shot Finch" by Harper Lee. I
was pleasantly surprised to see that the students were taking notes on a chart they had created which looked very similar to the chart I created for the last unit I team taught with this English teacher. The students were listening for details concerning the appearance, actions, and feelings of the main character. I was disturbed, however, to see that two students who are struggling in seventh-grade were sitting with their notebooks closed. I made a mental note that I need to work on encouraging teachers to check in with these struggling students to be sure they are doing what they are supposed to be doing. Often, simply opening their notebooks for them and asking them if they want help writing gets them going. They immediately reply, “No, I can do it.” I then respond, “Great!” Within a few minutes I check back in and praise the work they have done and give them any pointers they may need to get on the right track.

Then, the teacher gave a quiz. She told the students they could write their answers on the back of their charts. She said this once with no other directions before reading the first quiz question aloud. Obviously many students had no idea what was going on. Setting the stage is another thing to work on with all teachers. Giving clear directions and allowing the students enough time to get ready for the next activity is important. This clarity makes sure the transition moves smoothly rather than taking much more time than it should because students are confused and off task doing something else because they didn’t realize it was time to move on.

The quiz questions were all low-level recall, which probably does not matter at all in the long run. Who cares if a student can remember the exact month of the story or the servant’s name? This information can be gained by looking at the story. No questions were asked about the meaning of the story, the author’s purpose in writing the story, or
the possible themes found in the story. We really need to be teaching and assessing higher-level analysis as this is what is being measured on the state exams, not low-level recall questions that simply measure whether or not a student read the material.

During the last 7 minutes of class, the teacher handed out a copy of the paragraph model I introduced in September. Again, I was pleased to see this being used, but I was appalled to see that the teacher did not seem to understand the model and had not prepared a sample paragraph for the students ahead of time. She asked the class what the topic for their paragraph would be, and fortunately the class all answered correctly. Students really struggled, however, with the opinion box, so I decided to help by writing possible choices on the board.

It was apparent to me that the students needed to work on understanding the difference between general and specific ideas. If they wrote, “Atticus was an old man” for their topic sentence, what specific details could they use to fill up their paragraph? I explained to the students that they needed to think of a character trait or a way to describe Atticus in general. The students started listing such traits as humble and nice. The teacher then circled humble and told them all to put that in their light bulbs (opinion boxes). I could see that an upcoming mini-lesson that all of the students needed was on identifying the difference between general and specific details.

The students had about 2 minutes left now. They were told to complete the paragraph model or outline tonight for homework and to remember to use quotes when they could. This sent off a siren in my head. The students had never been shown how to use quotes in their writing before. How would they know how to do this tonight on their own? Would some of the students even do this assignment if they were not sure about
how to attack it? They had not gotten started or done a practice one first in class with the teacher’s assistance, so many would be lost. This causes a terrible cycle of students not doing their homework, the teacher getting frustrated because the students don’t seem to care, the students getting bad grades, and the parents getting upset and punishing their children or blaming the teacher, and learning is lost in all of the bad feelings that have been created.

As an ISC, I try to jump in to help stop this cycle and possibly prevent it all together if I can see it happening before it gets started. Working in the classroom with the teachers allows me to do this rather than working with an individual student after the assignment has been given with no modeling, no checking for understanding, and no using guided practice. I can help this student with this assignment, but what about the next one? If I can work with the teacher, I can help the teacher see how to work in checking for understanding and in using guided practice before giving the independent practice. Many teachers forget these two steps and are more than willing to include them, especially if they are given ideas for doing so that make it seem relatively simple. The key to learning is breaking the learning down into small incremental steps. We often do not break the steps down enough for our students who are coming in with little knowledge about the content that we know so well.

Probably because I was there, the teacher then reminded the students to put these papers in the left-hand side of their green folders and to write their assignment in their assignment books, which should have been done at the beginning of class. At least the teacher did remember. It takes time to get into a routine of reminding the students on a daily basis where to put their homework and to write down their assignments.
Eventually, the students will be so well trained that the teachers will not have to do this. But, until then, it saves trouble in the long run if the students are reminded and helped to stay organized.

As the students walked out the door, I thought, “Yikes!!!” The students have no idea how to complete their outlines. Tomorrow, they are going to the computer lab to type their paragraphs. Oh boy. How can I step in to ensure success for these students who may not have a clue how to do their outlines tonight and will automatically be behind because they will not be ready to type tomorrow?

Immediately after observing that class, I modified the generic paragraph model I have to better match the assignment and ran 100 copies of it, hole-punched them, and then ran them back to give them to the teacher to hand out to the rest of the classes, explaining where the students could write down their quotes in the model. I then spent an hour or so reading the story myself and then writing a sample paragraph, which should have already been done by the teacher. I created a PowerPoint slide with bubbles labeling the different parts of the paragraph as well as color-coded the text to illustrate each main part to use in my lesson the next day.

The next day, I would have the paragraph slide showing on the large screen in the computer lab. I planned to help the teacher explain the parts and how to write such a literature analysis paper before the students started typing their own. I would probably teach the lesson first period by myself and then slowly get the student teacher more involved until she taught it on her own by fourth period when I would simply watch and give her any feedback. This is the process I usually follow when modeling a new lesson or method of instruction for any teacher. “I teach, we teach, you teach” is the model.
This way I am using the same process of effective instruction that teachers should be using all of the time. The teacher first models the task that is to be learned, then guides students with immediate feedback as they try the task themselves, and then when students are ready, they do the task independently with feedback from the teacher.

**The Next Set of Layers**

I often visit a class to see what is happening and what help I can offer as is seen in the previous scenario. I observe the class setting and then look at the students as they are interacting with the learning tasks. I look for what they understand and what might be getting in the way of success. I model the process of checking in with individual students, making sure they are all on track and know what to do. When I see a skill that is weak or some information that is missing, I either jump in and share information, or make a note to plan a mini-lesson with the teacher for the next day. When I model a lesson, I make sure I teach the foundational skills students will need for the lesson and create a sample of the assignment to be completed by the students. I often do this step for the teachers at first and then work with them to create these model assignments. Eventually, teachers begin doing this on their own. Students need to see what they are expected to do and need to know how to do this. Often students do not have the prerequisite skills needed to be successful with given assignments.

**Getting the Teacher More Involved . . .**

I went into the social studies classroom for the first time this year. Last year, the teacher had not wanted anything to do with me, as he was a little concerned about who I was and what I was there for. So, I gave the teacher some space and worked in other
classes. Throughout the year, the teacher was able to see that I really was working with every teacher and not just teachers who might have been singled out as needing “extra” help by the administration. By the end of the year, the teacher told me that I would need to work with him at length next year to help him get his students ready to write their essays on their state tests. I assured him that I would be in whenever he wanted me to.

The first day I was in that teacher’s classroom, I felt a little unsure of how the lesson would go in that the students seemed hyperactive that day. Also, I was concerned about how to get the teacher more involved this year. Last year, when I modeled the few strategies in this room, the teacher took a back seat and even called in sick a couple of times. Knowing that the instructional support model stresses not doing everything for the teacher but doing everything with the teacher, I created well-thought-out lesson plans that required team teaching. The teacher was involved from the beginning by introducing the lesson while I interjected some additional thoughts. The teacher then took the lead with the pre-assessment that I had designed to discover what the students already knew about writing social-studies-related essays. Hopefully, the teacher would design his own pre-assessments before teaching a unit from now on as he had attended the summer training I had delivered where teachers learned the importance of discovering what the students already know and then building from what they know instead of what they do not know (Gickling & Thompson, 1985; Tucker, 1985). I intentionally model and explain the purpose of as many strategies as I can in one class period, or several, in this case. After the students finished writing all they knew about the essay format and the definitions, the teacher told the class that I had created a PowerPoint slideshow to help them review the parts of an essay. But, before we got started, he had noticed the homework assignment
written on the board. He must have remembered just then that, yesterday, his grade level team and I had talked about making sure teachers were consistent in reminding students to write their homework down in their assignment notebooks as soon as they came in the door. Therefore, he asked the students to open their assignment books and write down the homework for the night. Then he asked them to open their notebooks to the social studies sections so that they were ready to take notes on the slideshow. Instead of beginning right away, I walked around the room quickly to be sure all students had found the right section and had labeled their notes. I discovered that many students do not label and date their notes, making it hard for them to find them at a later date. One of my routine questions when I am in any class is “Where does the date go?” I love to hear a choral response from the entire class chanting back, “On the top right-hand side.” “Very good!” I praise the class with a big smile. Sometimes I take a minute to remind them about why they do this as a reinforcement of the strategy as well as a reminder for the classroom teacher of how important it is that he/she do this every time notes are given in class. Now that everyone is ready with properly labeled notes, I reiterate the purpose for this part of the lesson.

And More Layers

People often ask me how I get teachers to buy in and let me work with them. My first response is, I do not worry about it. I have plenty of work to do with the teachers who want my help. When I run out of work, I will go find more. If we focus on the positive, success will come. I begin by working with a few teachers and sharing my work with others whenever the opportunity arises. Another teacher usually hears about or sees students in action and asks me if I can do what I am doing in his/her room too. With the
teacher in this story, I was careful to give space and not push too much. Over time, the teacher saw how I worked with other teachers who are vocal now about asking what they can do better so their students learn more. Once the teacher had worked through feelings of insecurity and wariness, I was able to come closer and get more involved. By the end of the year, this teacher, too, wanted me in his room all of the time. Being sensitive to feelings and knowing how and when the time is right are key elements of my role as well.

**Working With an Individual Student in Math Class as an ISC**

**Situation:** John is struggling in math class. He is refusing to take any tests and does not complete his homework assignments. He works only when someone is standing right beside him helping him as he goes. He asks a question about each step before he writes anything down.

The ISC observes him in math class and sits next to him to conduct a curriculum-based assessment in order to discover how to help him:

"How is it going, John?" I asked.

"Okay. I guess. I hate math though. Mrs. Schwartz says I am just not trying."

"Are you trying?"

"Well. yeah. I am. but I can’t do the problems without her help."

"Hmm. Let me take a look at your worksheet. What are you supposed to be doing?"

"We have to turn these sentences into division problems and then figure out the answers to the questions."

"Okay. Let’s look at question number one. What would you do first?"
“It says 24 apples are divided into six boxes. How many apples would be in each box? So, I guess I would set up my division problem like this: 6 divided by 24.”

“What did Mrs. Schwartz tell you about figuring out which number goes inside the bracket?”

“Oh yeah, FIT which means I have to fit the first or the top number in the bracket.”

“Excellent! So, what number should be in the bracket?”

“24.”

“Very good. Now what is your answer?”

“Umm. 3?”

“Not quite. What would you multiply with 6 to get 24?”

“5?”

“Actually, it is 4. 4 times 6 is 24. Now, let’s look at the next question. How would you set up that division problem?”

“12 divided by 3.”

“Yes! How did you know 12 went in the bracket?”

“Because 12 was the first number so it FIT in the bracket.”

“See, you know what you are doing! Okay, so what is the answer?”

“3.”

“Actually. 4 times 3 equals 12. You were close. It looks like you just need to spend some time reviewing your multiplication tables. I can help you make some pocket cards that you can use to review your math facts. This will help you when you are doing
these problems. You know what you need to do to solve these problems. You are just getting the wrong answers because you are not multiplying correctly."

“Okay, thanks for helping me, Mrs. Dove.”

In a follow-up discussion with the teacher, I said, “John seems to know what he is doing. When I reminded him about FIT, he was able to set up the problems with no trouble at all. He is getting the wrong answers because he is multiplying wrong. I told him I would help him make pocket cards so he could review his math facts. After I finished working with him, I walked around and talked with several other students in your class to see how they were doing. Quite a few had forgotten what FIT meant, and I saw several multiplication errors. What would you think about making a review chart and pocket cards for everyone to use this week to help them all review their math facts?”

“That would be fine with me. I don’t know how to make a chart, but if you could make it and show me how to use it that would be great.”

“I learned this great way of practicing sight words when I was observing in the elementary school. It is called ‘Red Dot, Green Dot.’ The students all had 20 words they needed to practice saying correctly. The teacher made a chart with 20 boxes and had the students write one of their words in each box. Then, working in pairs, the students took turns asking their partners to say the words aloud. The listening partners marked a green dot next to the words the speaking partners said correctly and with ease. They marked a red dot next to the words that needed some more rehearsal before being automatic. I am thinking that we can put some basic math facts in these boxes. The students can mark the boxes they need to practice. What do you think?”

“Sounds great. What do you need from me?”
“Well, what are the really important concepts or facts that you want your students to know?”

“Let’s see. FIT is definitely important. As you said, many of the students are forgetting this little tip. They also need to know how to read each division sign and what they mean.”

“Okay, we could put each of these in a box, and then we can fill in the rest of the boxes with the most commonly missed multiplication facts. What ones do you notice the most?”

“The sixes, sevens, and eights.”

“Okay, great. Here, I just sketched out a chart. If you could fill in each box, I will then type this on the computer so you have a master to use. Then, in your next unit, all you will have to do is change the information in the boxes. I will e-mail you the chart so you can save it on your computer. Next time, the students will know exactly how to use the charts, so you will not have to spend time explaining the directions.”

“This is great. Thank you for doing this for me.”

“No problem. This is the fun part of my job. I will also make some flash cards on the computer so we can do Fan-N-Pick with them some time this week. The students could work in pairs with their charts or in teams of four for Fan-N-Pick while you are checking homework each day. I will also give the charts to the other teachers so they can quiz the students when they have some down time in class and at lunchtime. This may help if the students are thinking about the answers outside of math class as well.”
“Okay, that sounds great. Would you mind coming in to help me get this set up and to explain the directions to the students. Once I see how you do it, I am sure I will be fine.”

“Sure, no problem. I can be here tomorrow and Wednesday to help. I will stop in later to let you see the chart. I am not a math expert so you will have to make sure it all makes sense and that I didn’t type anything wrong. See you later!”

“Okay, bye.”

Working With an Individual Student in Social Studies Class as an ISC

“Hi, Matt, how are you?”

“Fine.” Matt grunts.

As I sit down, I notice that Matt has not taken out a piece of notebook paper to start on the writing assignment that the teacher is taking the students through step by step.

“Wow. who drew that picture on your notebook?” I ask incredulously.

“I did.” Matt looks up with a spark of pride in his eyes.

“You are kidding me! That is awesome. My son would love that picture.” I exclaim.

“Really?” Matt asked with a beaming smile on his face at this point.

“Yes, he loves anything to do with dragons. Hey, do you think you could draw him a picture like that? He would be so excited.”

“Yeah, I guess so. I could draw it today in study hall. I have two in a row.”

“Great! So, what are you supposed to be doing right now anyway?”

“I don’t know. He is talking so fast I can’t understand him.”
"What is this assignment about? I haven't been in here in awhile so I don't even know what topic you are talking about."

"We are learning about the Civil War."

"Oh, okay. So what is it that you have to do?"

"We have to write an essay using the documents she gave us, but I don't know what I am supposed to do."

"Okay, well, let's look at the directions. What do they say?"

"Using the documents, write a well-developed essay."

"What is the essay going to be about?"

"The causes of the Civil War."

"Great! How did you know that?"

"Because that is the title of the assignment sheet."

"I am impressed. Do you know how many students ignore the titles? Okay, now what are the key direction words in the next sentence? Remember that the direction words are the words that tell you what you need to do like describe, explain, list, etc."

"Identify and explain."

"Yes, perfect! Okay, now answer the questions 'Identify what?' and 'Explain what'?"

"Identify the three causes of the Civil War, and explain each cause with support from the documents."

"Bingo! That is right. Were any of the documents you read about the Civil War?"

"Yes, all of them were, I think."
“Okay, now let’s try to figure out how many paragraphs you will need for your essay. How many causes does it ask you to explain?”

“Three.”

“Okay, so how many body paragraphs do you think you will need?”

“Three. One for each cause.”

“Sounds good to me. What does it say that you need to put in each paragraph?”

“Support from the documents.”

“Great, so what do you need to do first to get started?”

“Look at the documents to find the causes they talk about.”

“Sounds like a plan. Where are your documents?”

Matt opens up his notebook to his social studies folder and finds them on the left-hand side of his folder.

“Look at that; you remembered to put your unfinished work on the left-hand side.”

Matt looks pleased and nods his head.

“What is the first document about?”

“I don’t know.” Matt says.

I glance at Matt’s answers to the questions at the end of the first document. He has answered them correctly. Why doesn’t he know what the document was about?

“What is the main idea of this document?”

“I don’t know.”

“Where might you look to find the main idea?”

“In the document?”
"Well, yes. It usually helps to look at the title if there is one or at the topic sentence. Also, it helps to look for any important words that are repeated often throughout the document. Look at the bold print in this case. What do you think this document might be all about?"

"Slavery?"

"Yes, what helped you figure that out?"

"Well, the bold print talks about slaves in the South."

"Very good."

"What I would like you to do is to read through each document and write the main idea or magnet word in the margin. Then, star the documents that you think you could use for your essay on the causes of the Civil War. Don't worry about writing your essay yet. I will talk to Mr. Fry and tell him you have a different homework assignment tonight, okay?"

"Thanks, Mrs. Dove."

"No problem. I will stop in later to see how you are doing. When do you have study hall? I could stop in then to see if you have any questions."

"I have study hall during seventh period and eighth period in the cafeteria. I can work on the picture for your son too."

"That would be great. But, make sure you get this done first."

"Okay. I will. Don't worry, Mrs. Dove." Matt says with a grin.

"What did you think of the lesson?" Mr. Fry asked, during our follow-up discussion later. "I am not sure the kids are getting it. I had to answer so many
questions that I didn’t get as far as I had hoped. Do you think they will be able to write
the essay tonight?”

“I think a lot of the students will probably have problems getting started. After
talking to Matt and a couple other students, I think many of them are having trouble
figuring out the essence of each document. If they do not understand what the documents
are about, they will have a hard time using information from them to support their thesis
statement.”

“So what should I do? I was going to have them spend time in class typing their
essays tomorrow.”

“Perhaps you should go back a step to make sure they all understand the
documents first. I could team teach with you if you want. We could put the students in
teams of three and ask them to identify the main idea of each document and then discuss
what point they might use each document to support or prove. To make sure that
everyone is engaged, we could ask the students to number off from one to three in each
team. Number one could identify the main idea. Person number two could either agree
and explain why this is the main idea or disagree and share what he/she thinks the main
idea is and why. Then person number three could explain what point this document
might be used for. After all three agree, they turn to the next document and rotate the
roles clockwise. If we write the roles on the board, the students will be able to look up
and see what role they have next.”

“Okay, that sounds great. I have never done this type of activity before, so it
would be great if you could be with me.”
"No problem. I don’t have anything scheduled for tomorrow. I was planning on observing in the math class to see how I can help the students master fractions. But, I can do this fifth period. After we try this lesson four periods in a row, I am sure we will have worked out all of the bugs, and you will be fine without me."

"Great. This sounds like fun. I am so glad you came in here today. It never occurred to me that the students might not understand the documents. We went over them in class, so I thought they would all know them."

"I know; it would be nice if they all understood what we do as a class, but I am afraid most of the students need to actually process the information themselves and have the opportunity to verbalize their thinking. It should be helpful for them to hear each other sharing how they are finding the main ideas."

"I can’t wait until tomorrow!"

"Me too. Have a good night if I don’t see you later!"

Upon reading several reflections written by people helping me to analyze the underlying beliefs of instructional support, I wrote these two found poems by again taking key words, phrases, and thoughts from these reflections:

The Magic of Learning

Believe it can happen
It will
Find out how people learn
Everyone is different
Try, try, try
Find a successful match for EVERY student
Don’t leave a single rock unturned
Celebrate each small success
Yes, you did it!
These moments multiply incrementally
It seems like magic.
Unlimited Potential

Life is what you make of it
You have unlimited potential
What does this really mean?
You can do it!
What are your dreams?
Shut off that negative voice
You can do it!
Don’t listen to others.
You can do it!
It is simply amazing:
We really can fly!

And More Layers

Watching, noticing, and conversing while breaking learning down into incremental steps is key to what I do as an instructional support consultant. I believe all students can succeed if I take the time to notice what they are doing, what they already know, and what they need to know. Often, the only way to find this out is through conversation. Through a questioning process, I can find out an amazing amount of information about students, which often amazes even the students themselves. It is important to share with the students what I see that they know because they may not realize this. They always grow a couple of inches when they hear how much they know. For some reason, I do not see people tell this often, as focusing on what students know is not at the center of school. This process is referred to as curriculum-based assessment and is discussed at length in the next chapter.

What Else Does the ISC Do? Dialoguing With the Principal

"Jennifer, we need to talk about what you are doing. I want to make sure you are working with students and not spending too much time working with teachers. I am
concerned because we are not seeing any improvement with state test scores.” explains the principal.

“Well, I have only been working in this role for a year and one half now. It has taken awhile to get everyone on board and to teach some of the fundamental strategies. We are not going to see miraculous results overnight. I am working with teachers to help them teach their students more effectively. When I am in classes, I am teaching students as well as showing teachers new ways of teaching. So, I really work with both students and teachers.”

“I really think we need to be sure we are spending most of our time working with students. I am not always sure that they are our focus in education.”

“I hear your concerns. I think what I need to do is let you know every week what classes I am in and what lessons I am teaching to students so you can see what I am doing. I agree that we need to be spending our money on students. I see my role as working with teachers as well as with students. If I can change how a teacher is teaching, I can help all of that teacher’s students at once, instead of working with one student at a time to fix the situation for the moment. If I cannot change what is happening in that classroom, I will be forever “fixing” the situations on a daily basis. I do hear your concerns and can see that I need to do a better job of communicating with you so you know what I am doing in my role, in that this position is so new, and we are all still figuring out what it should be like.”

“Thank you. This will help. But, until I see a difference in the state test scores, I will have a hard time believing we should be spending the money that we are on your position. It might be better spent on student programs.”
Wow, doesn’t he realize that real change will not occur for 3 to 5 years for an individual and approximately 10 for institutional change? (Fullan, 1993). I am trying so hard to make change, but it has not been easy. Getting into classrooms and working with students has taken a lot of finesse. Helping the students figure out who I was without having them thinking I was working with only a few targeted students has been quite a challenge. I am still convincing people that everyone can learn and needs to learn more so that no one feels singled out as in need of “extra help.” Receiving extra help has taken on a negative connotation in our educational system. I have found that I need to be aware of people’s feelings and have to figure out how to put people at ease with their concerns. I could have probably used some psychology courses for this, but I am simply drawing on my own feelings of fear as a student and as a teacher with someone else in my room.

“Mom, I had a very stressful conversation with my principal today. He doesn’t think what I am doing is working. He also said he wants me working with individual students and not spending so much of my time working with teachers.”

“Well, maybe you just need to share some information with him and let him know that you really are working with students all of the time. When you are working with teachers, you are helping them help their students, so in turn you are helping these students.”

“Yes, I will keep working on that. I told him I would try to share more of what I do with him. I know he wants to see me working with individual students in the more traditional sense on a pull-out basis. But, how can I justify my salary to work with six or seven students every day for the entire year when I could be affecting 200-300 students every day for the entire year?”
If individual students come to me with organization problems, study skills problems, and or problems with certain assignments, I can work with them to take care of the problem of that particular day. However, unless I work with the teacher as well to add some steps before final assignments that are confusing or to implement strategies on a daily basis that will help the student stay organized, all that I do with an individual would be short term and, in my eyes, for naught. According to Fullan (1993), the best way to bring about educational change is to affect the classroom teacher. When we can change teacher practices, we are not only helping the children of today, but the children of tomorrow as well (Joyce & Showers, 1995; Sarason, 1990). If I can convince the teachers of the benefit of my approach, they may be able to help the principal see the benefits.”

The Next Level of Layers

This composite story represents a reality that any change agent in education will have to face, changing the paradigm of how we think about and conduct education (Fullan, 1993; Kuhn, 1962; Senge, 1990, 1999). People accept that schools should function the same way they have for 100 years. We have tested, identified, labeled, and placed students ever since the time of the scientific revolution when we decided in the 1880s we could apply science and our desire to measure and know truth through science (Smith, 1998). Schools are built around focusing on what students do not know and on what they need to know in order to be productive citizens, instead of around discovering what students do know and what they need to help them learn what they need to know. Learning theory has been fairly non-existent in school practices (Gickling & Thompson, 2001; Smith, 1998; Tucker, 2002). For example, simply assigning a random list of 10 to
50 vocabulary words to every student to memorize in a week for the test on Friday is not aligned with any learning theory principle.

In order to go against the norm and fight for a different way of delivering education, one has to have a strong moral purpose and to really know one's underlying beliefs. It is one thing to say all students can learn, but it is quite another thing to really fight so all students have the opportunity to learn without being hurt in the meantime by labels, tests, etc. Many people feel they cannot change the way things are and that they do not want to make waves. As an instructional support consultant, I must take this risk to improve the possibility of success in teaching and learning.

**A Sample Day in My Life as an ISC**

Linda came racing in to find me in the math classroom next door. She had left her students who were quietly working on their journal entries to come find me for some advice. She found out this morning that she had block periods today, which meant she saw each class for 30 extra minutes. Thus, she had not planned anything for this time. The students were going to be reading their first novel of the year, so she thought maybe she should give them some literature terms to know first. She had 2 lists that she had found in her materials and wanted me to tell her which list she should have the students copy down in their notes. Each list had over 15 words on it. Yikes, I thought to myself, neither list. Luckily, Linda had been to the summer learning theory/curriculum-based assessment training I had delivered so I simply said, “Remember the magic number?”

“Oh yeah, I shouldn’t give them any more than 7, huh?”

“Right, I will come over in 2 minutes to help you figure out which 7 to go with.”
After making sure the students were all on task with their review charts, I told the teacher I would be right back. I went into Linda's room and looked at the two lists. I liked some definitions better than others so explained which 7 terms I would start with. I told her these were the most basic terms and that it made sense to start with them before getting more advanced. She agreed and quickly started making an overhead for the students to use. As I was watching this, I was trying to determine what she could have the students do with these words besides simply copying them down in their notes.

During the summer, I had seen an idea for a research project where the students taped envelopes inside a manila folder. They put their note cards for each different main point of the research paper in the appropriate envelopes.

I shared this idea with Linda, thinking that her students could have different envelopes for each set of definitions they get throughout the year. The envelope they get today would be labeled “Literature Terms.” She thought it was a great idea and went immediately to the back of the room to get some envelopes and index cards. After the students copied down the terms in their notes, she would have them write each word and definition on a card that they could then put in the envelope that they would tape inside their English folder. All of the students have a green double-sided three-hole punched English folder in the English section of their three-ring binders as part of the organization system the team had agreed to use this year.

I stopped back into the math room to see that the students were all engaged by overhearing a student tell another, “You were right, but I think you might want to practice that one some more since it took you awhile to get the answer.” I smiled at the teacher who gave me the thumbs-up sign from across the room. I decided to step out
again to check in the social studies room. The social studies teacher was having her
students write an essay, and she wanted me to stop in to see what else she could do to
help them. She said they were still having trouble getting started, and she did not know
how else she could explain the assignment.

I walked around the room, looked at some student work, asked some students a
couple of questions, and realized that many of the students could not explain what they were
writing about. If they did not understand the content they were supposed to write about,
how could they write about it? So, I asked the teacher if she had some time later when
we could figure out a lesson to help the students process and verbalize the content in their
own words. Then, they would be ready to write about it.

When the bell rang, I went back to offer support for the math teacher as she
started the next class with the review charts. She remembered all of the directions and
seemed to be fine, so I went to my office to brainstorm some ideas for helping the
students write their social studies essays. I needed to design a reading comprehension
lesson we could use that would help the students pull out the main ideas and significance
of the passages they had to write an essay about. We would have to use a cooperative
learning structure if we wanted all of the students to be processing their thinking aloud
and to hear how others were thinking.

The reading skills we needed to focus on were identifying the main idea and then
paraphrasing the main ideas in such a way that they understood the meaning and use of
each idea so that they could then use these ideas in their writing. I spent the next hour
designing a lesson we could use tomorrow. Later that day, I shared my ideas with the
social studies teacher who added her thoughts, and, together, we created a final plan. I
was already supposed to be in math the next day, but talked to the math teacher about
changing our plans a little so we did our review structure at the end of class. This way I
could team-teach with the social studies teacher at the beginning of class and then sneak
out by the time the students were all actively engaged in their reading teams.

Upon analyzing the stories found in this chapter discussing the multiple layers of
my role, I wrote the following poem to represent succinctly the essential steps in the
problem solving process found in the instructional support approach:

**The Process**

Observing
Looking for patterns
Planning
What can be done?
Implementing
This might work
Evaluating
We might try this next time
Assessing
What is working and what is not?
These steps are missing
Try this
This will help
Okay, now try this
Try it again now
And again
Yes, we did it
We make a great team!

**Readers’ Theater: Metaphors for Me as an ISC**

Again in attempting to pull together all that I have shared about the multiple
layers of my role as an ISC, it seems fitting to close with a discussion from my closest
colleagues and family members who discuss metaphors they have thought about as a
means of capturing the essence of what I do and how I do my job as an ISC.
Characters: Mom, William (teacher and husband), Emily (office mate), and Jennifer

Jennifer: Thank you for helping with my research of uncovering what it is that I do in my role as an instructional support consultant. I am thinking that writing metaphors might be a nice, succinct way of capturing the essence of what I do. Why don’t we give it a try and see if this works?

William: Okay, I am game. When I think about everything we talked about during our discussions about what you do and how you do it, I am reminded of the sun. The reason I would choose the sun is first because of the brightness and the energy we get from the sun. When the sun comes up outside, people look out and say, “Oh, this is a beautiful day; let’s get out and partake in it.” When you are there, whether it is in a classroom or at a workshop, or wherever else, when people see you it is like getting out in the sun. People thrive off of that energy level, off of those new ideas, you know those rays of sunlight that are coming off of you. People take those in, eat them up and go with them. You are also like the sun because as the Earth revolves and we go into nighttime, people are processing what you have shared back in their classrooms. During the day, when they come see you again, it is a positive interaction. Yeah, we have our cloudy days; we make mistakes whatever, but the sun comes back out and visits us and helps us do whatever. Because you are so upbeat, so positive, and so much of a problem solver, the metaphor I would think is the most fitting for you is the sun. You are that bright moment in everybody’s day.

Emily: I, too, see this extremely positive side of you. People are always stopping in our office to ask for an idea or to share the amazing success they had with an idea you

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gave them. The synergy and energy level that exists in our office is so exciting and keeps me motivated and interested in my job. I would compare you to an unlocked treasure trove because you are so full of creative, positive, and enriching solutions and are always willing to give of yourself to benefit others.

**William:** Great metaphor! This idea of sharing great ideas fits with my metaphor of the sun as well. First, you give teachers an idea. At first, either consciously or unconsciously, they are not sure if it will work. But, once it does work, people are anxious to brag about their success with this interactive way of teaching. You are like a warm ray that hits them when they share their success with you. When other people see this exchange, they want to feel the warm rays too, so they ask to get involved. People also become suns themselves when they get excited as the warmth radiates onto the people around them. When people get something good, they want to return the favor which leads into a positive cycle of growth. People are seen as successful, and this builds relationships between people involved in this solar system experience.

**Mom:** The energy that you both have highlighted is what came to my mind immediately. The idea of sharing ideas with others also rings true when I think of what you do. Whenever I hear you recount the tales from one of your days, I picture a busy bee full of energy, flitting around from one classroom to another, doing your job, adding input and then moving on to the next place, maybe to come back later to see how everything is going and to share more ideas that you have possibly gleaned from another room you have been in.

**Jennifer:** Wow, these are great. They will be perfect in my dissertation as a way of helping people to see some of what I may not be able to capture when writing about

Conclusion

The sun, treasure trove, and bee metaphors capture the complexity of my role as well as many of the attributes that describe my actions in my role as are described at the end of chapter 3. My role changes depending on the need, and I am in many places in order to facilitate a collaborative, living network within the learning organization (Helgesen, 1995; Senge, 1999). In order to be in such a role, I am flexible, creative, knowledgeable, determined, and so on. I help to lead a problem-solving network that is constantly growing by adjusting and adapting as we continue to learn more about how people learn and how to best meet all people’s needs.
CHAPTER SIX

THE NUTS AND BOLTS OF THE MODEL

My heart is singing for joy this morning.
A miracle has happened!
The light of understanding has shown
upon my little pupil’s mind.
and behold, all things are changed.
Anne Sullivan

This chapter puts what I do in my role as an ISC back together again after analyzing the various perspectives and layers of what I as an ISC do within the instructional support model. I present an overall description of the instructional support model and then present the fundamental underlying principles that drive all decisions made through instructional support about helping to increase student achievement, which is the ultimate goal of instructional support. Next, I present the history of instructional support to provide an understanding of the distinctions in the model I have implemented. I close the chapter with answers to typical questions I am asked about the role, duties, qualifications, and attributes of the instructional support consultant.

What Is Instructional Support?

Instructional support is a concept of discovering how to help all students succeed academically in school. This concept then leads school districts to create a problem-solving system of educators whose primary goal is to determine how to help all students
meet with success (Tucker, 2001). The problem-solving system consists of classroom teachers, administrators, students, parents, guidance counselors, and all other personnel who work with students academically. Schools create their own specific models of implementation that include choosing an instructional support consultant (ISC) to lead the initiative and creating various teams as a vehicle for bringing educators together in a building to network and share their strengths. These teams of teachers and other school personnel use a collaborative problem-solving process to create action plans that are implemented in classrooms across content areas and grade levels in order to address specific learning needs of specific students throughout the school (Kovaleski, Tucker, & Duffy, 1995; State of Pennsylvania, 1995; Wall & Tucker, 1992).

At the middle-school level, grade-level teams of teachers work together to help all students succeed by aligning their practices and implementing consistent intervention plans. Frequent and consistent application of these plans ensures success. One such plan includes a way to help middle-school students be organized, usually the first reason why many students struggle academically in middle school. Other plans focus on reading, writing, problem solving, study skills, and test-taking skills as these are universal areas that need to be addressed in consistent ways in order to help all students learn the content in any area, and progress as they should through school.

An instructional support consultant works closely with the grade-level teams to help them observe needs, create action plans, implement them consistently across content areas, assess student progress, and determine next steps. The ISC is a part of grade-level teams and also works closely with teachers, helping them with instructional needs of students by teaching with them in their classrooms and by helping them to assess and
plan their instruction according to student needs based on best practice models of instruction and learning theory. The ISC helps teachers use assessment information gathered through curriculum-based assessment rather than solely from normative assessments such as state exams. These exams provide some information but do not share the whole picture about what instruction students need next in order to be successful with the learning process as they represent only one form of assessment.

The ISC shares learning theory and corresponding instructional strategies as well as instructional methods with teachers who are trying to help all students learn the material in their particular courses. Instructional support is a process of collaborating to solve problems and a network for the sharing of ideas that work with each other. The intent of instructional support is to help teachers integrate learning theory, literacy skills, learning strategies, and instructional methods into everyday instruction in all classes so students do not experience failure but success with learning.

**What Does Instructional Support Look Like?**

Instructional support is hard to see as it is not a routine, concrete program where students go to a certain class every day and work on a set curriculum. Instructional support looks like a spider web that is stretched all over the building. It reaches students and teachers in every classroom during regular, on-going instruction. The spider web is continually expanding as more and more teachers begin spinning their own webs by networking with colleagues and teammates in order to solve problems of specific student needs. Every decision to do something different instructionally strengthens the web. The network throughout the building is strong and cannot be easily swept away by problems that occur since everyone has in place similar expectations and is implementing common
strategies and procedures for organization, problem solving, test-taking, reading, and writing.

The web sticks to some people more than others, and the ISC and grade-level teachers intentionally build stronger portions of the web around certain students who need a safety net in order to ensure success in school. The ingredients for the web are threads of learning theory, curriculum-based assessment, belief in people’s ability and desire to learn successfully, and conditions necessary to meet people’s basic needs. These beliefs, principles, and practices that spin from these are what constitute the nearly invisible spider web that stretches across the building.

Helgesen (1995) uses this web metaphor to describe her leadership theories for successful organizations. She explains that webs are flexible and able to change upon need and remain intact, while more traditional team structures dissolve once a job has been completed. The web is constantly in place and ready for whenever a need arises. The web has open lines of communication and allows people on the ground level to be connected and strong as one united whole. When everyone is involved and part of the communication, people are less likely to be caught up in fear of the unknown and suspicious of new actions, as they will know what is happening and why it is happening.

This explanation of the web describes my leadership style as an instructional support consultant. I help to spin the web and maintain the web that connects all teachers and students together in a supportive network for the sharing of ideas that leads to successful school experiences for all students and teachers. Helgesen (1995) also states that the webs are created through a process of trial and error: “One learns and modifies as one goes along” (p. 31). This problem-solving method that accepts and embraces the trial
and error approach is at the heart of learning and thus is at the heart of my approach with students and teachers. I help both groups feel comfortable with taking risks and celebrating their small successes, which eventually lead to larger success. One way I help people feel comfortable taking such risks is by modeling my own risk-taking, learning process. I share my trials and errors as well as what I did to improve on my mistakes. I constantly talk about something I tweaked so people can see most of what we do is not completely wrong, and we are not incompetent; we simply need to alter an aspect of what we are doing, and then we will be more successful.

Assessments, record keeping, and celebrations of success bring the web into visibility for others to see. Again, I can never really know how far and how strongly the web is reaching and reinforcing, but I can begin to measure the impact of the implementation of instructional support by looking at student and teacher enjoyment in school, report cards, attendance rates, and pre/post-assessment scores for specific skill areas.

**Instructional Support Aims to Help All Students Succeed**

Instructional support is a concept of helping all students, not just low achievers, succeed in school. All students need to be taught at their instructional levels and to be taught from their prior knowledge base and to their learning styles (Gickling & Thompson, 1985; Rosenfield & Rubinson, 1985; Tucker, 1985). All students also need the opportunity to stretch their learning styles by being exposed to and asked to use weaker areas as well. A model that focuses just on one group of students is discriminatory. Instructional support is not about sorting and selecting, but about providing the necessary instruction and skills needed to learn any content for all students.
regardless of labels and "assigned ability levels." Hargis (1995) states, "In fact, such a program benefits all children" (p. vii). All children have a right to a successful education where they are learning at their instructional levels and steadily progressing with their skill and knowledge acquisition. Why design a program to benefit a few when it can benefit the masses?

**Instructional Support Is a Strengths-Based Model**

If we know what works, there is no reason to wait for failures that lead to permanent labels and placements. Once students are labeled, they find it hard to perform above these labels and are often underachieving for life (Cunningham & Allington, 1999; Smith, 1998). Such deficit models are limited in scope in that traditional remedial programs work only with the student and do not attempt to affect the regular classroom instruction (Fullan, 1993). According to Gickling and Thompson (2001), "Effective instructional assessment measures what children know, what they can do, and how they think in order to determine student needs instead of focusing on deficiencies" (p. 81). Learning theory tells us that everything we learn is connected to something we already know (Driscoll, 2000; Gickling & Thompson, 2001; Sarason, 1990; Smith, 1998). Therefore, teachers need to determine what is already known in order to build from here. Finding out what students do not know does not help students learn new material.

Sarason (1990) states:

> You start with their worlds. . . . You look at them to determine how what they are, seek to know, and have experienced can be used as the fuel to fire the process for enlargement of interests, knowledge, and skills. . . . You do not look at them in terms of deficits: what they do not know but need to know. Far from having deficits, they are asset rich. You enter their world in order to aid them and to build bridges between two worlds, not walls. (p. 164)
Our school systems need to look closely at some fundamental practices that are deeply entrenched in order to achieve the goal of helping students learn new material. For example, we rarely spend our time looking for what students can do. Our testing system is all about wrong answers and the percentage of inaccuracies or percentage of error. We spend hours pouring over test results and complaining about what students cannot do or have not learned. Smith (1998) states, "Teachers are taught to focus on what students cannot do. Once students learn what they cannot do, it is hard for them to forget this, and they probably will not do what they think they cannot" (p. 14).

Instructional support sets out to reverse this deficit pattern in schools by helping teachers use curriculum-based assessment and learning theory to build on what students already know and can do. When this is done correctly, motivation is built right in. We all like doing things we are good at and can do.

Instructional Support is a competency-based model that looks for what students need in order to be successful and looks for immediate ways to give students what they need by affecting the instruction and assessment in their own classrooms. This process of continual assessment is known as curriculum-based assessment (CBA) or instructional assessment (Gickling, 1999; Gickling & Thompson, 1985; Tucker, 1985). All learning is built on what students already know and occurs at incremental levels (Driscoll, 2000; Gickling & Thompson, 1985, 2001; Hargis, 1995; Tucker, 1985). By teaching at instructional levels, the level where the students know enough information in order to learn the new information presented, success is ensured as the instruction is constantly being adjusted to ensure success. Vygotsky (1978) refers to this area where the students know enough background information and skills to be able to learn something new with
help from another person as the zone of proximal development (p. 86). Failure occurs when the instruction does not match the students’ prior knowledge, skills, and readiness levels and, thus, the students are not being taught within their zones of proximal development (Hargis, 1995).

In order to avoid failure, the teacher needs to be constantly assessing student performance with the given instructional materials. At any point when students are not comprehending what is being taught, the teacher needs to adjust the instruction either by teaching a prerequisite skill, using more words that the students know, or by providing more background information with which the students can connect the new information (Gickling & Thompson, 1985; Hargis, 1995; Tucker, 1985).

This process is different from the traditional deficit-driven models that look to label and classify students based on what they do not know and cannot do in order to get them the help they need through special education classes or other remedial services rather than through the adjustment of the current instruction within the regular classroom. Levine (2002) questions the traditional system of testing children. He states, “Their intellectual identity has been shrunken down to a list of examination scores that will determine their destinies while shedding little light on their true strengths, weaknesses, and educational needs” (p. 14).

**Importance of the Classroom Teacher and First-Time Instruction**

Classroom teachers are the best people to conduct assessment and implement instructional strategies that help students learn, as they are the ones who know their curriculum. They know exactly what their students need to know and can best determine
what their students already know and how they approach what they do not know (Cunningham & Allington, 1999; Tucker, 1985).

Sarason (1990) states, “One can change curricula, standards, and a lot of other things by legislation or fiat, but if the regularities of the classroom remain unexamined and unchanged, the failure of the reforms is guaranteed” (p. 88). According to Stronge (2002), “The teacher has proven time and again to be the most influential school-related force in student achievement” (p. viii). Fullan and Hargreaves (1996) state, “There can be no improvement without the teacher” (p. 63). Walker (2002) states, “In a high-stakes context, school leaders must search for ways to create a culture of high expectations and support for all students and a set of norms around teacher growth that enables teachers to teach all students well” (p. 3). Haycock (2001) states, “Teachers matter, so both the preparation and ongoing development of teachers are critical to students’ learning” (as cited in Walker, 2002, p. 3). Knowing the importance of the classroom teacher and first-time instruction for student success, the main emphasis then of instructional support is to affect classroom instruction and practices. Instructional support is about helping teachers implement learning-theory principles and curriculum-based assessment when teaching to help all students learn more effectively.

Teachers need to intentionally plan the stages of CBA and learning theory into their daily routines and design alternate plans for certain scenarios that may occur. For example, CBA is first about finding out what students know and can do. How can a classroom teacher find this out? Once she knows, what will she do next? The teacher should have a plan in place for the following possibilities: one or two students do not have the necessary prior knowledge (words or skills) needed to proceed, half of the class...
does not. the whole class does not, or all but two students do not have this knowledge. With the help and support of the Instructional Support Consultant, the teacher can put a game plan in place to address each of these scenarios so that when one of them becomes reality, the teacher is ready. Eventually, after this process becomes second nature, the teacher will not have to spend as much time writing out these plans and will be able to react accordingly more on the spot. But, as with the learning of anything, at the beginning, each piece needs to be spelled out and intentionally focused on and practiced until it becomes automatic or routine.

Meeting the individual needs of every student within a given classroom is not easy (Kohl, 1976). According to Sarason (1990), “There are few roles as demanding of one’s energy, ingenuity, sensitivity, and patience as that of the classroom teacher” (p. 140). Swafford (1998) states, “Teaching is more demanding today than ever before. The diversity of the student population presents new challenges for teachers” (p. 54). Instructional support offers support to teachers who are attempting to meet these diverse learning needs of all students. Wall and Tucker (1992) state, “Teachers are taught to adapt [adjust] their instruction and to vary the ways that they teach to better meet the needs of their students” (p. 1).

**Underlying Principles of Instructional Support**

Instructional support as I have implemented it in the middle school is a concept based on several fundamental beliefs that drive decisions about how to help all students be successful within any given school setting. To understand instructional support as I have implemented it in my school, one needs to first understand the underlying principles
that have guided my practices. In order to try new practices, people need to look at their mental models first to see what is driving their decisions. Senge (1990) states:

‘Mental models’ are deeply ingrained assumptions, generalizations, or even pictures or images that influence how we understand the world and how we take action. Very often, we are not consciously aware of our mental models or the effects they have on our behavior. (p. 8)

The principles outlined in this section can also be found in Helgeson’s (1995) model of organizational leadership, Lambert’s (2002) model of constructivist leadership, Fullan and Hargreaves’s (1996) research on school reform, Fullan’s work on change and school reform (1993), and the 14 learner-centered psychological principles as put forth by the American Psychological Association (n.d.).

It is important to note that the principles discussed in this section are equally applicable to students and teachers alike. Teachers can easily be substituted for the word students in each principle. Often, I use the word people instead of students or teachers to illustrate that these learning principles really apply to anyone we are working with in the teaching-learning process. For example, the first principle is that all students can learn. I truly believe all teachers can learn and want to learn to improve their instruction. I believe in teachers and thus support them and help them to learn what they have not learned already in their preparation courses. I also appreciate that all teachers are at different levels of knowledge, skill level, and experience and thus differentiate my instruction accordingly to each teacher’s individual needs. Lambert (2002) states in her model of constructivist leadership that what is good for children is good for adults as well. She states, “It is important that we come to understand and interpret the learning needs of children and adults as patterns that recur in complex ways—the learning patterns of all humans. If something is worthy for children, it is also worthy for adults” (p. xvi).
When thinking about each of the following principles, it is important to think about how each applies to students, teachers, and anyone else involved in the teaching learning process in school.

All People Can Learn

The most fundamental belief of instructional support is that all people can learn (Good & Brophy, 2000; Pawlowski, 2001; Tomlinson, 1999; Tucker, 2001; Wall & Tucker, 1992). If I believe all students can learn, I will try everything in my power to help students be successful. However, if I believe that some students cannot learn, then I will stop trying too quickly and, thus, those students will not learn (Cunningham & Allington, 1999; Gickling & Thompson, 2001; Pawlowski, 2001; Senge, 2000; Smith, 1998; Tucker, 2001). Sarason (1990) states, “We should set our goals very high, because we know that most people are capable of more than they do or are” (pp. 1-2).

Gickling and Thompson (2001) state:

There was a period in our history when early learning success for every student was not a priority, and many people tacitly supported a system that allowed some students to succeed and others to drift behind and eventually quit. . . . Unfortunately, some of the practices inherent to this ‘sort and select’ type of schooling still exist. (p. 76)

Analyzing one’s beliefs is the underlying essence of Michael Valentine’s (1987) *How to Deal With Discipline Problems in School: A Practical Guide for Educators*. He states that most behaviors stem directly from the beliefs adults have about how the children will act. Students who know teachers and parents do not expect them to do well will probably not even try to do well. I have noticed that students and teachers perform to my expectations, so I need to make sure they are always high and that I do not give up on anyone.
Palmer (1998) calls me to believe in people when they might not even believe in themselves. Good teachers or leaders see the best in their students and are able to call this out and work with these strengths. He says, “It means seeing more in teachers than teachers sometimes see in themselves—just as good teachers see more in students than students know they have” (p. 159). Lambert (2002) calls for believing in each other and valuing the people we work with in her model as well. She argues, “If we do not understand each other as equal—in the sense of having something of value to bring to the learning process—we cannot form relationships that contribute to growth and purpose. The ecology of our systems will be out of balance. Power and authority, rather than learning, will drive the culture” (pp. xvii-xviii).

Instruction Accounts for Variability

Levine (2002) reminds me to remember that all people are different and thus learn differently. Because a student does not learn well in a certain manner as presented in a classroom, does not mean the student is stupid or not capable of learning. Levine goes on to state, “As a pediatrician, I am obsessed with helping children find success” (pp. 13-14). This is the ultimate goal of instructional support. Educators need to follow Levine’s advice to keep in mind that failure in school does not equal a lack of intelligence or ability. It is simply a sign that either the instruction is not working or that a student is missing some prerequisite literacy skills needed in order to gain and report new learning (Hargis, 1995; Senge, 2000).

All students have different learning needs and at times will need more instruction in certain areas. Once this instruction has taken place, if it has been effective, these learning needs will no longer exist. Thus, needing help in chunking, putting several
words together to form a thought group, etc., does not mean a student is not able to read or is reading deficient as a label might imply. Once the students in that classroom spend a sufficient amount of time practicing chunking during various cooperative learning structures, the individual who needed help with chunking will not need this extra instruction anymore as he will be up to speed on this skill. The teacher is constantly looking for these weak areas that students need to practice and builds in direct instruction as well as practice time to help students master these areas. This is the ongoing process of teaching. Teaching is not delivering content to students once and hoping they get it. Teaching is a means of listening, watching, and helping students to become active participants with their learning of new material (Beyer, 1996; Freire, 1992; Reason, 1988). Stigler and Hiebert (1999) state:

American schools have done little to change their basic structures and approaches in order to help all students reach those higher standards. Instead, the curriculum continues to be wide ranging and shallow; the teaching emphasizes practice without deep understanding; the role of the student is to function as passive recipient of teacher knowledge that has little application to real-world settings. (as cited in Walker, 2002, p. 4)

Instructional support is in place to help students and teachers bring learning to life so it is meaningful and successful. In order to do this, teachers realize that all people are different and have different learning needs. Gickling and Thompson (2001) explain, “We know that each student approaches school activity with different levels of knowledge, experience, and skill, all of which affect their thinking and influence the way they construct meaning” (p. 76). Knowing that such variability exists in every classroom in every student, no one method can be embraced as the way to teach children. Teachers need to build on the prior knowledge of each individual student and use various teaching methods in order to meet the variability
within all students (Gickling & Thompson, 2001; Senge, 2000; Stronge, 2002; Tomlinson, 1999). Gickling and Thompson (2001) state that too often the knowledge of student variability and knowledge of building on prior knowledge get overlooked in schools that are driven by state mandates of covering curriculum. They say:

One-size-fits-all instruction, as well as politically mandated testing requirements, becomes the general rule. Children are evaluated by adopted criteria, passed or failed by a lockstep grading system, labeled according to deficiencies, and, in some cases, assigned to special programs. Too often this occurs without any real awareness of what individual children actually know, what they are ready for, and what they are capable of doing. (p. 82)

Hargis (1995) attributes many of our problems in school, both behaviorally and academically, to this forcing of a lock-step curriculum that is not matched to student need and instructional level. Hargis states that what needs to be done is really quite simplistic, but that educators are simply not doing it. Taking time to teach individuals at their levels and readjust instruction accordingly rather than covering the curriculum in an order prescribed by the state may seem time-intensive and impossible, but I have found this time worth my while if I truly want to educate students and help them all be successful. Less is more when students are actually learning. According to Hargis I will have to spend much less time reviewing and re-teaching at the end of the year if I am truly teaching during the year and building in the repetition that is needed to take a skill from recognition to automaticity or mastery.

The instructional support concept is based on the belief that all students can learn but in different ways and with proper instruction that is at students' instructional levels. Gickling and Thompson (2001) state, "Matching curriculum and instruction to the needs of each student is the cornerstone of good teaching. The suitability of the match reflects the difficulty of each task and the student's ability" (p. 78). Cunningham and Allington
(1999) cite Fountas and Pinnell who refer to this concept of instructional match as the "Goldilocks principle." The learning task should not be too hard or too easy. Betts (1946) discusses instructional levels in depth as he found that a reader needs to know between 93-97% of the words in a given passage in order to be able to understand what is being read. Gickling (1999) states that instructional level for drill and skill content is 80%-95% known. Working memory is linked to instructional match as well. People can only take in so much information at any one time. George Miller's famous study found that people age 15 or older can keep seven plus or minus two items in their working memory at any one time (Driscoll, 2000).

Learning styles and multiple-intelligence also need to be taken into consideration when helping all students learn (Bellanca, 1997; Gardner, 1993; Lazear, 1994). We cannot teach all students the same way and expect them all to be successful on the same page on the same day. Teaching in this manner often leads to failure, which then results in lack of motivation for students of all levels of experience and abilities in any classroom. Tucker (2002) asks teachers if they would teach their fifth-grade class the same way if they found out that they had students ranging from first grade to 10th grade in them. The teachers respond with a resounding "no." Instructional support helps us to rethink how we look at our students. No two students have the same prior knowledge, learning readiness skills, learning styles, and learning strategies. Therefore, we cannot teach a class as if all students are the same. We need to teach 24 individuals and not 1 individual. Many cooperative learning structures and methods for checking for student understanding help the teacher with this seemingly overwhelming mission of managing

Success Breeds Success

All learning tasks need to be broken down into small steps so the learner may tackle one step at a time. Once success is met with the first step, the learner is ready and willing to take on the next step. In order to know how and where to begin with such incremental instruction with students, I use Curriculum Based Assessment (CBA), which is a cornerstone of instructional support. CBA allows me to determine individual learning approaches, instructional levels, and specific learning needs that can then be met by purposefully designed instruction that is constantly assessed in the context of student achievement using best practices as are delineated in the effective school research. Gickling and Thompson (2001) state, “Initial assessment helps identify a student’s previous experiences in order to begin instruction, while ongoing assessment during classroom problem solving helps identify the child’s continuous learning needs. The role of assessment in adjusting, moderating, and managing instruction is seldom complete” (p. 81).

According to Tucker (1985), “Curriculum Based Assessment is a new term for a teaching practice that is as old as education itself: using the material to be learned as the basis for assessing the degree to which it has been learned” (p. 199). Gickling and Thompson (1985) define CBA as “a methodology used to determine the instructional needs of students based upon their performances within the existing course content” (p. 217). According to Hargis (1995), “The primary objective of CBA is success” (p. 136).
The essential element of Gickling’s model is getting at the student’s thinking in order to know what the student is struggling with, where the student is coming from, and what the student’s knowledge and skill level is. This information is essential for planning and delivering instruction that is at the student’s instructional level. If I do not take time to talk with the student, I will not know that possibly the reason the student failed the test was because he she did not know what to do or that the student did not understand a major word on the test so he she could not demonstrate understanding, etc. Gickling and Thompson (2001) state, “Instead of looking for weaknesses, educators should look for patterns of performance that will help them understand how each student works and thinks. This information can be gleaned by conversing with the child, observing how the child interacts with each task, and continually sampling performance” (p. 81). CBA offers a way to control for curriculum casualties and to determine each student’s instructional level (Burns et al., 1999; Gickling & Thompson, 1985, 2001; Hargis, 1995; Tucker, 1985).

Assessment literally means “sit beside” (Dellegrotto, 2001). This one-on-one conversation with a student is essential for gathering valuable information that cannot be gained without knowing what the student is thinking when attempting a given task. This conversation does not have to be long or have to occur outside of the classroom setting. As Gickling and Thompson (2001) suggest, simply conversing with a child and observing a child working in the class setting can offer valuable instructional information.

Thus, Curriculum Based Assessment is a means of “sitting with” a student using the curriculum the student is working in to gather information about this student’s prior knowledge, specific skills, and known strategies as needed for accomplishing a given task.
within the curriculum. In addition, a student's ability to organize and process new information and the ability to share new understanding of information in written or spoken form are needed in order to find the appropriate instructional match and inform one's instruction to meet the student's needs (Dellegrotto, 2001; Gickling & Thompson, 1985, 2001; Wall & Tucker, 1992). This process is an ongoing cyclical process that occurs as often as teaching occurs. Immediate help and intervention occurs to help students learn rather than waiting until the end of the year to find out where students are performing and what skills or strategies they may need in order to master certain tasks (Gickling & Thompson, 1985; Hargis, 1995). Gickling and Thompson (1985) state:

The primary reason [CBA emerged as an alternative to traditional assessment] is the need to align assessment practices with what is taught in the classroom. Its focus is on providing help for those curriculum casualty students who are unable to keep pace with the routine instruction offered through developmental programs—instruction that moves too fast and demands too much in relation to their entry level skills. (p. 217)

Learning Is Situated and Dependent Upon Need

Learning occurs best when it is meaningful and authentic (Glasser, 1998; McTighe & Wiggins, 1998; Smith, 1998). This means that people will learn information where they can use it and as it is needed. For this reason, instructional support brings literacy skills, test-taking skills, etc., into the classroom where and when students need to use them in order to be successful with what they are attempting to learn in their classes. Teachers are also learning in their classrooms with the help and guidance of the instructional support consultant. The significant difference between the staff development offered through instructional support and the development offered solely in workshop settings is that teachers are learning in their classrooms when specific needs.
arise, which is the ultimate situated cognition where theory and practice come together (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995; Fullan & Hargreaves, 1996; Palmer, 1998; Reason, 1988).

This on-site learning is supported by the situated cognition literature and the reflection-on-action that calls for an immediate application of new learning (Dewey, 1910, 1997; Reason, 1988; Schon, 1983). The teacher learns something new or is given support in trying something new within his/her own classroom. Applebee (1996) notes that teachers, as any learners, often need to become a part of the conversation while gradually gaining an understanding of the new learning before they will be ready to embrace and use the new learning. He states, "This is the way we gain knowledge-in-action in any arena, through gradual immersion in new conversations rather than by standing alongside and being told about them" (p. 123). Applebee points out that this learning in action is new to the way we typically teach. He states, "American education has long emphasized the knowledge-out-of-context that comes from studying about, rather than participating in, the traditions of discourse" (p. 126). Walker (2002) discusses the concept of situated cognition when stating, "It means learning is embedded in the classroom and school, not taken out of context and culture as in a lecture hall or professional development activity separate from the work of the school" (p. 8).

Joyce and Showers (1995) found that if all teachers in a given district were involved in the training and follow-up training support in the classroom with any staff development initiative, the chances of ongoing implementation were close to 100% whereas if only a few members were involved in the training, implementation would be around 75% (p. 14). Thus, when school districts implement instructional support, all teachers and administrators need to be trained in the fundamental concepts and methods.
of the process including: learning theory, curriculum-based assessment, and effective instruction for assessing and creating instructional matches in the classroom for all students. Making sure all members are a part of the purpose and philosophy from the beginning is important so members do not feel left out or that they do not need to do anything differently because they were not among the chosen few who were selected to try something new. Attending to the culture of a school and the needs of the people is key to any successful implementation endeavor (Rosenfield & Rubinson, 1985).

It is important that the classroom teacher receives training first in the theory with an explanation of how the theory links with the application so the teacher will know how to adapt and adjust the application without changing the underlying principles as is needed to meet the individual needs of students on an ongoing basis. Rosenfield and Rubinson (1985) state, “In almost every instance, we have observed that CBA techniques have been adapted or reinvented by the teachers, sometimes in ways that made them too difficult for the teacher or that violated some underlying assumption” (p. 285).

Thus, ongoing implementation support is needed from an expert in both the theory and the application of the theory to help teachers understand both. According to John Dewey (1910-1997), we learn by doing. So, teachers will really be learning this new information when applying it to the classroom where they will need guidance from someone who can help them work in their own zones of proximal development areas. Rosenfield and Rubinson (1985) suggest that guided practice in the classroom is one method for ensuring success with the implementation of such a complex process as CBA on a daily basis. They state, “Teachers may develop their own CBA classroom variations with ongoing support from peers and/or consultants” (p. 285).
Instructional support is built on the premises of guided practice and ongoing support for teachers and students in the classroom to learn these new methods and concepts. I, as an ISC, have no classroom or other set duties in order to be available all of the time to help the classroom teacher apply this new learning in his/her own classroom with his/her own students (Wall & Tucker, 1992). According to Joyce and Showers (1995), coached teachers were much more likely to retain the new learning and to apply the new learning correctly (p. 119). They go on to explain their original intent for the term peer coaching and explain that they never intended peer coaching to become a form of supervision as it is being used in many places today. Joyce and Showers (1995) state:

Designing the workplace so that teachers can work together to implement changes (through peer coaching) is still the key to transferring the content of training into the repertoire of the classroom and school, whether the content is over teaching and curriculum or over processes for collegial action. We are saddened by the cooption of the term “peer coaching” by the field of supervision. We believe that staff development should replace “supervision,” which is an obsolete concept in our opinion. (p. xv)

This classroom staff development provided by myself as ISC is an essential link between workshop training and classroom application (Joyce & Showers, 1995; Rosenfield & Rubinson, 1985). I offer guidance in planning lessons, assessing student needs and matches between what is being taught and their instructional levels, teaching learning strategies, delivering effective instruction, and monitoring student progress to report growth. Ultimately, teachers begin to seek and deliver this same support to each other so that everyone is serving as an instructional support consultant. Instructional support is about giving away our skills and talents (Gickling, 2000).
Rosenfield and Rubinson (1985) found that when this link between the training and the implementation was missing, schools they were working with were not successful in implementing the staff development initiatives they had helped them begin. Support on a daily basis is needed to help teachers and schools change the norms of education to the principles involved with instructional support, learning theory, and curriculum-based assessment. Their advice is in keeping with the findings of Joyce and Showers (1995) as is stated earlier.

Learning Is Social

Applebee (1996) discusses the need for social learning and learning in context. He discusses the paradox of knowledge-in-action where one has to do something that one does not already know how to do. He explains what Lev Vygostky discovered, which is, “The way out of this paradox is to realize that learning is a social process: We can learn to do new things by doing them with others” (p. 108). Walker (2002) explains, “The processes of ‘coming to know’ are influenced and shaped by reflection, mediation, and social interactions” (p. 7). She credits Dewey for contributing to the ideas of constructivism stating:

Dewey (1916) first gave voice to this view of learning, noting that students must learn and make sense of new knowledge together, based on their individual and collective experiences. He perceived learning as a social endeavor, and his ideas about instruction can be found in current models of cooperative learning that emphasize the social construction of knowledge. (p. 28)

Cooperative learning increases student understanding and academic achievement when used in conjunction with direct instruction (Kagan, 1994). Ellis and Fouts (1996) state: “Used properly, cooperative learning is designed to supplement and complement direct
instruction and the other teaching and learning activities typical of classroom life” (p. 168).

Palmer (1998) notes, “Learning together also offers [learners] a chance to look at reality through the eyes of others, instead of forcing [learners] to process everything through their own limited vision” (p. 128). With training in the areas of instructional support and guidance of myself as the ISC, teachers have an opportunity to learn and grow together as they continue in their quest of helping all students be successful in their classrooms (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1996; Joyce & Showers, 1995; Palmer, 1998). I work with both students and teachers within their zones of proximal development to help them learn and apply new skills and strategies that lead to increased academic success (Vygotsky, 1978).

Fullan and Hargreaves (1996) explain, “The greatest problem in teaching is not how to get rid of the ‘deadwood,’ but how to create, sustain and motivate good teachers throughout their careers. Interactive professionalism is the key” (p. 63). Teachers need the support that instructional support offers for creating this environment of interactive professionalism where teachers are working together, taking risks, and continually dialoguing about what they can try next to better meet the needs of all students. Risk-taking and the problem-solving process of trial and error are essential for good teaching (Beyer, 1996). Palmer (1998) supports this call for dialogue and interaction when he says, “We must observe each other teach, at least occasionally—and we must spend more time talking to each other about teaching” (p. 143). Palmer goes on to state, “The growth of any craft depends on shared practice and honest dialogue among the people who do it. We grow by private trial and error, to be sure—but our willingness to try, and fail, as
individuals is severely limited when we are not supported by a community that encourages such risks” (p. 144). A key part of Lambert’s (2002) model of constructivist leadership is that as “we work together in collaborative professional cultures. we grow together” (p. 51).

Rosenfield and Rubinson (1985) state, “Establishing a process where teachers can network with one another as they begin to implement [a new method] is a useful consultant strategy. When peers encourage and support rather than censure, innovation is more likely” (p. 285). Instructional support is a process of building a network of support for both teachers and students as we are all working toward increased academic success. No one person will get as far as all of us together (Helgeson, 1995). Palmer (1998) states, “It is said that all of us together are smarter than any one of us alone. and perhaps that maxim is more than wishful thinking” (p. 128).

Learning Is a Process of Problem Solving and Taking Risks

Learning is a social process as well as a process of problem solving and taking risks. The principles of instructional support help to foster an environment where people are comfortable learning with each other and taking risks together. Lambert (2002) states, “Change that is constructivist in nature emerges from the meaning-making process and is therefore unpredictable and evolving” (p. 59). Teaching is a complex endeavor with no prescribed answers. Thus, teaching is a process of problem solving and taking risks. I can never know what will work effectively for a student until I try it. Fullan (1993) states, “The change process is so complex and filled with unknowns that we can never ‘know’ we are doing the right way. We need to be constantly problem solving and investigating” (p. viii). Thus, no one method or approach can be embraced as “the”
method. Effective teaching requires keeping a direct line open to students so we can read the pulse and know how to plan, guide, and redirect our instruction accordingly in order to increase student achievement. Instructional support advocates a trial and error approach that validates the learning process of constantly assessing and adjusting as we continually try new approaches until we find what works best for all learners. In order to help students and teachers feel comfortable taking such risks, I share this philosophy and model my own learning experiences of mistakes and successes. I want them to see that I am taking risks by trying out new methods in their classrooms. I share what I think did not work well and why as well as what I might try differently next time for a better effect. I work with the student and teacher in this process of trial and error.

Figuring out how to meet all students' needs can seem impossible, and implementing all of the research on effective schools can seem overwhelming. Ysseldyke and Christenson (1996) have taken the effective schools research and compartmentalized the research into 14 areas for educators to focus on when improving student achievement in the classroom. Even 14 areas seem overwhelming to think about all at once. However, this conceptualization of the research offers a vehicle or tool to use when attempting to help students be successful in the classroom. I know from experience that when I have a problem in the classroom, it often means changing one or two things, and the problem is better. The 14 components as set forth by the TIES research are a great resource to use for problem solving. (See Appendix B.) One area may stand out and can be addressed without needing to focus as much on other areas. Also, I have found the 14 components overlap, so when working on one area such as increasing academic engaged time, I am really affecting several other areas at the same time such as
immediate, informed feedback, classroom environment, etc. Fullan's (1993) research supports the findings found in the TIES components. He states, “The major kinds of problems and difficulties that teachers experience are readily identifiable. Most of them relate to the management and conduct of instruction” (p. 107).

I know all students are different, and I can never know exactly which strategies will work best until I try them. Teaching is scientific, as it is experimental. I am constantly observing, collecting data, hypothesizing, experimenting, evaluating, and observing, collecting, etc. This is the process of curriculum-based assessment. I need to be directly connected to the students in our classes in order to know what they need next and how they need instruction for particular content and skills. Hargis (1995) states, “Students are not permitted to fail or do poorly. [CBA] is used to adjust and match material and activity to the students in order to achieve the desired performance levels” (p. 136).

As stated earlier, no one way exists to teach all students on any given day. Teaching is a science, but is also an art where one needs to almost know intuitively what to do when and where. Good teaching is not always spelled out for me in a scientific textbook as I will not know what to do and how to do this until I meet my students, observe them, and determine their learning needs. Palmer (1998) tells me that I cannot separate the head from the heart, facts from feelings, theory from practice, and teaching from learning (p. 66). According to Palmer, “Good teaching cannot be reduced to technique; good teaching comes from the identity and integrity of the teacher” (p. 10). I need both the science of teaching and the art of teaching to reach students who are whole people: scientific learners with emotions, feelings, and experiences that drive much of
their learning in school. Kohl (1976) states, "What is crucial is the ability to observe and discover students' skills and needs, and build a learning environment that grows from them and does not violate them" (p. 30).

Honor and Meet Human Needs

Working with people as a change agent requires me to consider the ethics that are involved with asking people to change. Graham (2002) explains that when we are working with people, we need to consider four basic human needs: a need for autonomy, community, identity, and privacy. Instructional support is about helping students and teachers add certain strategies and skills to their learning repertoire in order to help them learn and teach more effectively. As a change agent in this case, I need to care about the people I work with in order to respect their basic needs and to know when to allow the individual his/her own space and when to provide the support needed for community. I find it is also important to build up a person's strengths, so a person can remain secure and whole as they add more strengths to one's identity. Palmer (1998) states, "Looking at our 'failings' is always hard, but it is easier when done against the backdrop of our strengths" (p. 70).

Garrison (1997) begins a discussion about the ethics of working with other people in the moral realm by defining moral perception. He states:

Moral perception is the capacity to comprehend particular contexts and the uniqueness of persons. . . . Moral perceptions allows us to see the unique needs, desires, and interests hidden in the words and deed of our students. . . . Moral perception is crucial to exercising the ethics of care. . . . Teaching is a caring profession, and good care requires personal connection. Perception and sympathetic connection depend on emotion and imagination. Moral perception is about recognizing and responding thoughtfully to the needs, desires, beliefs, values, and behaviors of others. (p. 170)
Instructional supporters need to care enough about the people they are trying to help to recognize and respond to their basic needs as Garrison suggests.

I, as an ISC, work especially hard to value the individual and work to keep the individual whole when building on and from what the teacher or student knows, can do, and needs next. It is an art to be able to help someone while still keeping his or her identity in tact. Teachers need to be reminded that just because a lesson did not go well, it does not mean that it was a bad lesson, or that the students are stupid, or that they are bad teachers. It just means that something needs to be altered a little. The teacher, alone, cannot possibly see all that is to be seen in a classroom, so inviting the efforts of other colleagues and students to help in this problem-solving process of reaching for success for all is invaluable. This protects the teacher by taking away the expectation that teachers need to be perfect which has been placed on teachers by society.

Fullan and Hargreaves (1996) state, “You cannot change the teacher [and student] in fundamental ways, without changing the person the teacher [student] is. . . . This means that meaningful or lasting change will almost inevitably be slow. Human growth is not like rhubarb. It can be nurtured and encouraged but it cannot be forced” (p. 25). Senge (1999) supports this need for nurturing with his metaphor of the gardener. Working within the moral realm and keeping people’s basic needs in mind are essential for helping people to learn, grow, and change. Helping people grow requires leaders to grow as well right along with their teachers, students, etc. While growing together, relationships are formed that are fundamental to the learning process. Lambert (2002) states:

Patterns of relationships form the primary bases for human growth and development. Communities are generated from the patterns of learning and the
patterns of relationships that grow within them. The principles of community place relationships at the heart of successful, self-renewing schools and districts. These patterns are the connecting modes of the educational community through which meaning and knowledge are constructed and shared. The connections form the basis for reflecting on and making sense of who we are and how we work. Relationships may well be the most important factor in our past, present, and future possibilities. (p. xvii)

Continual Reflection on Beliefs and Practices

When I espouse the belief that all people can learn, I constantly reflect on this belief, as well as the previously discussed beliefs about learning, to be sure I am using practices that are based on these beliefs. I often step back to ask, "Why am I doing what I am doing?" and "Is it working?" Once I look at the answers to these questions, I ask "What else can I do?" in order to reach the ultimate goal of helping every student reach his/her fullest potential.

Dewey (1910/1997) and Schon (1983) both call for the need for reflection about our actions as a tool for changing and growing. Schon (1983) talks about two forms of reflection, reflection-on-action and reflection-in-action. Reflection-on-action is a process of learning from what we have done, looking at what we could do differently, and trying something else (maybe not completely new) next time we are in a similar situation. Reflection-in-action is a matter of "thinking on our feet" as we encounter a problem, immediately thinking about what we should and how we should do this. Loughran (1996) states:

Reflection is, then clearly purposeful because it aims at a conclusion. The purpose of reflecting is to untangle a problem, or to make more sense of a puzzling situation: reflection involves working toward a better understanding of the problem and ways of solving it. Reflection, then, can be seen as a number of steps in thinking which, when organized and linked, lead to a consequence in action. These steps are suggestions, problem, hypothesis, reasoning, and testing.
Although these phases need not follow in a particular order, the five phases combined comprise a reflective cycle. (p. 14)

Cooper (2002) explains, “It is only through reflection on our actions that we are able to clarify and articulate what we know” (p. 125).

History of Instructional Support

Tucker (2001) states, “Instructional support is simply the most recent name of the concept. . . . By introducing a simple collection of proven educational practices under the rubric of instructional support, schools in at least four states have systematically and significantly reduced the number of referrals to special education while at the same time seeing an increase in academic achievement and a decrease in grade retention” (p. 47). Instructional support came into existence to put some of the effective-schools research into practice (Tucker, 2001).

Tucker (2001) states that the roots of instructional support lie in Connecticut under the name “Early Intervention Project” beginning in 1985 (p. 47). Instructional support was then implemented in Pennsylvania in an effort to reduce special education referrals so an intervention model was created to save the money used on testing for special education services and to offer students more immediate help rather than waiting 6 months or so to finally get tested in order to receive extra help through special education (State of Pennsylvania, 1995; Kovaleski et al., 1995; Kovaleski, Tucker, & Stevens, 1996; Tucker, 2001).

Many people now think of instructional support as being a method simply for reducing the referral rate to special education, which in turn is a money-saving program for the district. The concept first originated, however, to help all students be more
successful in schools by implementing the effective-schools research. Pennsylvania decided to use this concept to create a model that would offer immediate help to struggling individuals and thus reduce the high number of inaccurate referrals to special education. They have had great success in meeting this goal of reducing the referral rate in Pennsylvania (Tucker, 2001).

In my school, we have adopted the concept of instructional support as a means of helping all students meet and exceed state standards. Thus, a whole class and whole school approach has been implemented, rather than an individual student approach such as is seen in the special education system where individual students are referred for services.

According to Kovaleski et al. (1995):

The instructional support process helps schools create a seamless system of support for students and teachers where assistance for the student who is at risk for school failure is provided in the regular classroom... The model is based on the concept that teachers need assistance in meeting the increasingly complex academic, behavioral, social, and emotional needs of their students. The IST is a working group of teachers and other professionals that help teachers find solutions to their instructional challenges through a precise, classroom-based assessment and collaborative problem solving. (pp. 44-47)

Here the authors are talking about only students who are at risk of failing as being offered assistance through instructional support. This model lends itself to becoming a modification of the special education model without all of the paperwork, expensive testing, and regulations that are tied to the special education model because only a few targeted lower achieving students are the focus of the support. Yes, the teacher learns how to teach more effectively so all students benefit, but this is not the foremost goal as seen in the quote above.
At my school, I have held to the principle that instructional support is for all students to help all of them be successful with their learning tasks and have not singled out just a few students to focus on and serve with instructional support services, thus avoiding the problems related to a labeling, deficit-driven approach. I truly believe all students can learn and therefore, advocate an approach that expects this rather than an approach that expects failure. For example, students are getting help without feeling as if they are stupid or not capable of achieving. When students who have traditionally not been successful in school see me helping more successful students as well, they realize instructional support is about helping all students learn and not about helping lower ability students learn. I have found that no one, students nor teachers, wants to be singled out as different and possibly not as good as others.

Pawlowski (2001) defines the intervention model in an elementary school in Michigan stating, “Classroom teachers work closely with a team of specialists to analyze learning difficulties and brainstorm appropriate interventions” (p. 64). He describes a detailed referral process whereby teachers complete formal referral forms asking for assistance from an instructional support team and a specialist who comes in to work with an individual child or who pulls the child out to work one-on-one outside of the classroom (p. 67).

I have avoided this formal “call for intervention” approach when implementing instructional support in my school because a referral process is too similar to the special education process. Referral systems lead people to believe that some students are not capable of learning in the regular classroom and that the classroom teacher either cannot or is not responsible for meeting all students’ needs. With a referral process in place.
teachers believe they can send a student out for someone else to fix, relieving them of the problem-solving process of determining the specific learning needs of that child.

Cunningham and Allington (1999) cite McGill-Franzen as saying, "The very presence of remedial programs and special services for certain children undermines the responsibility of the regular education program—to educate all children" (p. 11).

At my school, I have used the "85 15 Rule" that Tucker (2001) describes where 85% of student concerns are directly linked to systems problems and only 15% of student concerns are truly individual student problems that need to be addressed as such (p. 48).

As the ISC, facilitator of the instructional support model in the building, I start with the whole grade level at first when implementing instructional support. I observe all of the students and all of the classes they are taking. I look for patterns of need that stand out such as missing, broken, and or completely disorganized notebooks. After finding the need that stands out the most, I work with the grade-level teachers to develop a plan to address the root cause of the problem. In the case of the notebooks, the teachers and I decided middle-school students may not know how to be organized and may never have had the opportunity to practice such skills. So, we put an organizational system into place as a team, which every student uses and every teacher reinforces and supports.

Thus, all students are benefiting from this plan even though a few students are probably in much more need of the help than others. I have found that many people including myself, even as adults, however, need to work on and refine our organizational skills. Once the targeted need has been addressed, I look for another need. I have found that most students are severely lacking in literacy skills and that all students need to refine their literacy skills in order to perform at higher levels. Thus, teaching basic
reading and listening skills needed for gaining and processing new information and
writing and speaking skills for giving back information are essential for helping students
successfully master content in any class. Other areas that are lacking are problem-solving
skills, study skills, and test-taking skills. All of these fall into the literacy skills
instruction, but I separate them out to intentionally teach them. I have yet to find a
middle-school student who excels in these areas and cannot grow with the help of the
strategies and knowledge of how to gain information and share information at higher
levels. Thus, I work with teachers to teach, plan, assess, and monitor the skills of all
students in all classrooms. Helping teachers focus on how people learn helps them to
teach more effectively by using CBA and learning theory to create instructional matches
for all students.

The Need for an Instructional Support Consultant

I have found that teachers and students benefit from a removed, objective, third-
party perspective at times to help them see what they may be missing while trying to be
successful because teachers and students may simply be too close to the experience. As
the ISC, I bring a wealth of ideas, information, and dialogue to share with students and
teachers. Continual learning about instruction and learning theory is a key part of
instructional support. I am a student and teacher advocate learning and working
alongside students and teachers to increase student achievement. Fullan and Stiegelbauer
(1991) state:

If the teacher as advocate can become skilled at integrating the change and the
change process, he or she can become one of the most powerful forces of change.
Teachers working with other teachers at the school and classroom levels is a
necessary condition for improving practice. At least, such a development offers
some potential for not only improving classroom practice but also remedying
some of the burnout, alienation, and routine that blights the working day of many teachers. (as cited in Fullan, 1993, p. 128)

In order to constantly readjust and change instruction according to student need, I am well versed in a variety of learning strategies and instructional methods that reach diverse learning needs. I also share instructional methods and designs that allow the classroom teacher to work with individual students one-on-one within the regular classroom setting. Keeping the student in mind and what I know about how people learn from learning theory, I need to be constantly attuned to what the student is doing, thinking, and creating.

This concept all came clear for me one day when I was watching my husband reading a book to our then 1-year-old son. He was reading along completely engrossed in his reading of the story, not noticing that our son had taken interest in something else and had wandered off across the room to play with a different toy. This was funny until our son decided to explore the fireplace that was hot. My husband was still completely engrossed in reading and had no idea that our son might be in trouble. I had to first rescue my son and then ask my husband to stop reading so he could play with our son. The book has been read, but if the child has not been listening, then what is the point? How true is this of education today? I, when I was a classroom teacher, often became so caught up in what I was teaching and the demands of the curriculum ("I have to cover the curriculum") that I completely lost sight of my students. I have found that teachers are all faced with a growing amount of content to teach and the reality of limited time within which to teach.

When working with teachers, I have come to believe that one of the most difficult ideas for educators to realize is that students are not empty vessels that can be filled with
knowledge as in the banking theory that Freire (1992) criticizes in his writing. Keeping in mind working memory, instructional match, the repetitions of perfect practice, and the need for process time of new information in order for real learning to occur, I have to determine how to cut down the amount of content I teach so that, in the end, students leave me with more than they would have had I ignored what has been proven about how people learn and retain information.

Another example can be seen if you can picture an adult taking a child for a walk in the woods. The adult holds onto the child’s hand and starts walking. The child, not knowing about roots in the ground next to big trees in the woods, does not look down and thus trips over the first root he walks over. The adult, frustrated with the child for slowing him down, keeps walking while pulling the child up. The child’s legs are scrambling as he tries to keep up. The child feels badly about falling down and a little sore where the tree root scraped his knee. The adult wants to get to the end of the path as soon as possible because it is such a long walk, and they have to get to the end before dark. So, they quickly keep going. Looking for the bird he hears singing in the air, the child stumbles over an even bigger root this time. He completely falls down this time. The adult is furious with the child because he should have known better. Why did he not remember about the roots after tripping over one earlier? He brushes the child off and keeps going, pulling harder now, walking faster in order to get to the end of the trail. What was wrong with the child? Why could he not remember to look for roots, and why could he not go faster? Something must be inherently wrong with him. Perhaps, he should get him tested when he gets back home.
If someone could find a label for him, then he would know his child was okay and that he was okay. If the child is declared not capable, then he would not have to worry about figuring out what was wrong with his child or what he could do differently to help his child when taking walks in the woods. The adult simply wants to accomplish his mission and needs the child to be able to keep up. Classroom teachers too tend to assign responsibility for a problem child to experts, for example, special education teachers, remediation teachers, etc. With the aid and support of me as an ISC, the classroom teacher can be successful in handling his or her responsibility of helping all students learn.

**Commonly Asked Questions About My Role as an ISC**

With new state standards and rising pressure about student state test scores, schools are looking for alternate ways of helping students meet these standards. During the past two years, several school districts have sent representatives to observe me in my role as an ISC and to talk with me about what I do. I have recorded the questions that have been asked and have included some of these commonly asked questions in the following section. When people ask me what I do in my role as ISC, they seem to be looking for a set job description that they can take back and share or possibly implement in their districts. I struggle with this request because how can I explain or share all that I do in such a short period of time? All I can share is what I know from my experiences. I do not have the answers for what every ISC should do in every district. Much of what I do is in keeping with the needs and talents in my district. I am sure my role would differ somewhat in a different school district.
In the following section, I share my responses to some of the commonly asked questions I am asked during visitations of my program. I speak from my experiences and from techniques I have found to work for me. This study is simply to uncover what I do, not to generalize from my experiences to what all ISC’s should do.

What Is My Role as an ISC?

I often struggle to explain what I do as ISC because an observer cannot visibly see everything that is in place at any one time. In order to explain what instructional support looks like, I describe my role as being a spinner of threads to help create the school-wide web of support for all. As a spinner of threads, I am a facilitator and guide who helps all teachers apply the principles of instructional support, curriculum-based assessment, and learning theory in the classroom on a daily basis in order to help all students be successful academically. To do this, I have taken course work and read several books about all of these principles in order to help teachers learn and apply them in a variety of ways, depending on their particular content areas and classroom needs. I have also practiced applying these principles in various classrooms to see what works for me, so I can share this with the teachers with whom I work.

I am also knowledgeable and well versed in effective instruction and all of the other factors linked to the effective-schools research such as classroom set-up and classroom management, again from several graduate courses I have taken and from my experience during nine years of classroom teaching. I attempt to serve as the master teacher in helping classroom teachers tweak what they are doing to better meet the needs of their students. I am quick to remind teachers I work with about my own learning
experiences that have been full of failures and successes to not make people feel uncomfortable with taking risks and trying new methods in their classrooms.

I deliver traditional forms of staff development on conference days, at faculty meetings, and during the summer. I then follow up on these trainings at grade-level team meetings and directly in the classrooms. I teach lessons and entire units with the classroom teacher while modeling several tools for conducting CBA and using this information to alter instruction accordingly during the same class or for the next day. This way the students are learning the material and the strategies being taught at the same time as the teacher is learning. The teacher now only has to worry about how to continue what has been taught in many cases rather than on how to teach these processes and strategies as well as how to build them into classroom instruction and practice.

I also help teachers to plan lessons and units by taking them through a questioning process that helps teachers to think about the key principles of learning theory and to plan in steps for conducting CBA and changing instruction as may be needed. I have found that many teachers enjoy this time to reflect on their practices and to gain new ideas to try. In some instances, when a teacher is having difficulty understanding how a particular child learns. I model a one-on-one interview process with that child for the teacher so the teacher can see other ways of discovering information about what the child knows and can do and how the child approaches problems he/she is unsure about. Discovering what the child is thinking about while attempting each step of a problem is essential in uncovering what the child needs next regarding instruction. It is important that this session takes place with the classroom teacher in that the classroom teacher is ultimately
the one who needs to understand what is needed in order to help the student be more successful.

After modeling this process, I then meet alone with the teacher to discuss how what he/she just learned might be useful in planning future instruction for all students and not just that one individual. Often, the teachers I work with find out that students do not understand the main terms or concepts in a lesson or unit. So, I share ideas for how to better teach these and how to incorporate more repetition and encoding strategies that will help students retain the information they are attempting to learn.

I also serve as a curriculum coordinator of such in that I know what each content area teacher is teaching and can help to coordinate the skills and strategies grade levels of students are learning at the same time. Consistency and frequency are essential for the success of any strategy or learning tool. I help grade-level teachers to teach the same strategies and to use the same terminology and approach to common practices such as the writing process which is essential for helping students learn how to communicate ideas in an organized and coherent manner.

By being in all classrooms, I also notice patterns of need across larger groups of students that need to be addressed by grade-level teams. By sharing a certain need that was noticed in every classroom, teachers do not feel singled out as being "bad" teachers but as people who can work together to reduce this need of students by working on the same page with their teammates. I have found that interventions are so much more effective when applied uniformly and frequently over time.

From my experience, I have seen that organizational needs of knowing how to manage materials such as notes, homework, and notebooks are common needs that tend
to arise for all students, especially in middle school. Intentionally teaching students strategies and skills while putting a system in place where students can practice these new organizational skills on a daily basis in every class can be helpful. Students also tend to struggle with basic reading skills and comprehension as well as writing skills needed for showing an understanding of material and to organize, present, and support their thinking. Knowing how to problem solve, study to process and retain new information, and take tests effectively are also common areas that all students need help with. I have found that myself and other teachers often take these areas for granted and assume students know how to do all of these. Often students fail because they simply do not know how to perform one of these skills instead of not learning the material. Instructional support principles remind me to make no assumptions when teaching students anything.

What Are My Attributes as an ISC?

According to the people I worked with during this study and from analyzing my own experiences, I see that I am a passionate believer in the principles of instructional support—for example, that all students can learn. I apply these beliefs to teachers as well as students and truly care about the people I work with. Having the sensitivity to the vulnerability we all feel when learning something new is essential for helping people as they are trying something new and for getting people to want to try something new. Really listening to others is also important. People need to vent, share, and dialogue about issues with which they work. I try to foster a collaborative, needs-satisfying relationship by truly caring about the person, taking an active interest in the whole person, and sharing my own learning experiences, both successful and not so successful.
As an ISC, I function as a change agent working to change the way schooling is done and, therefore, have to fight the norm and all that accompanies the "accepted" way. This is not an easy or well-marked path. I am persistent, determined, and creative to determine ways to stay true to the underlying principles of the model and to solve problems that arise along the way, even when people question and charge me with being "wrong." In order to stand firm, I have had to be very knowledgeable about all of the theories and research that supports my approach to helping all students meet with success in school. I have gained this strong knowledge base and confidence level during my graduate work at Andrews University. Through writing this dissertation, I have noticed my growing abilities to communicate this knowledge in such a way that others will listen and understand why change is occurring. Sometimes, in working with people of differing ideas, I have found that it is important to be patient and to be willing to walk away in order to come back again from a different angle or stance. Knowing how and when to do this has helped me to get places I might not have gotten by trying only one approach.

I also have needed to be very knowledgeable about the teaching of literacy skills needed for reading, writing, listening, and speaking, as well as teaching accepted models of effective instruction such as cooperative learning, mastery learning, direct instruction, etc. I have had more credibility in the eyes of veteran teachers because I have volumes of experience to speak from when giving examples and sharing various scenarios in multiple content areas and grade levels. Theory and principles that are supported and illustrated with real-life classroom examples are more believable and understandable for people.
What Are My Qualifications as an ISC?

As an ISC, I am an instructional leader, and therefore I have both strong leadership skills as well as effective teaching skills. I am well versed in leadership theory, learning theory, curriculum-based assessment, literacy skills, and curriculum unit design. As an instructional leader, I develop a community of learners with both students and teachers. In her constructivist model, Lambert (2002) explains, “Leadership is the factor that enables meaning to be constructed together in that it engages people in the essential reciprocal processes. Without value-driven, purposeful leadership, communities can become balkanized, or focused on the self-serving purposes of an individual or a few individuals” (p. 52).

I am both a student and teacher advocate who continually models, learns, problem-solves, and grows alongside of the people with whom I work. Lambert (2002) explains, “Moral educational communities come into existence as people learn to grow together. The purposes referenced in our definition of constructivist leadership involve a commitment to the growth of children and adults as well as a commitment to communities and societies that sustain such growth” (p. 55). I am committed to the beliefs and practices outlined in this chapter and confidently pursue these ends.

In order to put these beliefs and practices into place, I serve as a facilitator throughout the building to empower students and teachers to take charge of the learning process. Lambert (2002) states, “Those performing acts of leadership find facilitation skills essential to creating engagement in reciprocal processes among leaders in a community” (p. 58). I have needed the skills necessary to set practices in motion in several classrooms at one time and to oversee and support these simultaneous practices.
A leader is a change agent and thus needs to understand change in order to help affect change (Fullan, 1993; Helgesen, 1995; Lambert, 2002; Senge, 1990, 2000).

Lambert (2002) explains. “A deep understanding of change and transitions is also essential to jointly designing the sequencing, timing, and duration of reciprocal processes. Change that is constructivist in nature emerges from the meaning-making process and is therefore unpredictable and evolving.” (p. 59). Fullan and Stiegelbauer (1991) offer advice to instructional leaders trying to affect change in a school system. They explain:

Similarly, teachers engaged in curriculum development or otherwise involved in content innovations must put their advocacy in perspective. If these teachers try to sell a product without recognizing that it may not be the most important thing on other teachers’ minds, and without being sensitive to the need for other teachers to come to grips with the sense of the innovation, they will be doing exactly what most developers or advocates of change do—confusing the change with the change process. . . . If the teacher as advocate can become skilled at integrating the change and the change process, he or she can become one of the most powerful forces of change. (as cited in Fullan, 1993, p. 128)

I have found my experience teaching in the classroom at different grade levels and content areas and my work with several people in these areas extremely beneficial in order to have stories to share and real examples to pull from. Teachers tend to believe and respect presenters who have real classroom examples to support what they are telling teachers to do.

I also have experience with delivering staff development where I model what is known about effective instruction for teachers. Teachers have told me that they appreciate meaningful instruction where they have time to process their new learning and begin making application plans during the training. Ultimately, I try to model best practice and share my own learning experiences all of the time. Fullan (1993) states that teachers and instructional leaders need to “be active learners who continually seek.
assess, apply and communicate knowledge as reflective practitioners throughout their careers” (p. 115).

What Does a Typical Day Look Like for Myself as an ISC?

An average day does not exist for me, but typical duties do exist. Most of my time is spent in the classroom: either teaching students directly, team-teaching students, or observing student learning and needs. When I am not in a classroom, I am creating materials to share with grade-level teams so every teacher can be working on the latest strategy or skill that I am working on in one particular class. I am a part of grade-level teams and attend regularly scheduled meetings to help facilitate the consistent teaching of strategies and skills and to remind teachers to use these tools and to help them apply the principles of learning theory and CBA in their lessons. I also help teams problem solve in order to determine new ways to help individual students meet with more success academically.

I spend a little time each day or each week researching and learning more about new ways of teaching and differentiating instruction in order to meet all learning needs in the classroom. These new ideas then are worked into lesson plans that are created each day for and with content area teachers.

Planning with individual teachers takes another portion of the day where I help teachers plan lessons that incorporate learning theory and CBA. I often ask reflective questions that help the teacher determine essential information, methods for teaching this information, and techniques for building in learning theory and CBA in order to know that students are really learning the material.
I decide with what teacher and in what classes to work based on a rotating schedule of moving from one content area class to the next and from one grade level to another grade level. This rotation is often interrupted, however, if a major need occurs where a certain area is in need of immediate help. Working with grade-level teams, however, allows instructional support to occur even when I am not working at that particular grade level for a period of time.

**Conclusion**

Instructional support as I have defined it is a concept of problem solving to help all students learn. Believing that all students can learn is fundamental to achieving this goal, and is thus at the center of the model. Five other beliefs connect to this center belief about learning that are supported by the APA principles of learning theory. One connecting belief is that all people are different (APA principles 8 & 11).

Therefore, I use different methods of instruction, strategies, and approaches in order to help all individuals learn. Using CBA allows me to determine individual strengths and learning needs as well as specific prior knowledge and skill level. Learning occurs in small increments. People are motivated to approach the next increment only after meeting with success with the previous increment. Thus, success breeds success (APA principles 5 & 8; Hargis, 1997).

Learning is situated and dependent upon need. From my experience, students have not wanted to learn how to use a graphic organizer until they have experienced a need where they have been able to see the benefits of such use as well as understand how the use helps increase their understanding of what they are trying to achieve (APA principles 1 & 3). Students need opportunities to dialogue about their new learning and
to work together with others who may share a technique or strategy that helps them learn. Cooperative learning opportunities are based on the belief that learning is social (APA principles 7, 9, & 12; Johnson & Johnson, 1993; Kagan, 1994; Vygostky, 1978).

Taking risks and problem solving are also essential for learning to occur (APA principle 6). Determining the best approach for individual students requires much risk taking and problem solving, as education has no easy answer or formula that can be applied for all students. Students also need to know that learning new tasks means taking risks to attempt something they do not know and may fail at in the beginning. Failure should be at a minimum if the teacher is breaking the learning down into incremental steps and conducting CBA in order to match the instruction to prior knowledge.

When helping people take such risks that are vital to learning, I have found the need to honor and meet people's basic needs such as autonomy, community, and identity (APA principle 10; Glasser, 1998; Graham, 2002).

While implementing all of these beliefs and practices, I am constantly reflecting both after the fact and during the act of educating people to see if what I am doing is working and if it aligns with the fundamental beliefs of this approach to instructional support. I need to make sure I know why I am doing what I am doing and what I can change in order to improve what I am doing. I can always improve some aspect or add something to my repertoire for helping all students learn.

As an ISC, I help teachers implement these beliefs and practices in their classrooms where they can directly impact student success. I apply these beliefs and practices when working with both students and teachers. I offer suggestions, create teaching tools, and/or model for the teacher within that teacher's class and with that
teacher’s students. The goal then for me in my role as an ISC is to help teachers vary their teaching techniques to meet the needs of individual students within the class and or groups of students within that class. I accomplish these ends by modeling lessons in the classroom for the teacher, team teaching with the teacher, and working with the teacher to plan lessons using strategies that meet a particular student’s needs and or a group of students. I also plan with grade-level teams and other decision-making entities so that common skills and strategies are used in the various classes a student takes. I then achieve the goal of being a support person and advocate for the teacher as well as for the student. This approach is different from more traditional forms of staff development support for teachers and pull-out programs designed to provide only certain students with additional skills and strategies. With the pull-out model, the help is provided on an as-needed basis in an arbitrary, contrived setting rather than where it is needed--in the classroom in a meaningful context.

To accomplish these goals, I observe teacher and student needs, identify patterns and use CBA and a problem-solving approach to implement action plans that help people learn. Then, I constantly reflect with the classroom teacher about what is working and what needs to be altered to get the best possible results. I also extend this reflection to myself as to the degree of success of my activities when working with teachers, guidance counselors, and administrators to make my performance as an ISC more productive and successful.
CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSIONS

When someone is taught the joy of learning it becomes a lifelong process that creates a logical individual. That is the challenge and joy of teaching.

Marva Collins

The stories have been shared, an analysis has taken place, and the beliefs, attributes, and practices have been uncovered. This chapter comes back to review the purpose of this study and to review the research questions. Here I share a metaphor for the learning process I have come to see and understand. I liken the beliefs and processes of learning to the act of juggling, which not only represents my beliefs about learning but my multifaceted role as an instructional support consultant. The chapter closes with recommendations for further research in this field of study.

Summary of the Study

This study was designed as a means of uncovering what I believe, what I do, and how I do what I do as an instructional support consultant. Reflective thinking calls for an analysis of one’s own beliefs and a look at how these beliefs play out in everyday actions (Applebee, 1996; Beyer, 1996; Clandinin & Connelly, 1995; Fullan & Hargreaves, 1996; Joyce & Showers, 1995; Loughran, 1996; Reason, 1988; Schon, 1983; van Manen, 1990). I created the way I deliver instructional support in the middle school by intuition as I
went along and am still creating what I do as I meet new experiences. The stories of my childhood reappear in different form as I encounter different situations now, such as being faced with taking a risk or with supporting a teacher in need, thus connecting my earlier experiences with my current and future experiences. As far as I know, no other school delivers instructional support the way I do. Thus, a blueprint did not exist. My actions were based on my underlying beliefs about learning and about working with people. Before I began this study, I was working in the mode of being unconsciously skilled. In order to share what I do with others interested in implementing the instructional support model in the way I have done, I needed to become consciously skilled so I could share with others what I do in my role as an instructional support consultant. This process required me to study my own beliefs that drive my actions and to uncover as many of the nuances and layers as I can of what I do every day in every classroom.

Autobiography seemed to be the most appropriate method in this case; however, I was sure that I would not be able to see everything that I do unconsciously. Therefore, I employed the help of my close colleagues, family members, and peers. I engaged in numerous dialogues with them about what they see in my actions and beliefs (Butler-Kisber, 2000-2001; Heron, 1988; Nelson, 1994). Also, I asked these people to do some writing about what I do and about what they have thought and done as the result of their interactions with me. From all of these data, I was able to discover salient themes that stood out from every angle. I represented these themes through story, readers’ theater, found poems, and metaphor in attempt to present a rounded, dynamic picture of what I do rather than a flat, static picture that is fixed in time. Clandinin and Connelly (2000)
speak about working within a three dimensional space of moving backwards and forward in time and inward and outward between inner emotions and outer realities of society. I attempt to move backwards by sharing my childhood stories. I move forward in time by telling my stories of my work now. I can see my childhood stories being relived in my present day stories, sometimes in slightly different form. As I retell my stories, I make more meaning of them by adding my newly gained knowledge to my past experiences and feelings. The connection between these stories is ongoing as I learn, change, and grow in my ever evolving position as an educator. Bateson (1994) states.

As an adult, [I] am learning from my own memories of childhood and [am] using them to communicate more widely, feeling my way toward a sense of the world that includes both the empirical and the intuitive. Learning, we build on existing knowledge. It often becomes necessary to find a prior wisdom, an earlier layer of learning, to strip off some distorting overlay and combine the recent with the old in Fibonacci ratios of awareness. (p. 57)

Presenting answers to the research questions in this chapter presented me with a challenge of figuring out how to present what I have found at the time of this study without fixing myself in time as if I am no longer changing, growing, and becoming. I struggled with issues of identity in which I wanted to keep my identity without seeming like a fixed identity. Bateson (1990) explains that our ability to understand our identity grows as we grow and gain more knowledge and experience. She says, “The same kind of spiral underlies the shaping and reshaping of identity, as gradually we have more to work with and we become skilled in reconstruction” (p. 214).

This study is an attempt at uncovering my beliefs and practices by looking at who I was and who I am now in my role as an ISC. I want the reader to be clear that I am still a becoming person and my stories continually recycle in the experiences I encounter in new forms as I continue to learn and grow. My early experiences have strong roots in
who I am. When I experience a challenging situation such as being in a classroom where I am not sure if the teacher wants to hear what I have to say, but I feel really needs to hear what I have to say, my violin story is playing out all over again as I take the risk of offering feedback without knowing the best way to do this.

I know the song needs to be played and, therefore, do not worry about being perfect. I know I will make mistakes and could approach the situation differently given more information regarding the situation, but I proceed with confidence hoping that I can get where I need to be in order to help this teacher. I decide to share some suggestions with the teacher about what I have done in the past and what has worked as well as what has not worked. I try to make just a few suggestions that are most needed in the given situation and that will make the biggest difference in the short term. My dad’s coaching can be seen here as he simply reminds me to bend my hand a little more so I am sitting on top of the notes. I am sure much more could have been corrected in my playing at the time, but all of this feedback at once would have brought me to tears. I am sure.

My dilemma of offering help and holding back for fear of hurting the teacher’s feelings also brings into play my mom’s teacher story. I know what others say about teachers and what support is not always received by the administration. I feel the need to step in and help before the teacher receives negative feedback from the administration, justified or not. I am here to support and protect teachers from unnecessary abuse. I do not always know what to do or how to move forward, but my drive to help people and my ability to take risks take me to where I need to go. Each time I find myself in a new situation, my stories re-story themselves in new places with new people in a new time, so everyday. I not only have my old stories to tell, I also have new stories to tell that
continue to create who I am becoming. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) explain, "The more important task is the retelling of stories that allow for growth and change. . . . Within the inquiry field, we lived out stories, told stories of those experiences, and modified them by retelling them and reliving them." (p. 71). Elsewhere in their book, Clandinin and Connelly (2000) state, "We retell our stories, remake the past. . . . To do so is the essence of growth and, for Dewey, is an element in the criteria for judging the value of experience. Dewey's reconstruction of experience (for us the retelling and reliving of stories) is good in that it defines growth." (p. 85)

When reading my answers to the following research questions, I ask the reader to remember that these findings simply represent a specific time in my life and do not represent all of who I am and will become. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) state, "Narrative inquiry carries more of a sense of continual reformation of an inquiry than it does a sense of problem definition and solution" (p. 124). One of the most difficult challenges a qualitative researcher faces is representing data in such a way that does not reduce people to mere stories or themes and does not fix people in time. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) state, "Living, telling, retelling, and reliving mark the qualities of a life. A book on narrative inquiry, one reflective of this ongoing quality of life, simply stops at some point or moment when the authors, and their most intimate readers, say, enough is enough, at least for now." (p. 187).

**Answers to Research Question 1**

In what ways have my early experiences shaped my beliefs, attributes, and current practices as an educator?
When reflecting on my stories, certain themes seem to stand out more than others in specific stories. The Christmas story represents the sense of community I have had with a warm, caring family that takes an interest in each other and enjoys watching each other open presents and looking for the excitement in each other. Being attuned to the feelings of others is the key to my role today. I must be sensitive to how other people feel, helping them be positive about themselves and their learning experiences. Also, having a role or purpose in preparing breakfast shows my need for belonging to a group. I am sensitive to other people’s need to belong and fit in, and I am careful not to single people out, thus making them feel badly about being different from the rest.

The violin story really captures most of my beliefs about the learning process. My dad was instrumental in helping me to learn how to play the violin. The first and most important aspect of helping me play was creating a sense of safety with taking risks and making mistakes. He taught me how to feel comfortable with myself during this risk-taking part of the learning process. In order to ensure success, he broke the learning down into small steps and was constantly assessing and suggesting various strategies to try to help me play better. The constant feedback and support helped me to continue and take on the challenge of playing solos in church on Sunday mornings. Some of my best learning occurred on Saturday nights when I needed to apply the tips my dad was sharing in order for me to be ready to perform the next morning. I had a real need, and the tips were specifically geared to the piece I would be performing. For me, I have always learned best when I can immediately apply what I have learned.

My school stories show that I wanted to be respected as an individual with my own learning needs and not to be treated as everyone else in the room. These stories are
really the foundation behind my drive to improve education and to help all students meet with the success. I found elementary school to be meaningless and frustrating. When I began to experience real opportunities to use the writing process and learn more about each stage, I began to see that writing was really not that difficult. This success with writing spurred me on to want to share my learning with other people. I learned that learning does not have to be mundane, boring, and painful.

My mom’s school story highlights my concern for teachers and my desire to make their lives happier by helping them make education more of a joy than a frustrating experience. I have met too many teachers who have been disillusioned. The administration has not supported what the teachers have done in the best interest of the student. They simply did not know the principles of learning theory and how to apply them. I entered the field of education determined to help teachers be what they wanted to be—teachers who make a difference in students’ lives. We all want to be successful. I want to help teachers learn how to teach students in such a way that students are successful.

**Answers to Research Question 2**

What beliefs and attributes can be identified in my current practice as an instructional support consultant?

The following beliefs and attributes can be identified in the stories, poems, and reader’s theaters found in chapters 4 and 5.
Beliefs

All Students Can Learn

This belief is most prominent in the "Mike" story in chapter 4 and the "Believe It Can Happen" poem in chapter 5. As an ISC, I have the same high expectations for Mike as I have for everyone else in the classroom. Most teachers ignore Mike, praying he will behave and not cause any trouble as he has been known to cause. When I talked with him, I worked hard to help him see that I was there to help everyone, not just him. I remembered his name the next day and called on him during class to give an answer. I knew he would be successful with this because earlier we had discussed the answer privately. He beamed with pride and already was beginning to act like a good student who was excited about school.

All People Are Different

Mike did not want to stand out as being different because in school different means something is wrong with a student. The teacher in chapter 4 also did not want to be singled out as being different or inferior. I strive to help both teachers and students see that I work with everyone regardless of differences. We are all different, and this is normal. Traditionally, in school, people are singled out and labeled for being "different." I work hard to counter this notion. In the final multiple-perspectives story in chapter 4 in Mr. Blaire's class, I explain that everyone learns differently, which means that we need to figure out different ways of presenting material and teaching in order to meet all students' needs. The students affirm this statement by explaining how happy they are that Mr.
Blaire does not solely lecture all of the time anymore. The readers’ theater in chapter 4 also highlights the importance of figuring out how to meet all students’ needs.

**Success Breeds Success**

Once the students and teachers in chapter 4 have figured out who I am and have decided that it is all right to try new ideas, that we all learn differently, and that this is normal and not “special,” they get very excited about their successes. These successes have come with using a graphic organizer to write a paragraph or helping the students review using various cooperative learning structures and so on. Mike becomes so excited about his success with writing paragraphs that he asks for a graphic organizer that he can use in science class. The teacher at the end says she is glad I came into her classroom as she never would have asked me to come. Now she is looking forward to working with me more.

Both the student and the teacher first needed conditions that allowed them to feel comfortable taking risks. One such condition is incremental learning. I broke all of the learning tasks down into minute steps for both the student and the teacher, in order for them to tackle one small step at a time. I was right there to guide them through each step to ensure success as we went along. Once they got to the end, either with writing a paragraph or with reviewing the order of operations all week, they were very pleased with their end products. The visible excitement and the asking for more help show that success breeds success. This energy and excitement is contagious and spreads to other students and teachers who also want to feel this way and to meet with such success. This energy level can be seen in the readers’ theater in chapter 4 where the teachers are
positive about their work with me. In chapter 5, William uses a metaphor of the sun to capture the energy level seen when people are so successful.

**Learning Is Situated and Dependent Upon Need**

Mike asks for a graphic organizer to use in science when he needs it to help him with an assignment. The math teacher would not have asked me for help. However, I brought suggestions to her in her classroom setting at a time when she needed help. While figuring out what else she could try to help her students learn the order of operation facts, she learned several different ways of using cooperative learning structures for review as well as charts for partner review. She learned how she could have students engaged while she was working with individual students and checking homework. She had probably heard all of these things before, but until she had a need and learned the various strategies directly in her setting, they did not become real for her. This concept also can be seen in the readers' theater in chapter 4 and in the stories in chapter 5 where the ISC brings the new learning directly into the classroom as she observes specific student and teacher needs.

**Learning Is Social**

This can be seen in the stories where students are working in cooperative learning groups, described in detail in the teacher story in chapter 4. This belief stands out strongly in the readers' theater where the teachers state that they share ideas with each other and create new ones with me. I work hard to foster the belief that we are all in this together and that two heads are better than one. No one of us can possibly solve all of the problems in school, but together we can accomplish great tasks. The science teacher in
the readers’ theater in chapter 4 states that I help him “percolate ideas.” This sharing of ideas can also be seen in “the day in the life” story in chapter 5.

**Learning Is a Process of Risk-Taking and Problem Solving**

As explained earlier, the ISC first has to help create the conditions that allow people to feel comfortable taking risks and to realize this is essential to the learning process. The individual stories in chapter 5 highlight the problem-solving process involved with conducting CBA in order to determine what a student needs next. The follow-up discussions with the teachers to plan next instruction highlight the constant need to problem solve and reflect on what we are doing to see if it is working. We are then constantly figuring out what else we can try.

**Attributes**

In all of these stories, poems, and readers’ theaters, eight attributes stand out. I have a clear vision to see what people need and how to break these needs into incremental steps to align my activities and those of teachers to be in accord with the belief that success breeds success. I am knowledgeable about instruction, learning styles, learning strategies, etc., in order to help students and teachers incorporate the appropriate strategy at the appropriate time. I am also creative, energetic, and a risk-taker when thinking about plans and trying them. I never know what will work and am constantly adjusting as I go. The readers’ theaters highlight my positiveness and persistence in my approach and belief that all students can learn. I truly care about all people and want to help them be successful. This can be seen in chapter 4 where I work hard to value human needs of autonomy and identity, helping people feel good about themselves while giving

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them a choice of options they can try. I help the student and teacher remain whole by having them know that I value them as people, people who have skills and abilities that can contribute to their own success in learning.

**Answers to Research Question 3**

How do my beliefs and practices interact?

Beliefs and practices intertwine, go back and forth, and are sometimes hard to distinguish from each other. After analyzing my stories in this dissertation, I have identified six fundamental beliefs and five practices that interact in my actions on a daily basis as an instructional support consultant. The belief that all students (and teachers) can learn is at the center of a cyclical and interchanging circle. The practices of cooperative learning, CBA, and differentiated instruction, using incremental steps and meeting human needs, exist in the outer layer of the constantly revolving and evolving circle of successful instruction. The beliefs and practices are interrelated and flow back and forth. (See Figure 1.)

At the center of this circle, which drives the model of instructional support, is the belief that all students can learn. If people believe this, they will look for ways to help all people learn and will not give up until they have been successful. In order to help all people learn, we need to know how people learn (Cunnigham & Allington, 1999; Gickling & Thompson, 1985; Levine, 2002; Senge, 2000; Tucker, 2001).

First, it is important to realize that all people are different or unique; therefore, they learn in different ways. If people believe this to be true, they will differentiate their instruction and use a variety of teaching methods and strategies in order to help all people
Fig. 1. Relationship of beliefs and practices within the instructional support approach.

Note.
Inner circle = Core belief which drives all other beliefs, attributes, and practices
Second circle = Concurrent beliefs
Third circle = Practices based on beliefs, to facilitate learning
Outer circle = Core practice which causes the fluidity and motion found in the learning process (Learning is a continual process always in motion as we reflect, alter, change, try, etc., in an ongoing manner.)

Learning is a process of taking risks. Knowing that we learn through trial and error, we need to teach a problem-solving process and help people feel comfortable trying new things, making mistakes, and celebrating their successes (APA principle 7; Fullan, 1993; Gickling & Thompson, 1985; Hargis, 1997; Senge, 2000).

Success breeds success. Thus we need to break learning tasks into small, incremental steps that are easily managed and learned in short periods of time. To help people begin at the appropriate increments, we need to use curriculum-based assessment. We need to discover what prior knowledge people already have and how many of the incremental steps of the learning task people already can do in order to know where to begin working with them, thus finding their zones of proximal development (APA principles 5 & 10; Gickling & Thompson, 1985; Hargis, 1997; Vygostky, 1978).

As we put these practices into action, we need to be continually reflecting on this fluid cycle of beliefs and practices in order to determine what we are doing, why we are doing what we are doing, and what else we can be doing to be even better (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Joyce & Showers, 1995; Lambert, 2002; Loughran, 1996; Reason, 1988; Schon, 1983; van Manen, 1991). This makes for a cycle of continuous improvement. Looking at what we are doing looks at our practices. Asking why we are doing what we are doing causes us to think about our beliefs. Asking what else we could be doing allows us to think about both our beliefs and practices together. Learning means we are growing and changing. Growing and changing mean we are living. Thus, learning means we are living (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Dewey, 1910; 1997).
My Beliefs About Learning Crystallized While Learning to Juggle

My theories about learning all became clear to me as I learned how to juggle and began teaching and watching others learn to juggle. I could see the whole learning process from beginning to end, and the principles of learning theory came alive for me. When I learned to juggle, many of my beliefs about learning crystallized. My husband taught me the basics and was always there encouraging me onward. Learning to juggle was completely different from learning anything else in my life. Every step of the way is celebrated. When I finally was able to keep three balls in the air for one rotation, one would have thought I had landed on the moon. It was so exciting. This success spurred me on to try for two rotations and so on. When learning to juggle, every time a new goal is reached, it is celebrated, and then a new goal is set. It is really quite an addictive process.

Encouragement and coaching are also unique to learning to juggle. Everyone celebrates when a goal is reached, and this calls for an immediate performance. Everyone stops to watch to see that the goal is met. When trying to meet a goal, people offer feedback as they can see the formation and technique better than the learning juggler can. A simple suggestion such as “Make sure you are catching the balls with the pads of your fingers” can make all the difference. Learning to juggle typically means breaking the process down into tiny incremental steps. By practicing the basic steps over and over again, they eventually become automatic.

Good jugglers always go back to the basics to improve their technique and form, which leads to learning more advanced tricks in the long run. The number of tricks that can be achieved with any objects is uncountable. It is simply amazing what people can
do if they spend enough time practicing. If the learners stay on their own learning paths, they will not be fazed by all that they cannot do; they simply know what they would like to be able to do someday.

After teaching juggling to seventh-graders and interested parents at Juggling Nights, I have noticed certain characteristics or principles that need to be in place in order to learn to juggle successfully. The first and foremost principle is a belief that you can and will be able to juggle. The second principle is realizing that the only way to learn to juggle is to take risks and to learn how to drop the objects. Dropping balls is essential to learning to juggle. Many of us have a mind-set that dropping is bad so we are afraid to let the balls go. If we drop, we look clumsy and are obviously not juggling, which is what we want so badly to do. So, for many of us, the hardest part of learning to juggle is letting the balls drop. Learning the pattern and the rhythm is really the first step, so it does not matter if balls are dropped. “Throw, throw, drop, drop” is the first pattern and rhythm that needs to be mastered. My 22-month-old son has this part mastered and looks so proud of himself when he does this and is absolutely delighted to see the balls drop on the ground. He rushes to pick them up so he can try that again. Once we acquire this mind-set and realize it is all right to drop, we can practice that pattern.

Once that pattern and concept is well established in our brains, we can move on to the next step which is “Throw, throw, catch, catch.” This process continues incrementally. It is amazing when you have a breakthrough and you finally master a step that seemed impossible when you began. Much of learning is getting our brains to think differently. Mental blocks can really inhibit learning, so we have to be able to first identify these mental blocks and then work with others to figure out ways around these
blocks. People learn in all different ways, and it is especially helpful to talk with several people when learning to juggle to get tips and strategies that have worked for them. Try them all until you find the ones that work for you.

Learning to juggle works best in a social, collaborative environment where everyone is trying to reach a goal and break a mental block (Johnson & Johnson, 1963; Vygotsky, 1978). The feedback and encouragement are vital during this process. Accepting the fact that we are learning at all different levels and that we get out what we put in is key (Hargis, 1997; Tucker, 1985). Focus, repetition, and determination are essential characteristics needed when learning to juggle (Driscoll, 2000; Hargis, 1997). Celebration and the euphoria experienced spur a person on to the next stage (Hargis, 1997). Incremental learning is also a key (Driscoll, 2000; Hargis, 1997; Vygotsky, 1978). People do not start out trying to juggle clubs if they have never juggled balls before. Chances are, they will not be successful and will give up juggling for good. Believing in oneself and allowing one to make mistakes is probably the biggest factor leading to success. People who give up quickly and think “I can never do this” really will not be putting their full efforts into the attempts and will most likely not learn. These are the learning principles I would like to see applied in school on a daily basis. How do we get here?

**Conclusion**

Learning to juggle not only represents all of my beliefs about teaching and learning, it also represents my multifaceted role as an instructional consultant. Juggling is a metaphor that shows motion. Lambert (2002) shares that in the 20th century we have shifted from “static core metaphors to dynamic core metaphors. By this we mean that our
key concepts about the world are no longer static" (p. 239). As an instructional consultant, I play several roles and have many different and simultaneous actions. I am a student advocate, a teacher advocate, an instructional leader, a facilitator, and a curriculum coordinator, to name a few. I work with individual students in the classroom setting. I work with individual teachers in their classrooms, and I work with classes of students and teams of teachers. While I have pulled each layer apart in chapter 5 to share and closely analyze what I do, I do not focus on one aspect at a time, and it cannot be stated that I simply work with students or that I simply work with teachers or that I simply model a strategy, and so on. I constantly juggle the various roles I play and the various activities I engage in to meet my ultimate goal of increasing student achievement for all students throughout the grade levels with which I work closely.

The model I have presented in chapter 6 closely aligns with the APA Learner Centered 14 Principles (n.d.), Lambert's (2002) constructivist leadership model, Helgesen's (1995) organizational model, Fullan's (1993) theories of educational change, Fullan and Hargreaves's (1996) and Fullan and Stiegelbauer's (1991, as cited in Fullan & Hargreaves, 1996) research on school reform. I refer to these sources often as I continue to find my way as an instructional leader implementing the instructional support model as I define it through the role of the instructional support consultant as I define that.

**Recommendations for Further Study**

This study uncovers the beliefs, attributes, and practices of an ISC to illustrate what the ISC does and how someone could implement this model. A long-term study could be done to measure the impact of instructional support on student achievement and teacher development. Case study research could be done with students and teachers
focusing on their perceptions of the model and its impact on their ability to perform successfully.
## Overall Beliefs & Practices Found in this Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Beliefs</th>
<th>Practices</th>
<th>Stories</th>
<th>Journals</th>
<th>Interviews/Conversations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All people can learn</td>
<td>Teach all people using learning theory and CBA to discover how to help all people learn. Reflect on beliefs and practices to be sure they align with the belief that all people can learn.</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All people are different</td>
<td>Use CBA to determine individual learning needs, differentiate instruction, offer choice when possible, use a variety of instructional methods and strategies Honor and meet people's basic human needs</td>
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<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
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<tr>
<td>Success breeds success</td>
<td>Break the learning into the smallest incremental steps, and celebrate each small success. Use CBA to determine which step to start with and to identify strengths for the learner</td>
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<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning is situated &amp; dependent on need</td>
<td>Teach people where they are and based on what they need at the moment, help the learner apply the new learning in direct and meaningful ways to what the learner is doing and thinking about at the moment Differentiate instruction Make learning meaningful for the learner</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
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<tr>
<td>Learning is social</td>
<td>Provide cooperative learning opportunities for learners to process new learning and learn from with others &amp; build in time for dialogue of ideas, views.</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Help people learn by doing what you want them to learn with you in their zones of proximal development.

<p>| Learning is a process of problem solving &amp; risk-taking | Use a process of gathering information to identify a need, brainstorm possible strategies, create a plan, implement the plan, evaluate the plan, change the plan accordingly, etc. Create an environment that is conducive to taking risks, value the process of making mistakes and trial and error as part of the learning process |  |  |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jennifer’s Underlying Beliefs (as seen by others)</th>
<th>Mom</th>
<th>Emily (Officemate)</th>
<th>William (colleague &amp; husband)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive &amp; determined that all students teachers (people) can learn</td>
<td>A very positive person</td>
<td>Believe there are simple ways to help all students learn</td>
<td>Everyone can be successful, every student...students, teachers, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You have always been interested in how people learn</td>
<td>You are always looking for what can help every student succeed</td>
<td>You believe every student has the ability to do it, and you try to figure out what we aren’t doing to get at this student’s knowledge and resources</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>You also have a very strong feeling, and have always, that anybody can learn. I think you have been quick to note that there isn’t one right way of teaching or of learning, but if things are maneuvered the right way that anybody can learn, and you have worked for that end.</td>
<td>You always maintain a positive focus with them [teachers who come to you for help]</td>
<td>You are always very positive; you take a positive approach to everything...“how can we fix this? How can we resolve this issue? How can we improve our standards? How can we raise the student to this level?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You have not wanted to be stereotyped, and you don’t stereotype other people. You have never thought anything to be beyond you...playing basketball as a short person, telling the director of a federal program what was wrong with his program in a very polite way, but</td>
<td>You are not trying to belittle anyone...you are trying to make them feel the potential of their own power</td>
<td>You take a positive attitude about it even though other teachers would be saying, “Well that can’t be done.”...your outlook is “we can make a difference, we can improve this, don’t give up.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You are never in a hopeless situation:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Value and truly care about the people you work with (building a relationship) | An advocate for teachers | You start with where the teacher is and try to help them in determining where they want to be and how to get there [by first finding out] where they are, where they need to be, and how to get them there.  
[You do some initial assessment and then ask them] “Is this what we really want? Okay here are some ideas about how we can get there; what do you think?” | you genuinely care about how this teacher performs and where the students get team teaching is so much fun when you do it with someone who cares so much about the students and who is willing to work in that partnership.  
[it is like what we saw on] the movie Erin Brockovich… [that personal involvement] you are constantly |}

| forceful way and a concrete way with specific examples as a college freshman... [You have believed you could do anything,] and thus you believe anybody can learn, and that things are not impossible. | Being positive, certainly you are passionate about what you talk about. With you the glass is always half full. Clown metaphor | you [always feel like] you can do something to improve it. I would just say that you have such a positive attitude and believe that everyone can achieve that is overwhelming that drives you. That everybody can achieve, and the system can get better. We can educate them in a better way. And we are doing it, with your help. Powerful. Sun metaphor | |
my perception again in terms of how your relationship interaction with other teachers is that you try to maintain a positive focus with them. ...that you are not trying to belittle anyone, that you are trying to make everybody feel the potential of their own power.

that teachers are glad they came to ask you for assistance and that they are not ashamed that they don't know how to do something but you are helping them understand that we all need assistance from time to time. it's not a bad thing to seek improvement and to seek out the resources that are there

You come off and what I like much more [than if you don't do it this way. you are failing] in your interaction is you say here is one method that works really well. it works for me or it works for someone else.

asking them [teachers] how did you do with that lesson? How did that go? ...people love talking about the successes they have had

But it is that personal touch you put on everything that you don't often see. We all get so busy in our daily routine... you don't. you stop and talk to them. I think this personal conversation goes a very long way...and so you have a quality relationship with everyone in our district.

You genuinely care...they see that you care...teachers know that you are genuine, you want to help them

You are a good listener
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Modeling own learning process</th>
<th>Through your explanation, I can see your working through the process of finding out where you hit the brick wall and also how you are going to make a detour and work around certain strong individuals who are roadblocks, um. for the most part. You are very quick to share experiences you have had ... so we get the sense that you are like us. you have had some of these same experiences... frustrations. So, I don’t get the feeling that you are kind of touting yourself as being better than I am because you are the consultant, and I am only a teacher; but you consider yourself to be a teacher and being very open about I tried this and</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>risk taking and sharing own successes and failures with others</td>
<td>but the way you teach or the way you operate, this may not be perfectly ideal for you; feel free to modify it so it works within your structure. let’s talk about why or why not that might work. I hear [you doing] a lot of questioning your own self about what [you] can do to [improve what you are doing to meet you goal of getting all of the students using the strategies] how [you] can be sure it is working well. are the kids getting it?, are the teachers getting it? How can I get the teachers to get it?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>You are the first person I have met who says, “Okay, let’s break it down, what do we really need to teach them? And then you come in and you problem solve ideas and solutions [some that work and some that don’t] And you are constantly growing as well. You come up with new ideas, you improvise, adapt, and overcome; you are a problem solver...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>And I think you model it yourself. I have seen you learn and improve over the 8 years [I have worked with you].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>One of your major beliefs is modeling; you teach by example, you don’t teach by this is what you need to do, you come in, you model.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
sometimes it works
and sometimes it
doesn’t and to
verbalize I tried this,
it didn’t work, and
what I discovered
was, duh, that...

So it is okay not to
be 100% successful. The
consultant accepts
this in herself and so
it is okay for me not
to be successful...

We learn from that
and now we can
tweak it and try it
again

In a sense, we are in
a society where you
have to be perfect
and right all of the
time or you are a
failure

You create a type of
atmosphere with
your teachers [that
allows for mistakes]

you work with other
people in a very
positive and upbeat
way...[forming] a
partnership

You share a lot
about your personal
self

You don’t come
across as the expert

You are yourself.
you interact with
everyone, become a
part of the team.
share stories about
yourself... so that
they see that you
made mistakes, have
fallen on your face
sometimes, and you
get right back
up...and try
something else

You are not an
authority who is
going to cut them
down or whatever,
but someone who
has made mistakes
before...
Attribute Analysis by Close Colleagues
(Represented in Chapter 3, 5, & 6)

(E = Emily, W = William, M = Mom)

Attributes

Positive (E, W)
  Lighthearted (E)
  Positive attitude (W)

Persistent (M, W)
  Committed educator (M)
  Dedicated (E)
  Hard worker (W)

Energetic (W, M)
  Enthusiastic (M)
  Vast energy (M)

Knowledgeable (E, M)
  Intelligent (E)
  Resourceful (E)
  Problem Solver (W)
  Observant (M)

Caring (W, E)
  Listener (W)
  Friendly (M)
  Sensitive (M)
  Honest (W)
  Genuine (W)

Creative (M, E)
  Spontaneous (M)
  Curious (M)

Clear Vision (W, M)
  Break things down (W)
  Explain clearly (W)
  Organized (M)

Risk-taker (M, W)
  Not afraid to be different (M)
  Not intimidated by higher authority (M)
  Won’t take no for an answer (M)
  Consistent (E)
  In control (M)
  Courageous (W)

Metaphors

Clown, Sun, Treasure Trove, Bee

Bee, Clown, Sun

Bee, Clown, Sun

Bee, Sun

Clown, Sun, Bee

Clown, Treasure Trove, Bee

Sun, Bee

Clown, Bee

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Analysis of Student Story, Teacher Story, and ISC Story
(Discussed in Chapter 4)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emerging Ideas</th>
<th>Student Story</th>
<th>Teacher Story</th>
<th>ISC Story</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Afraid of being seen as different; different is not accepted in school</td>
<td>&quot;I don't want them to see me talking to her or they might think I am stupid.&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;What is she going to say to everyone about my class?&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;I was no longer 'one of them' even though I tried hard to make them believe I was.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enjoys attention focused on own interests and needs</td>
<td>&quot;She remembered my name!&quot; Tells stories about hunting... Mrs. Dove listens!</td>
<td>&quot;What did you think? I mean I tried to get all of the students engaged.&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Thanks for telling me how to use the KWL...&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Success leads to excitement and good feelings</td>
<td>&quot;Mrs. Dove, look at my paragraph!! I have never written anything as long this before in my life!&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;She liked it? I did something right?&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Excellent. I have seen the KWL drag on too, so I thought this might work.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People are valued for strengths and interests</td>
<td>&quot;You are right on Mike. I am glad to see that you remembered that paragraphs are indented.&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Math is certainly not my expertise so I need you to tell me if what I suggest makes sense and will work with what you are trying to teach.&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;How do you know so much?&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What Do I Do In My Role As An ISC?
(Represented in Readers' Theater, Chapter 4)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role of the IST</th>
<th>Scott</th>
<th>Linda</th>
<th>Pam</th>
<th>Brian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Planning lessons &amp; creating materials for lessons</td>
<td>We have planned lessons together for my class whether it be test-taking tips or study skills. Any kind of skill that is going to meet all the students' needs</td>
<td>Another brain to help ideas percolate especially since you can't plan everything that would confuse a kid... someone to bounce ideas off of.</td>
<td>If I say to you they are not getting fractions and decimals or whatever, and I show you an example of what I am doing, you take it and apply it with cooperative learning or CBA stuff and figure out how to approach this to where I can help all the kids</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offering support &amp; help</td>
<td>Help the team and the students come up with strategies. Ways we can meet skills and needs of students. Maybe something we are not always focused on</td>
<td>I wasn't exactly sure how to teach the curriculum... so when you came in... it was so reassuring and helpful</td>
<td>Guardian angel. I had to describe your role to my wife the other day, and this is what I said.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Help teams focus on students or groups of students who are at risk of failing</td>
<td>The reassurance— you weren't telling me what to do; you were offering suggestions. Things I can learn. Things that I can teach in my</td>
<td>You bring a real joy and passion into the classroom which is good especially when mine is ebbing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>You help us teachers do things with kids so they</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>To support [us by helping us apply other learning strategies to what we are teaching] and offer a different point of view.... a different way of helping kids... and just keeping me in line like sometimes I need feedback like you could have done it this way Brian.</td>
<td></td>
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You were just engaged, got that feedback. You were just engaged, got that feedback. You were just engaged, got that feedback. You were just engaged, got that feedback. You were just engaged, got that feedback. You were just engaged, got that feedback. You were just engaged, got that feedback. You were just engaged, got that feedback. You were just engaged, got that feedback. You were just engaged, got that feedback. You were just engaged, got that feedback. You were just engaged, got that feedback. You were just engaged, got that feedback. You were just engaged, got that feedback. You were just engaged, got that feedback. You were just engaged, got that feedback. You were just engaged, got that feedback. You were just engaged, got that feedback. You were just engaged, got that feedback. You were just engaged, got that feedback. You were just engaged, got that feedback. You were just engaged, got that feedback. You were just engaged, got that feedback. 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| Sharing new ideas for teaching instruction | You helped Leslee create study sheets. That is something she wouldn’t have done. | Assistance in ways to teach the curriculum and ideas for teaching my new topics. Tons of support and assistance and information. You offer extensive information of how to teach students the curriculum. | You find ways to improve our activities. Create new and clever ones and help us do things that all of us want to do like improve the way kids take tests and do their homework and things like that. You help give additional | Jennifer either teaches the lesson to show me an example of how I could do it or she sits down with me and gives me examples of how I can do it by myself. You do charts, you take information we are teaching them and you put it into the CBA’s. you help me.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I have students reinforce skills during the warm-ups they do while I am walking around checking homework.</th>
<th>You give us new ideas like cooperative learning structures to look at different avenues to teach children. Wealth of information and different types of teaching—teaching used to be teacher standing up in front of the classroom teaching from the book. To be an effective teacher I think we need to get away from that and that is what I have learned from you—that is what stands out for me. Students are now learning from each other when I use cooperative learning structures in my lessons. Learning about different techniques and instructions that I hadn't thought of that helped to run more smoothly but just you there and having these extra ideas come up made me think of other ways that I could add and so by the third period it was running really wonderfully. A certain synergy came about where you thought of some ideas and I came up with others. It made the whole thing run more smoothly. And we need to clone you. Calling on random students [for increased accountability], having the students moving around, and giving them pictures [to help them remember the concepts]. You go in the classrooms and observe the classrooms, and you notice the things that we don't see because we are doing everything else and so you come back and with all of your practice with cooperative learning and CBA and everything you can take that experience and you can come back to us and say why don't you try this and then that is filling the gaps that we are missing trying...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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different structures, but I was also learning how to become a better teacher.

Popsicle sticks, timer, dividing class into teams, assigning time limits for parts of the lesson, writing the agenda on the board, using a warm-up to get class started to do everything.

CL and CBA have helped me look at learning in a different way, that I really need to hit all of their learning styles.

It puts some responsibility on the kids and the kids learn to help each other. I don’t have to check 25 – 30 separate papers but can go between 6-7 groups during class.

This has been the best year for organization [student] because we have the colored folders and every day I say, “If your homework is corrected where does it go? In the right hand side of your red folder.” This is the most organized class I have ever had [in my 14 years.
| Work for consistency across the grade level and program | You have made sure it [test-taking tips] is in every single class and so it isn’t just mine so it is equal throughout and consistent for all the kids. We also use a color-coded notebook system [to save time with students finding the right papers and to help students stay organized.] | You come to our team meetings and the test taking tip things and you help us with advisory so you are helping you are supplementing the team. |
| Help teachers self-reflect | You help me reflect every time I talk to you. I don’t know what I would do without you. Honestly, I don’t know that I would be as focused. I think you just focus and you make it. | In the beginning of the year, I wasn’t doing that. Now, I am getting them [students] involved, getting them interested in learning. So I think that is my growth. I think, I hope, I have become a lot better. I have a lot of structure for things, better at knowing what kids at this age group can handle and what they can’t. |
everything

simple.
INSTRUCTION:

The intentional design of the learning environment...

Instructional Match
Reflection
Classroom Environment
Motivational Strategies
Instructional Presentation
Teacher Expectations
Cognitive Emphasis
Student Understanding
Academic Engaged Time
Informed Feedback
Relevant Practice
Adaptive Instruction
Progress Evaluation
Class Setup & Organization

to create the conditions for success!

### Components of the Instructional Environment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional Presentation</th>
<th>Instruction is presented in a clear and effective manner; the student understands what kinds of behaviors or skills are to be demonstrated; and the student's understanding is checked before independent practice.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Environment</td>
<td>The classroom is controlled efficiently and effectively; there is a positive, supportive classroom atmosphere; time is used productively.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Expectations</td>
<td>There are realistic, yet high expectations for both the amount and accuracy of work to be completed, and these are communicated clearly to the student.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive Emphasis</td>
<td>Thinking skills used in completing assignments are communicated explicitly to the student.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivational Strategies</td>
<td>The teacher ensures all students are kept within their instructional level and uses effective strategies for heightening student interest and effort.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relevant Practice</td>
<td>The student is given adequate opportunity to practice with appropriate materials. Classroom tasks are clearly important to achieving instructional goals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Engaged Time</td>
<td>The student is actively engaged in responding to academic content; the teacher monitors the extent to which the student is actively engaged and redirects the student when the student is unengaged.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informed Feedback</td>
<td>The student receives relatively immediate and specific information on his/her performance or behavior; when the student makes mistakes, correction is provided.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adaptive Instruction</td>
<td>The curriculum is modified to accommodate the student's specific instructional needs and learning styles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progress Evaluation</td>
<td>There is direct, frequent measurement of the student's progress toward completion of instructional objectives; data on pupil performance and progress are used to plan future instruction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional Match</td>
<td>The student's needs have been assessed accurately, and instruction is matched appropriately to the results of the instructional diagnosis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Understanding</td>
<td>The student demonstrates an accurate understanding of what is to be done in the classroom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Setup and Organization</td>
<td>The physical space and the location of instructional materials have been analyzed to provide maximum instruction and minimum disruptions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection</td>
<td>Time is designated to provide students the opportunity to reflect on content and connect to what he/she already knows.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX C

DESCRIPTION OF ROLE AND
SAMPLE LOG SHEETS
A Description of My Role as ISC

Conduct Curriculum Based Assessment:

**With Whom?**
The school
- A grade level
- A specific class
- A group of students
- Individual students

**How?**
- Observations
- Interviews
- Reviews of school data (grades, guidance folders, sample work, etc.)
- Reviews of student work samples
- Individual “Sit-With” sessions with individual students

**When?**
- As needs arise
- Upon teacher, student, parent request
- Beginning of the year
- 5 week check points
- Beginning of new units
- Middle of units
- End of units

**Where?**
- In the classroom
- During study halls
- During teacher planning periods
- During team meetings
- Before/After school

**Focus of CBA’s at the Secondary Level:**

Patterns of needs in the following areas:
- Organization Skills (Materials such as notes and homework, class information, etc.)
- Reading Skills (Prior knowledge, basic skills, comprehension of material, etc.)
- Writing Skills (Clear thinking, understanding of material, ability to organize, support and present ideas, etc.)
- Problem Solving Skills (Assess situation, decide what needs to be done, gather information, plan, etc.)
- Study Skills (Processing information, mnemonics, drill & practice, etc.)
- Test-Taking Skills (built on problem solving skills, reading skills, and writing skills)

As an ISC, I combine ...

- the principles of learning theory:
  All new knowledge builds on prior knowledge
  All learning takes place in the instructional window (93-97\% known)
  Motivation stems from success with incremental learning
  25-35 repetitions are needed to bring new information to the automatic level or to mastery
  Drill & "perfect" practice make permanent (needed for maintenance)

- with Curriculum Based Assessment:
  What does the student know?
  What can the student do?
  How does the student think?
  How does the student approach what he/she is unsure of?
  As a teacher, what do I do next instructionally to meet this student’s needs?

- with Reading/Listening Skills: (Literacy Skills):
  Access prior knowledge
  Identify unknown words
  Teach important vocabulary
  Repetitions of important vocabulary
  Drill & practice important skills needed at the automatic level
  Work on fluency
  Focus on narrative comprehension
  Focus on expository comprehension

- with Writing/Speaking Skills: (Literacy Skills):
  Brainstorming
  Organizing
  Planning
  Outlining key points
  Clear thoughts
  Supporting ideas with specific examples

- with Problem Solving Skills: (Literacy Skills):
  What is the problem?
  What needs to be solved?
  What is the important information?
  How can I organize this information?
  What strategy can I use?
  Solve the problem
  Go back and check for accuracy and completeness
  Did I solve the problem?
What can I do next time?

As an ISC, I help teachers:

- assess prior knowledge of their students
- identify essential content (concepts & skills) in their courses
- choose important content vocabulary important for comprehension of material
- increase fluency of reading skills and basic content skills that need to be automatic
- increase student comprehension of material being delivered
- focus on metacognition to engage students in their own learning process
- use a variety of research based instructional delivery models
- incorporate research based instruction learning strategies into every day instruction

As an ISC, I offer ideas and strategies for:

- Classroom environment
- Classroom set-up
- Classroom expectations
- Classroom routines & procedures
- Instructional methods
- Learning strategies
- Assessment (monitoring progress)
- Conducting CBA on a daily basis with whole classes and individual students
- Record keeping and analysis of data to inform daily instruction

As an ISC, I:

- Create materials and lessons for teachers to address any of the above areas
- Model any of these strategies and techniques
- Plan with teachers to work on any of the above areas
- Co-teach with teachers
- Observe teachers and students (another pair of eyes in the classroom, another perspective)
- Offer another pair of hands to help students master certain strategies & skills
- Work with individual students who are struggling in the class
- Do in-depth analysis with individual students
- Find resources to help teachers and students
- See patterns of needs across grade levels that individual classroom teachers may not see
- Help teachers align their instruction vertically and horizontally in the school
- Facilitate the learning process of all students and all teachers (fostering a learning organization)
- Offer support, encouragement, and hope for teachers and students
- Increase collaborative problem solving by setting up meetings and leading teams through the problem solving process
- Help teachers and students focus on strengths and build from these rather than looking for deficits
- Recognize growth & accomplishments no matter how small
- Celebrate successes with students and teachers
- Be a cheerleader for students and teachers
- Check in periodically to remind students & teachers about strategies and procedures that might get forgotten due to pressure to cover content (consistency & frequency win the race)
## Sample Teacher Contacts Log

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9/13</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Academic Planning</td>
<td>Day 3 Paragraph Model—planning stage and graphic organizer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/14</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Academic Planning</td>
<td>Next writing assignment using the paragraph model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/14</td>
<td>8th Grade Team</td>
<td>Team Meeting</td>
<td>Student Concerns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/18</td>
<td>Special Education</td>
<td>Academic Planning</td>
<td>Newspaper lesson for 8th grade English classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/18</td>
<td>Social Studies &amp;</td>
<td>Academic Planning</td>
<td>Newspaper Unit (Writing Lessons)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/18</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Academic Planning</td>
<td>Paragraph Writing Unit. Making charts for pre-writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/18</td>
<td>8th Grade Team</td>
<td>Staff Development</td>
<td>Creating Study Sheets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/19</td>
<td>Special Education</td>
<td>Academic Planning</td>
<td>Science Research Papers—Using the paragraph model for note-taking and writing reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/19</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Academic Planning</td>
<td>Transitions Lesson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/19</td>
<td>Science</td>
<td>Academic Planning</td>
<td>Paragraph Model for Science Research Reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/19</td>
<td>Math</td>
<td>Academic Planning</td>
<td>Pre-assessment before beginning a unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/19</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Academic Planning</td>
<td>Rdg. Comp. Lesson with editorial on Afghanistan Issue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/20</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Academic Planning</td>
<td>Revision &amp; Editing Lessons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/20</td>
<td>7th Grade Team</td>
<td>Staff Development</td>
<td>Vocabulary Review Ideas</td>
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<tr>
<td>9/20</td>
<td>Social Studies</td>
<td>Academic Planning</td>
<td>Using stations for guided practice with reading primary documents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/21</td>
<td>Science</td>
<td>Academic Planning</td>
<td>Ideas for vocabulary review with word wall words</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Class/Subject</th>
<th>Modeling of Strategies</th>
<th>Per.</th>
<th>Other in Class Support</th>
<th>Per.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9 5</td>
<td>Math</td>
<td>Notebook Organization</td>
<td>1-4</td>
<td>Helped students organize notebooks</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Modeling with a notebook &amp; folders</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Using visual and spoken directions</td>
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<tr>
<td>9 6</td>
<td>Math</td>
<td>Helped teams complete webs and round robin sharing</td>
<td>1-3</td>
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<tr>
<td>9 6</td>
<td>Math</td>
<td>Setting up notes for warm-up problems, organizing notes</td>
<td>1-3</td>
<td>Helped students with warm-up problems</td>
<td>4.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>9 7</td>
<td>All grades</td>
<td>Created tips for using warm-ups &amp; made a warm-up sheet</td>
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<td>9 10</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Read student writing samples</td>
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<td>Created writing process</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Created writing process paragraph writing pre-assessment</td>
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<tr>
<td>9 12</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Introduce Paragraph Model to students</td>
<td>1-4</td>
<td>Helped introduce paragraph model</td>
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<tr>
<td>9 13</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Brainstorming &amp; Planning Stages; Read Bunnies' Ball</td>
<td>1-3</td>
<td>Helped students with note-taking</td>
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<td>Students practices listening and note-taking</td>
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<tr>
<td>9 14</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Review lesson from yesterday; choosing ideas, sequencing, completing the paragraph model</td>
<td>1-4</td>
<td>Helped with lesson</td>
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<tr>
<td>9 18</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Completing the paragraph model with a different topic</td>
<td>1-3</td>
<td>Helped students with brainstorming for new topic and completing the paragraph model</td>
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<tr>
<td>10 2</td>
<td>Math</td>
<td>Checking for Understanding with pair share and Popsicle sticks before moving on in the lecture</td>
<td>1-3</td>
<td>Helped students with processing questions and note-taking</td>
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<tr>
<td>10 3</td>
<td>Math</td>
<td>Using pocket words to learn key content words</td>
<td>1-3</td>
<td>Helped students make pocket words w/ pict.</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sample Individual Student Record Keeping Log

Subject: English
Unit Lesson: Paragraph Writing
Skills: Brainstorming, Organizing, Writing, Identifying and using parts of a paragraph
Strategies: Red Dot, Green Dot Charts, Forehead Review Game, Line-Up Formations, Making lists & charts, using graphic organizers, essay models

Individual Students:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>1st Period</th>
<th>2nd Period</th>
<th>3rd Period</th>
<th>4th Period</th>
<th>5th Period</th>
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APPENDIX D

STATEMENTS OF IMPACT OF INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT
Teacher Statement 1

I have found the Instructional Support program to be an invaluable tool for me as a teacher. The ideas, training, and methods taught to me through the program, and specifically through Jennifer Dove, have enabled me to grow greatly over the past 2 years. This growth has enabled my students to learn my course content better and to more enjoy the learning process.

Across all of the curricula, we the teachers have learned and implemented ways to help our students succeed. These tools have been applied consistently in all of the classes, enabling the students to learn in a dependable environment. These tools include a folder system wherein each class has a color and work is consistently placed in the correct pocket of the folder depending on whether or not it has been completed. The folders are also used as dividers between the sections of their binders. Every student also has an assignment notebook with spaces to write both their daily homework and upcoming examinations. The students are able to look to a consistent place in the room to see what that night's assignment is. Teachers start each class by announcing the assignment and ensuring that it is written in each student’s notebook. (Lists of each night’s assignments are also distributed to study hall teachers and posted on the web for parents.) Furthermore, teachers have “How am I doing?” charts posted in their rooms on which students can look to see if they are missing any assignments that should have been turned in.

Promoting student organization through Instructional Support has been applied to the content as well. Jennifer Dove has created or helped us create numerous organizers for the students. Most notable have been graphic paragraph and essay models that clearly
outline what each type of writing piece should contain. These models, as well as clear and consistent rubrics have greatly improved the writing products that students create. We have also implemented a “star system” in our class notes so that students can know the importance of an item by the number of stars it has, which helps them in studying for tests. To further help students study for tests, we have guided students to develop study skills (such as making review sheets and highlighting “starred” notes) and test-taking skills (such as underlining key words, checking for answers in the questions).

Specifically in my class, I can confidently say that Jennifer Dove and the Instructional Support program have made me a much better science teacher. When I began two years ago, I had only one year of experience and that was in a high school instead of a middle school. My initial teaching style was not at all student-centered. I lectured 80% of the time, often having the kids take 3-4 pages of notes per day. Hands-on activities were rare and the students were given a great deal of material with no guidance in organizing it. Over the last two years, I have turned around 180° in my teaching style. In addition to adopting the techniques already discussed, I have changed my teaching to a much more student-centered style. The students do a majority of their learning in Kagan cooperative learning groups. Lectures are given only one day per week, the rest of the time devoted to hands-on applications of the information and practice assignments to process and integrate the new material. Furthermore, I have instituted a “magnet word” system wherein the students put key terms and their definitions on index cards. These not only help the students know what to focus on but also can be used in a variety of review games. Other review games such as “Battleship”.
“Millionaire”, and “Bingo”-style games have made learning a lot more fun for the students and rewarding for me.

In summary, Jennifer Dove and the Instructional Support program have been a godsend for both teachers and students. The students are better able to learn thanks to a consistent organizational structure and fun learning activities. The other teachers and myself enjoy teaching more because the students are learning more and having fun while doing it. This program is one of the best tools for ensuring the academic development of our children.

**Teacher Statement 2**

When I started teaching at Spencer-Van Etten I taught a 10th Grade Humanities class with another experienced teacher. I was very inexperienced and had a difficult time teaching with a well-informed, knowledgeable teacher. I found it very difficult to get help from my team teacher and was not given “team time” to discuss issues with the kids. In addition to no team time, I had no time to even learn or discuss any new strategies or lesson ideas with anyone. I felt very alone and secluded. I was moved to the 8th Grade team during my second year of teaching. This is also the same year that Jennifer Dove became our full-time IST. Since I was teaching a new grade level with younger students, I needed quite a bit of guidance as far as classroom management, teaching strategies, and delivering instruction. With her help in these areas I found myself more confident in teaching specific skills and delivering the information that the students needed.

When I started teaching in the 10th grade, I thought I had an idea of what I wanted my class to look like before school started. Soon this idea changed because it is difficult to walk in to someone else’s classroom that has been teaching for years, and all of a
sudden implement my own ideas. Ultimately I implemented his classroom management style, which now I believe was very inconsistent and unfortunately ineffective. Although this management style is effective for him, it was not conducive to my success in teaching. Inevitably, when I moved to the 8th grade, I had to implement my own classroom management. With the help of Jennifer and the 8th grade team we came up with consistent classroom management strategies. For example, a typical beginning to any particular class looks as follows: 1.) Students write down their assignment. This assignment is written on the assignment board and the students must copy down the assignment in their assignment book. 2.) Students then get out their homework and the teacher goes around and checks their work. While the teacher is checking homework, students are working on a student-centered activity.

It is important for all students to be organized in a way that will aid in their success. All of their work for Social Studies goes in their blue folder. Each folder is separated in two halves. On the left side the work that needs to be completed is tucked away in the folder. On the right side, all of their completed work goes. Consequently, consistency in all the classrooms has been one of the key ingredients at helping our 8th graders be successful and keeping them organized.

In 10th grade the teaching strategies that I used with the students were not nearly as structured as they are with the middle school students. Most of the time, my classroom literally runs like clockwork. Every activity is timed with a timer. This way I do not lose valuable class time and the students stay on task because they know they only have a certain amount of time to accomplish the task. Because of my time management, students
now hardly ever need a timer to stay on task. They have used my guidelines and modeling and have added it into their own time management.

Another teaching strategy that I used when I taught 10th grade was cooperative learning. Although cooperative learning was used in my 10th grade year, I did not use it effectively. I had an understanding of the process, but no understanding of how to implement the programs. When I moved to 8th grade, Jennifer worked with me to help better use the cooperative learning strategies and implement the programs into my curriculum to make my teaching more effective. During my 8th grade year, I also learned how to use cooperative learning in my classroom to make students accountable for all of the tasks presented to them. I feel accountability is so important in the classroom in order for the student to be effectively engaged in class activities.

Varied instruction is important because within one class there are many different learning styles. Thus, ever since I began teaching, I have made an effort to change my teaching style to meet all of the student's needs. Jennifer has helped me to enhance certain methods of instruction that I had previously used when I taught 10th grade. On an average week, I spend a total of 45 minutes lecturing new material. Otherwise they are working independently or with a cooperative group to gather important information. I spend an average of 90 - 95% of my classroom time on cooperative learning activities, guided note taking, and accountability tasks. During my 10th grade year, I lectured most of the time. I believe that integrating these strategies into my curriculum has benefited both my students and me as a teacher.

As an 8th grade teacher, I must realize that my students will progress to the High School next year. It is my goal to provide them with the strategies and skills they need to
be successful. I am confident that a major task my students have achieved from the team is our consistency in practicing organizational skills. With the help of Jennifer and the IST Program we achieved our highest expectations for this academic year.

**Teacher Statement 3**

I have been a teacher in the Spencer – Van Etten School District for two years. The development and knowledge that I have gained through our instructional support program, has helped make this one of the best places to work. This program has provided an opportunity for me to grow as an instructor in ways most teachers, let alone districts, haven’t ever had the chance to do. The guidance, assurance, and instruction I have received from Jennifer, our ISC, has been far more useful than anything I had learned in college. The instructional support program added to the knowledge I gained in college, and has allowed me to teach students in more effective, creative and unique ways. In college, the focus was on “book” knowledge, learning primarily what to teach, when to teach it and what steps to take to teach the material. The instructional support program has taught me more about the process of learning and the different techniques one can use to teach the material. Much of what I do in my own classroom has come from the guidance and instruction of what I learned from Jennifer, our ISC.

When I began teaching two years ago, the anxiety I had was far more than I had expected. I had all of this knowledge I had learned from college and my student teaching experience, but really had no idea what to do with it. The principal of our school had told me about the instructional support program the school had implemented, and said she would be working with me to help get me started. At first, I felt as if someone was being asked to teach me how to teach. This was my misconception of what an ISC really was.
My idea of Instructional Support was far different from what it actually is. Jennifer was not coming in to my classroom to tell me how to teach, rather she was providing me with useful tools and strategies to use in teaching and in helping students be successful in my class. There was an instant bond that had formed with Jennifer that I am truly grateful for still today.

Some of the strategies Jennifer has taught me, and is still teaching me today, have provided my instruction with a vigor and excitement that I truly never experienced when I was in school. Much of what I do in my classroom centers directly around what I have learned from the Instructional Support, or is attributed to what I have learned from Jennifer. The strategies I have learned from the ISC makes me excited every day to teach, and it makes me equally excited to see the enjoyment in my students because of the way they are learning.

Not only have I learned many new strategies and techniques to teach material, I have also learned countless ways to be better organized in my classroom and to help my students be more organized as well. Organization is a key issue for middle school students. Each morning I write an agenda on the front board of my classroom. This allows me as a teacher guidance for my instruction, and provides my students with an overall picture of what I expect to cover that day. It helps to focus the students and time isn’t wasted on what they should have out on their desk or what they should be doing. Another form of organization learned from the ISC is the way students organize their work. Students have one 3-ring binder with separate folders for each subject area, instead of having a separate notebook for each class. Each class is represented by a different color folder. Each folder is divided into two sections. The left side is labeled...
“to do” and the right side is labeled “done”. This organizational technique has proved to be successful as every student knows exactly where to find their “need to do” homework, and their completed homework. Once again, this is a time saving tool because students are not fumbling through their folders trying to find their homework to turn in.

Holding students accountable is another aspect that I have learned from the ISC. It is pointless to assign students “group work” because it is difficult to determine who is doing the work and who is not. Cooperative learning is different from group work, and it assures the instructor that learning is taking place. In a cooperative learning environment, students learn from both the instructor and their peers. This significantly cuts lecture time in class. Students retain very little information if I stand in the front of the room and lecture. One way that I make every student accountable for the information is by using popsicle sticks. I have a cup of popsicle sticks for each class period. After the students have finished their cooperative learning exercise, I randomly pick a stick from the cup. Students have no idea what name will be picked, which holds every student in every class accountable for the learned material. Students are actively engaged in the learning in my classroom 95% of the time. When I did my student teaching, I was taught to lecture. Using what the ISC has taught me reduces, or in some units, eliminates my lecture time. This provides for a much more enticing and exciting classroom environment that fosters learning in a more creative and willing manner.

Essentially, IS has taught me to teach kids in a more effective way. Using the numerous strategies that I have learned from Instructional Support teaches students without them realizing that they are learning. The skills they learn from me that I have learned from Jennifer are priceless. I have just completed a mini unit on test taking tips...
and strategies that students not only use in my class, but in all of their other classes. This is a skill they will be able to use for the rest of their lives. Students are becoming better writers because of the writing process and essay model I have taught them, which I had learned from Jennifer. There are a countless number of other skills, strategies and techniques that I have learned in my job from Jennifer that I pass on to my students. It is really all about the students. What is it that can make learning more effective and more enjoyable for our students? With the guidance, support, knowledge and use of our ISC, I feel as if I have become a better teacher, and my students have become more successful. I continue to learn from Jennifer, and I believe that with the support of the Instructional Support Program, we CAN move mountains!
REFERENCE LIST


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VITA

Name

Jennifer Wilcox Dove
PhD in Leadership

Undergraduate and Graduate Schools Attended

Andrews University
State University at Binghamton
State University at Geneseo

Previous Degrees Completed

1996 Master's in English Education
New York State University at Binghampton

1993 Bachelor of Arts in English
New York State University at Geneseo

Professional Experiences

2000-present: Educational Consultant
2000: Administrator of Summer Reading Program
1999-present: Instructional Support Consultant, Grades 7-8
1996-present: Workshop Presenter
1993-1998: Classroom Teacher: 8th, 9th, 10th, and 12th grade English
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UMI
An Exploration of the Ability to Predict Student Achievement From Leadership Behaviors, Teacher Job Satisfaction, and Socioeconomic Status

by

Juanita Lynett Nicholson

A Dissertation Submitted to The Faculty of The Graduate School of Education and Human Development of The George Washington University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctorate of Education

May 17, 2003

Committee Chairperson: Dr. Linda Lemasters*

Committee: Dr. E. B. Howerton*, Dr. Sharon Dannels*

Dr. Hazel Jessee, Dr. Henry Willett
An Exploration of the Ability to Predict Student Achievement From Leadership Behaviors, Teacher Job Satisfaction, and Socioeconomic Status

by

Juanita Lynett Nicholson

Dissertation Chairperson: Dr. Linda Lemasters

Abstract

This study investigated the relationships between principal leadership style, teacher job satisfaction, school socioeconomic status (SES), and student achievement for 31 high schools. Each school's spring 2001 Standards of Learning (SOL) scores were used in the areas of English, math, social studies, and science as a measure of student achievement. The principal's leadership style was measured using the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ-5X) developed by Avolio and Bass (1995). Teacher job satisfaction was measured using the Minnesota Job Satisfaction Questionnaire—Short Form (MSQ) developed by Weiss, Dawis, England, and Lofquist (1967). The multiple regression analyses revealed significant relationships between the SES variable and student achievement. According to the results, no significant relationships existed between the transformational leadership style of the principal or teacher job satisfaction and the percentage of students passing the SOL tests. Incidental findings indicated a
direct negative correlation between the principal’s transactional leadership style and student achievement. The implications of these findings are discussed in this dissertation.
Dedication

In loving memory

of my father.

Robert Lewis Nicholson, Sr.

Thanks for always believing in me.
Acknowledgments

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Chapter 1

Introduction

"Where there is a will there is a way" is an old true saying. He who resolves upon doing a thing, by that very resolution often scales the barriers to it, and secures its achievement.

Samuel Smiles

American schools are undergoing a forced evolution in response to the demands of a changing global society. As a crucial element of democracy, the American public education system is being closely examined for evidence of high student achievement, which many people believe is the key to improving society as a whole while maintaining a position as a world power. No report or research regarding student achievement has had a stronger impact on education than the 1983 publication of *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform* written by the National Commission on Excellence in Education. The report was a nationwide call to educators, parents, and politicians to change the atmosphere of mediocrity in American schools and to initiate reform to raise educational standards to ensure the future of young people and the economic strength of the nation. The report outlined specific recommendations, standards, and means of accountability and defined the role of each element in a child's education. In response to this concern for reform, a growing number of states have passed legislation to hold local school divisions accountable for student achievement. Moreover, many states are
charging classroom teachers with the primary responsibility of improving student achievement levels as measured on state and national standardized tests.

This national trend of accountability has encouraged many researchers to attempt to describe in definitive terms the multiple factors that contribute to the success of effective schools, and especially those factors that result in higher achievement outcomes as a measure of that effectiveness. Although numerous studies have identified the characteristics that are basic to effectiveness, researchers have differed with regard to identifying and categorizing those features essential to successful learning environments (Purkey & Smith, 1983). Researchers generally have agreed, however, that relating organizational factors of effectiveness to educational organizations first requires identifying indicators of school effectiveness and means to measure them (Bass & Avolio, 1994).

Researchers and administrators have identified effective schools as those learning institutions in which students, regardless of their socioeconomic status (SES) or other demographic factors, do well on standardized tests (Owens, 1995). Most educators agree that the top administrator lays the foundation of a successful learning environment within a building. However, the exact way in which administrators create this success remains to be determined.

In his study on effective schools, Weber (1971) proposed that mitigating factors within schools contribute to student achievement. Weber identified and examined four successful inner-city schools, and his subsequent examination revealed specific characteristics that differentiated these schools from other schools comparable in size and
the socioeconomic standing of students. The characteristic found to be of greatest significance was strong administrative leadership (Weber).

Researchers conducting recent studies on effective schools not only have confirmed long-held beliefs concerning the correlation between strong administrative leadership and overall school success, but also have produced some interesting new tangents. Researchers have determined that the style of the leadership applied at the building level impacts the intended outcomes of achievement. In countless studies on effective schools, the perception of the principal as instructional leader has emerged. The principal must create an environment in which staff engage in active leadership and good instructional decision-making (Ubben & Hughes, 1987).

A school’s effectiveness in the promotion of student learning has been found to be the product of a building-wide, unified effort that depends upon the exercise of leadership (Robinson, 1985). Specifically, the leadership style of a school’s principal has been linked to a school’s success in improving levels of student achievement. When any organization is facing growth, competition, change, or the struggle for existence, its leadership is expected to provide guidance and to deliver positive results (Bass & Avolio, 1990). Given the pressure to elicit positive change, school system administrators have been forced to focus on reforms that will create effective schools. School leadership is obviously a critical element in instituting such a change, according to research from the last two decades (Leithwood, 1992; Parker, 1993; Purkey & Smith, 1983). Furthermore, this critically needed leadership must encompass a set of leadership behaviors that will result in fostering the desired attitudes and behaviors of other members of the school.
organization (Tirrill & Jones, 1985). Otherwise, a unified effort toward achieving optimal learning outcomes cannot be accomplished.

Teachers are critical to this process as they have direct impact upon individual students, thus collectively affecting school performance overall. Consequently, teachers' personal and professional well-being are factors in maintaining or achieving school effectiveness. Dissatisfied educators convey their dissatisfaction to their students through poor interaction with students, poor lesson planning, lack of enthusiasm for curriculum, and poor professional morale. As Goodlad (1984) pointed out in *A Place Called School*, "Merely holding teachers accountable for improved student learning without addressing environmental circumstances is not likely to improve the quality of their professional lives and the school in which they teach" (p. 196).

The circumstances referred to by Goodlad that need addressing include inadequacy of teacher preparation, teacher feelings of isolation, a professional lack of autonomy, governance of schools through legislation and the courts, low personal economic return, and low prestige and status of teachers in the community (Goodlad, 1984). These problems have been recognized since the mid-1980s, when parents' groups' demands and teachers' unions' demands for improved working conditions and more respect for teachers increased dramatically (Sizer, 1984).

Central to this renewed concern for improving the position of teachers was the belief that "good schools depend in part on reasonably stable and professionally satisfied teaching staff" (Goodlad, 1984, p. 172). Such a belief brought a second phase of school reform, beginning in the late 1980s, that attempted to address the job satisfaction of
teachers and the related concerns of status and professional preparation. The correlation between teacher job satisfaction and the leadership style of the school principal needs to be investigated further, however.

In addition to the importance of teacher job satisfaction, researchers have found indications of a link between the SES of the student population and school effectiveness. The socioeconomic condition of students is a strong predictor of achievement scores and several studies have explicitly linked SES to student achievement (Aitken & Zuzovsky, 1994; Coleman et al., 1977; Herron, 1995; Spady, 1977). Students from higher SES backgrounds perform at higher levels than students from lower SES backgrounds as measured by standardized tests (Fuller & Clark, 1994; Herron; Levine & Ornstein, 1993). Such a disparity in test performance could be attributed to several conditions of the learning environment that are not associated directly with SES, or conversely, to conditions not related to the learning environment but linked to SES alone. Rosenholtz (1989) noted that teachers at low SES schools have the greatest difficulty teaching basic skills and complain of spending more time on custodial functions such as disciplining students for inappropriate behavior than on educational functions. Socioeconomic conditions are exogenous (i.e., outside of school systems), and consequently combating them requires community-wide strategies (Fowler & Walberg, 1991). Despite this, a strong public perception remains, reinforced by public officials, that the problem of raising achievement scores can be resolved at the school-district level regardless of the economic heterogeneity of the district.
This study and its implications for school reform are grounded in a conceptual framework of previous research and theories regarding leadership. The sections that follow present the conceptual framework, the problem statement, the purpose, the research questions, the need for the study, the delimitations, the limitations, the assumptions, and the definitions of terms for this study.

**Conceptual Framework**

This study explored the leadership behaviors of the principal with emphasis on the degree to which the principal’s leadership could be described as transformational and how it impacted student achievement. Transformational leadership is a style of leadership that has proven to be highly effective in school administration in this age of continual and extreme change. Many theorists have hailed transformational leadership as the one model of leadership that can meet the uncertainties of the future (Bass, 1985; Bass & Avolio, 1994; Fullan, 1991; Leithwood & Jantzi, 1990; Schlechty, 1990; Sergiovanni, 1990).

In addition to leadership behaviors, teacher job satisfaction and SES were examined to discover their impact on student achievement as measured by standardized tests. The leadership style of the principal was examined in the context of transformational leadership behaviors and the school conditions and climate created by such behaviors. Teacher job satisfaction was explored in relation to a general concept of job satisfaction and the inherent intrinsic and extrinsic variables of teacher job satisfaction. Additional factors such as the role of teacher efficacy in student learning outcomes, teacher leadership opportunities and job satisfaction, and job satisfaction in
cross-cultural teaching settings were examined to determine their impact on teacher job satisfaction. Finally, factors and variables of SES—including students’ family background, teachers’ academic and behavioral expectations, and instructional methods—were examined in relation to student achievement (see Figure 1).

This study included a series of analyses of current available data in concert with an analysis of assessment instrument results to gauge the effects of the leadership style of principals, teacher job satisfaction, and the SES of the school on student achievement scores. Specifically, this study examined the correlations between and among the three variables. Teachers were surveyed on the leadership style of their principal and their level of job satisfaction. The SES of the school was determined based on the percentage of students enrolled in the free or reduced-price lunch program. Achievement was determined by each school’s scores on standardized tests for the year 2001.

All of the research and data were analyzed to reach a hypothesis for predicting student achievement based upon the correlation of the three variables to student achievement outcomes. In the following subsections each variable will be described for a thorough understanding of the concept and the rationale for its testing in this study.
Leadership Behaviors

Political scientist and social historian James McGregor Burns has strongly influenced leadership theory and research over the past three decades. Burns (1978) first identified and defined the concept of transformational leadership as a leadership process that results in "a relationship of mutual stimulation and elevation that converts followers
into leaders and may convert leaders into moral agents” (p. 4). Further, Burns suggested that, during this process, “leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of morality and motivation” (p. 20).

Burns’ work created a new line of research that has drawn an accurate portrait of the leaders who generate deep commitment among their followers. Transformational leadership is a term that describes those outstanding leaders who “transform people, organizations, and even whole societies” (Sashkin, 1996, p. 1). To survive in a constantly changing world, organizations must continually transform themselves. Leaders who adequately enable such transformations are a necessary component of an organization’s success (Bass & Avolio, 1994).

In contrast to transformational leadership, researchers also have defined transactional leadership. Transactional leaders (a) see what their followers want and try to get it for them if their performance merits it, (b) exchange promises of rewards for certain levels of effort, and (c) respond to the wants and needs of their subordinates so long as their efforts merit that attention (Bass, 1985). Although Burns (1978) initially defined transactional and transformational leadership theory in less than mutually exclusive terms, ultimately he insisted that a leader could be either transactional or transformational, but not both. Burns asserted that these behavioral styles are at opposite ends of a single spectrum. Bass and Avolio extended the construct considerably, and their extensive research showed clearly that a leader can engage in both transactional and transformational activities that fall somewhere along a continuum (Bass & Avolio, 1988, 1990). In other words, one can be identified definitively as a leader of either variety but
to varying degrees (Jantzi & Leithwood, 1995). Bass (1985) suggested that transformational leadership is really an extension of transactional leadership. In addition to transactional leadership skills, skills unique to transformational leaders are necessary to motivate others to achieve beyond their own expectations. By engaging in these transformational leadership behaviors, leaders transform followers who then are able to perform at levels far beyond what might have normally been expected (Bass).

According to Bass (1985), transformational leadership is a powerful force in effecting change in an organization. Transformational leaders seek to increase the satisfaction of followers while developing their potential and transforming and addressing their needs. A transactional leader (Bass), on the other hand, is very much a manager and may not be considered a true leader by some researchers and educators (Bennis, 1984; Covey, 1989; Silins, 1993). As Bennis stated, “managers do things right, leaders do right things” (p. 5).

Transactional leaders, in contrast to transformational leaders, tend to micromanage, are detail oriented, emphasize communicating through the chain of command, are methodical, combat resistance with logic, focus on accuracy and efficiency, and rely on experts. For example, a wholly transactional principal might deal with what needs to be done, rely on rules and procedures, micromanage and pay attention to detail, pass on directives, and push the faculty to follow directions. Conversely, a transformational principal might envision what is possible, lead by example, empower the faculty to do what they think is best, build teams, encourage experimentation, and communicate expectations that followers want to meet.
Transformational leadership carries a dimension that distinguishes it from other leadership styles. The research of Bennis and Nanus (1985) greatly influenced and enhanced Sashkin’s work on identifying transformational leadership behaviors. Sashkin (1990) identified three personal characteristics associated with transformational leadership: self-confidence, the need for power, and vision.

“Leaders are the most result-oriented individuals in the world, and results get attention. Their visions or intentions are compelling and pull people toward them” (Bennis & Nanus, 1985, p.28). In other words, Bennis and Nanus described the leader as someone who does not coerce people to attend to the issues of the organization but draws others in to “grab” them (p. 28).

Conger (1989) described transformational leaders as “charismatic” individuals who emphasize the importance of a vision that creates a sense of tremendous challenge for the members of the organization. This vision must reflect the deepest values and aspirations of the followers. Thus, leaders must be closely attuned to the organization, recognizing its special characteristics. Roberts (1985) described transformational leadership as that which offers a vision of what could be and gives a sense of purpose and meaning to those who share that vision. Such an approach builds commitment, enthusiasm, and excitement. It creates hope for the future and a belief that the world is knowable, understandable, and manageable. In essence, a transformational leader is one who facilitates the redefinition of a people’s mission and vision, a renewal of their commitment, and the restructuring of their systems for goal accomplishment (Roberts).
However it may be accomplished, the communication of goals and the means to achieve them creates meaning for the people in a leader's charge. “Leaders are only as powerful as the ideas they can communicate” (Bennis & Nanus, 1985, p. 107). Moreover, great leaders are able to find the right metaphor to articulate their vision clearly and without distortion.

Visionary leaders encourage followers to work together to develop creative and effective change for the future of the organization (Sashkin, 1996). A principal, as the school leader, must provide the inspiration and guidance for those in the school and be creative enough to construct a picture of the future; this picture must provide the rationale for school-changing projects and help to create a school environment of continual change (Crow, Matthews, & McCleary, 1996). This type of environment provides teachers and administrators with the vision and leadership for schools to reach their potential. Such an environment is one in which the participants are less fearful of change and embrace the increasing demands on teachers and administrators as positive opportunities for improvement.

It is evident that Bass' model of transformational leadership has been a powerful force in effecting change in an organization, especially one in flux (Bass & Avolio, 1990). Thus, transformational leadership is an ideal fit for the educational environment during the present rampant movement toward school reform.

In addition to expanding on the theoretical work of Burns, Bass also developed a survey instrument with his original 1985 work. He called this instrument the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire Form 5X (MLQ–5X). The instrument measures
transformational, transactional, and nonleadership behaviors as well as subordinates’ willingness to give extra effort, their satisfaction level, and the perceived effectiveness of the leaders they are rating. Bass and Avolio (1990) tested this instrument extensively in business, military, and educational arenas. Several researchers also found the instrument to be effective in the educational field (King, 1989; Philbin, 1997) and used it to assess the leadership behavior of selected research subjects. The MLQ-5X survey instrument was used in this study to measure the leadership behavior of principals.

**Teacher Job Satisfaction**

The MLQ-5X is a good instrument to study leadership behavior because it also determines job satisfaction of subordinates such as teachers. Principals’ leadership styles can have a huge impact on teachers’ job satisfaction, and teacher job satisfaction is closely related to student achievement, according to the literature. Further, researchers and theorists have linked teacher job satisfaction to teacher motivation, school culture, student academic achievement, student test scores, teacher retention, teacher stress, teacher burnout, intrinsic and extrinsic rewards, salaries, and teacher absenteeism. Deal and Peterson (1990) suggested that school leadership is closely connected with teacher satisfaction, motivation, and performance, and thus impacts the learning environment and student achievement.

The job satisfaction of teachers was a topic of several studies in the last two decades (Kim & Loadman, 1994; Lortie, 1986; Miller, 1981). These theorists asserted that job satisfaction is an important element in school reform (Educational Research
As a consequence of this realization, many researchers have sought an understanding of the factors that contribute to teacher job satisfaction. According to sociologists, current school environments are reward-scarce settings for professional work and often seem to work against teachers' best efforts to grow professionally and to improve students' learning (Peterson, 1995). The goal of current school reform efforts is to improve student achievement. This goal is well aligned with the primary motivator of teachers: their students' growth and their desire to help children learn (Educational Research Service). In short, to broach one issue, teacher satisfaction or student achievement, is inevitably to broach the other issue.

Miller (1981) noted that high teacher morale can have a positive effect on pupil attitudes and learning. Raising the teacher morale level not only makes teaching more pleasant for teachers, but also makes learning more pleasant for the students (Miller). This creates an environment conducive to learning. Ellenberg (1972) found that where teacher morale was high, schools showed an increase in student achievement. In short, the morale of teachers can have far-reaching implications for student learning, the health of the organization, and the health of the teachers (Miller).

Many authors have maintained that the school environment must support a strong organizational culture that includes faculty and administration who will embrace learning and teaching; Purkey and Smith (1983) specifically asserted that the key to increasing student achievement is the support of school staff. According to the preponderance of research, teacher performance has an impact on the learning environment and is closely connected to student test scores and academic achievement (Deal & Peterson, 1990). Shin
and Reyes (1991) stated that principals must work in collaboration with teachers to create job satisfaction before teachers can develop a sense of commitment. Moreover, a student’s opportunity for success and acquisition of academic skills is greatly influenced by the culture of the school (Coyle & Witcher, 1992); as previously discussed, the overall leadership style of the principal has a major influence on the shape of school culture.

_Socioeconomic Effects_

The issues that affect the culture of the school also include, as many researchers have pointed out, the impact of student SES on achievement scores. SES can be defined by many variables, but the primary demographic measures are poverty and the relationship of race to economic standing (White, 1982). Fowler and Walberg’s 1991 analysis of 293 public schools in New Jersey revealed a strong relationship between student achievement scores and the SES of the neighborhoods where students live. Alspaugh (1991) found that half of the variance in achievement levels of students in the 39 schools he studied could be correlated with these socioeconomic measures.

Student achievement scores are not independent of race. According to an abundance of research, minority students tend to have lower scores on mathematics tests than White students (Reyes & Stanic, 1988). Milner (1983) suggested, somewhat controversially, that race and socioeconomic class combine to create the ultimate driver for the underachievement of students. Consistent evidence from prior studies has pointed to socioeconomic factors as key drivers of student achievement scores (Bankston & Caldas, 1997; Howley, 1995; Sammons, West, & Hind, 1997), and many studies have
suggested that there is a strong correlation of race to poverty. The interpretation of test
scores in relation to SES is an extremely complex endeavor. The relationship between
race and standardized test scores is inconclusive at best and misleading at worst. This
study, therefore, will target the broader category of SES rather than isolating race.

**Problem Statement**

This study sought to determine any empirical effects on student achievement as
measured by standardized tests by (a) the degree to which the principal’s leadership can
be described as transformational, (b) teacher job satisfaction, and (c) school population
SES.

There has been increased public demand for public school accountability, and
many states have responded with various efforts to measure school effectiveness and to
force improvement. States such as Florida, Texas, and Virginia initiated and mandated
standardized testing. The standardized test scores enable each state’s department of
education, as well as administrators in local school systems, to hold teachers accountable
for teaching the required course content.

It is important to remember that independent variables such as principal
leadership, teacher job satisfaction, and SES have the potential to affect the dependent
variable, the standardized test scores. Thus, the procedural problem of this study was to
examine the relationships between the degree to which the principal’s leadership could be
described as transformational (as measured by Avolio and Bass’ MLQ–5X), teacher job
satisfaction (as measured by the Minnesota Job Satisfaction–Short Form), SES (as
reported by the state department of education (free/reduced-price lunch program), and student achievement (as measured by the standardized tests).

Purpose

A wave of effective school research initiatives has swept across America for more than a decade. Three key aspects of these initiatives for improving student achievement have been the degree to which the principal's leadership can be described as transformational, teacher job satisfaction, and the SES of the school population. The primary purpose of this study was to investigate the potential links these three variables may have to student achievement as measured by standardized tests in a sample of schools. The effects of transformational leadership have been described widely, but there is scant documentation describing its impact upon the learning environment. This study examined public high schools in an effort to find an empirical link between these three variables relative to schools' effectiveness as measured by standardized tests. To accomplish this purpose, the following research questions guided this inquiry.

Research Question

Can transformational leadership, teacher job satisfaction, and SES predict student achievement? This study sought to answer the research question using multiple regressions and an evaluation of the full model. Further, this study sought to determine which of the targeted variables had the strongest relationship to student achievement. The
process involved assessing whether any of the variables predicted student achievement in isolation or in combination with the other two variables.

Need for the Study

In light of current efforts to improve student achievement through the effective schools movement, there has been public demand for accountability. A need for change is apparent. How to make this change happen is key to improvement in schools. Researchers and school administrators have recognized other factors as contributing to poor test scores: school size, pupil-teacher ratio, teacher experience, teacher salary, percentage attendance, and high school dropout rate. Although none of these factors should be overlooked in the attempt to improve schools, some factors are exogenous and therefore difficult to improve, and some endogenous factors seem to have a greater impact on overall school success than others. In fact, some endogenous factors seem to contribute to school improvement in spite of exogenous issues. For example, researchers have found that successful principals work to maintain an environment that supports teacher efforts in the classroom and minimizes outside factors that would disrupt the learning process. Clearly, effective leadership can impact other issues and can overcome some exogenous factors to a degree.

States have responded to the “crisis in education” with various efforts to measure school effectiveness and to force school improvement; therefore, it is important to evaluate the impact that transformational leadership of the principal, teacher job satisfaction, and SES may have on student achievement. Empirical evidence resulting
from this inquiry of the positive relationship between the variables and student achievement could be a significant indicator of the areas of greatest potential for improvement. School administrators and policy makers could use the findings of this study to shape further school reform. According to the research literature, effective leadership can positively impact teacher satisfaction, and to some degree ameliorate the effects of SES; therefore, this portion of the study could be of particular interest.

Educational leaders of today, namely school principals and teachers, face different challenges than educational leaders of the past. Today's school principals and teachers are faced with reform issues such as high-stakes testing, accountability, school choice, and school violence. Thus, it is imperative that educational leaders have the ability to determine the factors that can make their learning organizations effective and to adjust and to adapt their leadership styles to facilitate effectiveness. Furthermore, to move a school forward, the principal must possess an understanding of the relationship between leadership, teacher satisfaction, and student achievement.

The process of leadership and characteristics of leaders have been research topics for centuries. Leaders in the 21st century face new and different challenges from those of leaders in the past, when many were able to lead organizations using top-down autocratic practices. As research on effective organizations and leadership styles has increased, it is clear that successful organizations today are led by individuals who are able to manage their subordinates cooperatively and to lead their organizations effectively (Kotter, 1990).

Despite improvements in standardized test scores since 1998, there is still a great deal of national concern regarding student achievement. With a significantly low
percentage of students initially passing the standardized tests, the public questions, as do some superintendents, the leadership of our schools. Indeed, some school systems are holding school principals, as well as teachers, accountable for their students’ tests scores. As tensions continue to rise about standardized tests and the new accountability system, it is imperative to understand the relationships between the constructs of leadership style, teacher job satisfaction, SES of schools, and the testing assessments, as well as any factors that impinge upon school effectiveness.

The findings of this research reinforce the basic philosophical foundations of effective schools by providing information necessary to facilitate improvement in the nation’s public schools. Moreover, the findings should serve as an impetus of program reform for college and university departments of educational administration. Prospective principals must be equipped with transformational strategies to enable new administrators to deal effectively with current issues, strategies that will help transfigure schools into effective learning environments.

Additionally, teachers’ professional development opportunities and in-service programs should be designed to motivate teachers and to build their professional satisfaction. Billingsley and Cross (1992) found that work-related variables such as administrative support, teacher salary, role conflict, role ambiguity, and stress predict commitment and job satisfaction better than demographic variables; therefore, teachers need to be empowered to create an environment in which they can experience job satisfaction. Even these few implications demonstrate the need for this study and provide
a sense of the far-reaching ramifications of research that links key elements of effective schools to one another and to gains in student achievement.

Although measuring achievement using only one test limits the suppositions one can make regarding correlations between achievement scores and other variables, it is nevertheless often the accepted method of determining a school's effectiveness. A school's reputation, accreditation, and provisional accreditation status can be dependent upon students' performance on a single test. Typically, low student performance has been explained—some would say rationalized—by the characteristics of individual students or the family background of students. Consequently, researchers have not studied adequately the influence of other variables such as the effects of a student's principal and teacher on student achievement.

Presently, however, the public, and school system superintendents hold principals and teachers accountable for student scores on standardized tests. In response, teachers and administrators appear to be searching for explanations for low test scores. For the most part, the question of what building-level administrators and staff can actually do to improve student success is, at best, still being examined.

A new method of improving student achievement might be devised by studying the impact on test scores by a different set of variables: leadership type, teacher satisfaction, and SES. The views of all stakeholders in school reform tend to be simplistic, including only a few variables without attempting to correlate the synergistic effects between them and failing to take other salient variables into account. This research, in contrast, has taken the next research step by offering suppositions for other
variables such as school size, per-pupil expenditure, and class size. This may provide the basis for further study and additional strategies to improve school effectiveness.

Delimitations

The following are the delimitations relative to this research:

1. This study focused on the transformational leadership of high school principals and teachers' job satisfaction in the high school. The population of high schools for this study was a convenience sample.

2. Student achievement was measured by the scores of high school students participating in standardized assessments during the 2000–2001 school year.

3. The MLQ–5X (Avolio & Bass, 1995) was used as a basis for describing leadership behaviors.

4. The Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire–Short Form (Weiss et al., 1967) was used as a basis for describing the overall job satisfaction of high school teachers.

Limitations

The following are the limitations relative to this research:

1. This study targeted public high schools. Therefore, results should be cautiously generalized to high schools in other geographic regions with similar demographic characteristics.
2. A careful examination of the testing assessments should be completed to ascertain whether appropriate generalizations can be made for other states based upon the data generated by this study.

3. Participating teachers were selected randomly from participating high schools. Their familiarity with their respective schools means that they should have been able to assess accurately the degree to which their principal’s leadership behavior could be characterized as transformational.

4. Tentative suppositions also were made pertaining to the relationship of this study’s primary variables and certain other secondary variables (e.g., school size, per-pupil expenditure, and class size) as they related to test scores, but the primary focus of the study remained transformational leadership relative to teacher job satisfaction and test scores.

**Assumptions**

This study assumed that:

1. The responses made by the teachers captured their perception of the leadership style of their building principal.

2. Standardized tests are a representative measure of student achievement.

3. Socioeconomic status can be determined accurately by high school free and reduced-price lunch program data.

4. The MLQ-5X can accurately define the leadership style of the building principal via teacher responses.
5. Teacher job satisfaction can be measured accurately using the MSQ–Short Form.

**Definitions of Terms**

The following terms are defined according to their use in this study:

*Laissez-Faire Leadership*: Bass (1985) defined laissez-faire leadership as the avoidance or absence of leadership. This is, by definition, the most inactive as well as the most ineffective style. This type of leadership was not included in the discussion of types of leadership.

*Leadership*: Leadership entails a complex set of behaviors that occur between a leader and a subordinate that result in the subordinate performing tasks to earn specified rewards or sanctions from the leader premised on the quality of the performance. The reward or sanctions may be tangible or intangible (Bass, 1985).

*Socioeconomic Status (SES)*: SES of the student population is defined as the percentage of students at each school receiving free and reduced-price lunches in the school lunch program.

*Student Achievement*: For this study, student achievement was based on the scores of high school students on mandated standardized assessment measures during the 2000–2001 school year. This study used test scores from Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL) tests.
Teacher Job Satisfaction: For this study, teacher job satisfaction is defined in terms of the overall job satisfaction of a high school teacher based on responses to the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire—Short Form (MSQ).

Transactional Leadership: Bass (1985) defined transactional leaders as those who (a) see what their followers want and try to get it for them if their performance merits it, (b) exchange promises of rewards for certain levels of effort, and (c) respond to the wants and needs of their subordinates so long as their efforts merit that attention.

Transformational Leadership: Transformational leadership encompasses the degree to which a school leader develops a widely shared vision for the school, builds consensus about school goals and priorities, holds high performance expectations, models effective behavior, provides individualized support, provides intellectual stimulation, builds a collaborative culture, provides a structure that supports individual and collective decision-making, and provides contingent rewards (Leithwood, Jantzi, & Fernandez, 1993).

Summary

Accountability has become the driving force behind the recent wave of educational reform in America. Educators at all levels are finding themselves responsible and accountable for the learning outcomes of the students in their charge. The result of this move for accountability is a fervent search for the key elements of an effective learning environment that creates high student achievement.
Chapter 1 described the trends in educational reform that have been linked to effective schools. These include transformational leadership style and professionally satisfied teachers. Together these elements impact the learning environment to mitigate school SES and related factors that impede student achievement. This study sought to determine the existence of an empirical relationship between these variables, the extent of that relationship, and the impact of that relationship upon levels of student achievement.

Chapter 2 contains an examination of the scholarly literature describing research in the areas of educational leadership, teacher job satisfaction, student achievement, and school and student SES and the related factors that impact student achievement. Each topic was examined independently and then in relation to the other variables tested in this study.
Chapter 2

Review of Literature

Introduction

In the culmination of an extensive research project on the conditions of educators in the United Kingdom, Evans (2001) prefaced her findings by stating, “If I had been asked a year ago what I considered to be the most potent influence on teacher morale, job satisfaction and motivation, I would have replied ‘leadership’....Now, my response would be a little less categorical” (p. 291). Evans’ statement reflects the ever-changing nature of the teaching profession and the learning environment and the recognition of the synergetic nature of the elements that can have an impact on schools. For example, principal leadership is affected by external factors such as district mandates and funding issues. As an isolated variable, principal leadership style impacts teacher job satisfaction and school climate. As isolated variables, teacher job satisfaction and school climate affect student achievement. Student achievement, as an isolated variable, in turn, impacts a teacher’s sense of effectiveness. Socioeconomic factors impact leadership style, teacher job satisfaction, and student achievement in combination and in a myriad of ways. In short, all of these variables are not only of great importance in education, but their dynamic interaction makes generalizations about improving school performance as measured by standardized tests complex at best and inevitably problematic. The effort, however, is justified because the absence of the first two variables (transformational leadership and teacher job satisfaction) and the presence of the third (low SES) seem to
contribute to lower overall test scores. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to interpret the correlations between these variables relative to a school's effectiveness.

Consequently, this review of the literature is divided into three main sections that correspond to the three main independent variables examined in this study. The first section explores literature on aspects of organizational leadership, including leadership styles and related research linking principals' leadership styles to behavioral outcomes. The second section explores literature related to teacher job satisfaction. The final section evaluates research linking elements of SES to aspects of student achievement. Throughout discussions of research on each variable, relationships to the other variables are presented to demonstrate the synergism that exists between them.

*Leadership Behaviors*

In reviewing the literature on the topic of principals' leadership styles, many researchers have indicated that transformational leadership offers the most successful approach in education (Avolio & Bass, 1988; Bass, 1985; Jantzi & Leithwood, 1994; Senge, 1990). Caskey (2001) examined leadership style through the use of multiple regression and one-way ANOVA to find relationships between leadership and student achievement. The final sample consisted of 73 principals. Caskey used the self–other agreement as her measure of leadership. She surveyed a random sample of principals on their leadership style and then asked them to give the instrument to teachers or associates who had reported to them for at least 6 months. Caskey failed to find that leadership significance contributed to the percent of students passing SOL tests.
This part of the literature review therefore concentrated on different aspects of transformational leadership. Unlike Caskey (2001), advocates have posited that transformational leadership shows great potential for engaging teachers' commitment to restructuring efforts, particularly through the mechanisms of building a shared vision and promoting commitment to collective goals (Leithwood, 1994).

**Transformational Leadership Behaviors**

Despite the emphasis on collective goals and shared vision, contingent rewards have proved to be closely linked with transformational leadership through their association with high performance expectations. However, this aspect of transformational leadership is the most context specific. Although contingent rewards and high performance expectations can serve as a strong motivational force, in schools where teacher commitment is already strong the combined effect may create undue pressures that are ultimately counterproductive.

To explore teachers' perceptions of transformational leadership, Jantzi and Leithwood (1996) surveyed teachers ($N = 423$) from elementary and secondary schools undergoing a process of restructuring leadership. The most powerful impact on the teachers' experience of transformational leadership came from observing principals working on behalf of the school. Principals who demonstrated a commitment to establishing a positive learning environment were awarded high esteem as leaders, irrespective of their age, gender, length of tenure, or the size and type of the school. The teachers were unanimous in the attitude that "put simply, it is what you do, not who you are that matters to teachers" (Jantzi & Leithwood, 1996, p. 528). The strongest influence
on teachers' perceptions of leadership was derived from in-school conditions. In-school conditions that encompassed the school's mission, vision, goals, culture, programs, curricula, policies, organization, decision-making structure, and resources had the strongest influence on teachers' perceptions of leadership. The most respected school leaders were those who were most adept at utilizing these elements to create a learning organization.

Creating an effective learning organization through leadership requires a strategy that addresses the unique position of educators as employees. Although the literature on educational reform is replete with parallels between school reorganization and organizational restructuring in business, Vandenberghe (1999) pointed out that teachers regard themselves as professionals performing work that "is intellectual, cannot be standardized or reduced to routines, and requires preparation through advanced training" (p. 134). As a result, "organizational efficiency in the educational sector implies quite invariably that rulers find the right balance between coordination requirements and professional autonomy" (Vandenberghe, p. 134). To Vandenberghe, the key question was whether schools that have attained this elusive balance are governed by "outstanding, but quite uncommon, principals, or whether they present distinct organizational—structural—features, combined in a very specific and identifiable manner which ensure a certain efficiency, no matter the personality of the staff in charge" (p. 134).

Case studies and interview data invariably have highlighted the qualities of dynamic school leaders while raising the question of whether their efforts would be sustained should they leave. Jantzi and Leithwood (1996) suggested that the actions.
rather than the personality of visionary leaders are more decisive in building an infrastructure for learning that will last beyond their tenure. Such an infrastructure would impact the achievement of future as well as present students.

As expected, the leadership style described by the teachers in the study by Leithwood, Leonard, and Sharratt (1998) was congruent with the tenets of transformational leadership. A qualitative cross-study analysis provided the data for the study of 14 school sites. Teachers described the most effective leaders as those with a clear vision of the future who are able to articulate common goals and promote collaboration in their attainment. Good leaders convey high performance expectations, stimulate intellectual curiosity, and encourage teachers to be creative in exploring new strategies. As advocated by Senge (1990), effective school leaders practice leadership by example and create an atmosphere of open, honest dialogue and collegiality. Some principals redesign the physical environment of the school to promote collaboration through such initiatives as scheduling changes and the creation of leadership positions devised to promote the development of leadership skills. All of this positively impacts student achievement.

**Collaborative aspects of transformational leadership.** Building on the earlier studies of transformational leadership (Jantzi & Leithwood, 1996; Leithwood, 1994), Leithwood, Leonard, and Sharratt (1998) examined results from three independent studies to determine the conditions that facilitate organizational learning in schools. The researchers used the terms “collaborative and harmonious” to describe the qualities of
school-district cultures that promote organizational learning. Although not directly examined, Site-Based Management (SBM) appeared to enhance the collective problem-solving dynamics of school staff. Schools characterized by a collaborative and collegiate atmosphere promoted the commitment of teachers to further their own learning, as well as that of their students. In these exemplary schools, organizational culture encouraged mutual support, respect for diverse ideas, and experimentation with innovative practices.

Consistent with Senge’s (1990) model, the active participation of all constituents in decision-making was a prominent feature of learning organization culture. There was minimal evidence of this type of school environment in a survey of urban principals (Shen, Rodriguez-Campos, & Rincomes-Gomez, 2000), although admittedly the data predated the major thrust of recent school reform efforts.

School councils, like SBM, allow for the collaboration and participation found in effective learning organizations and are a ubiquitous feature of school redesign, although there has been minimal research on the role they play in school improvement. Parker and Leithwood (2000) investigated the influence of school councils on school and classroom conditions as part of an evaluation project concerning the implementation of school advisory councils in a large school district. Their findings supported the proposal that four “imperatives” impact the effectiveness of school councils. The first and overriding imperative is a commitment to promoting student learning, which drives the other three: a commitment to capacity building among staff, a commitment to developing a strong sense of community in the school, and a commitment to be accountable for honoring the other three commitments (or a “leadership imperative”). These four imperatives were
evident in schools where school councils were influential and weaker or absent in schools where the influence of school councils was negligible or negative.

The findings of Parker and Leithwood (2000) related to the role of principal leadership in the effectiveness of schools. Parker and Leithwood (2000) noted that teachers and administrators were often skeptical of the impact of SBM and school councils on student achievement. However, principals who exhibited strong transformational leadership qualities effectively utilized school councils to facilitate the improvement of the school. In fact, the researchers found that these principals were successful in establishing the type of trusting, collaborative working relationships with parents that Leithwood and Jantzi (1999) proposed as a key to transcending the persistent influence of SES and family educational background on student achievement.

*Team learning.* Like SBM and school councils, team learning, with its element of active collaboration, is also an integral part of the transformational learning organization (Senge, 1990). Self-managed work teams are the most ubiquitous feature of redesigned corporations, and, similarly, SBM (with its team leadership) is the most extensive of all school reform efforts.

To examine how team learning promotes collaboration within learning organizations, Leithwood, Steinbach, and Ryan (1997) utilized quantitative and qualitative data gathered from six teams in five secondary schools. Data for the study were collected primarily through group interviews. A total of 48 individual teachers from the six teams completed the survey about team learning conditions. Teachers explored the
dynamics of collective learning within teams and the influence of school culture upon the
teams. The distinguishing factor of these dynamics was the presence of at least one team
member who was not afraid to take on the role of critic or “devil’s advocate,” leading the
team members to reexamine their thinking. The member was not necessarily the nominal
leader, but one who led the team in expert problem solving.

In addition to problem solving, school leadership was an equally important
consideration (Leithwood et al., 1997). Teachers in the study appreciated principals who
were supportive, flexible, innovative, and responsive to staff concerns; favored shared
governance and professional autonomy; and served as exemplary role models.
Conversely, the same teachers had negative perceptions of principals who displayed
authoritarian leadership and were unsupportive of team dynamics. Results of this study
helped refine a model for further investigation of team learning among teachers and
administrative leadership (Leithwood et al., 1997).

Teacher leadership. Clearly a principal’s leadership style impacts the group
dynamics of school staff. The qualities of principal leadership have been widely studied
and conceptualized according to six basic forms: instructional, transformational, moral,
participative, managerial, and contingent. However, researchers have not examined
teacher leadership in relation to principal leadership. Although the formal leadership
positions outlined by Leithwood and Jantzi (1999) for teachers in Canadian schools do
not directly parallel those in U.S. schools, in general, teachers in North American schools
exercise authority in such roles as expert teacher, department head, district representative, mentor, union representative, and professional advocate.

Factors that negate the impact of leadership style on student achievement. Leithwood and Jantzi (1999) examined the relative effects of teacher and principal leadership upon the school engagement of students. They administered two surveys in one large school district in Canada to collect data about leadership, school and classroom conditions, student engagement, and family educational culture. Statistical software was used to aggregate individual responses by school and then to calculate means, standard deviations, and reliability coefficients for all of the scales measuring the variables. A series of regression analyses were conducted to the extent the school conditions were influenced by principal and teacher leadership. Leithwood and Jantzi (1999) concluded that teacher leadership had no significant impact, whereas principal leadership data were statistically significant, although not to a great extent. They proposed that the unexpectedly small impact of principal leadership might be due to what has been termed the "romance of leadership," a concept based on the rationale that "leadership is a convenient, phenomenologically legitimate social construction that nonetheless masks a complex, multisourced bundle of influences on organizational outcomes" (p. 691).

Organizational characteristics were used as "leadership substitutes" in a study that explored teachers' job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Burrows, Munday, Tunnell, & Seay, 1996). Advocates of employing leadership substitutes have claimed that certain features of the organization can negate the impact of leaders on outcomes. As a
situational model, the framework can help to explain why certain leadership behaviors are effective in some situations but not in others. In addition, the model encompasses the array of variables that influence the behavior of employees or subordinates.

Researchers have identified many benefits of the transformational leadership style. Some of the main strategies of the transformational principal include: promotion of collegiality, a visionary outlook, a collaborative approach, strong support for subordinates, flexibility, innovation, and responsiveness to staff concerns.

**Resistance to Transformational Leadership**

Despite the merits of the transformational leadership style, school leaders face many challenges when attempting to implement a transformational approach to school management. One challenge is based on the traditional view of the leadership role. A survey of 158 newly appointed New York City principals demonstrated that, despite high female and minority representation (populations not traditionally viewed as leaders), most respondents expressed concepts of leadership that reflected the traditional roles of the principal as manager and instructional leader (Osterman, Crow, & Rosen, 1997). Many respondents advocated the theories and principles of transformational leadership; however, they believed their success depended more upon their ability to define goals than on empowering stakeholders to be active participants in the change process. Although the new principals acknowledged the need to involve parents, teachers, or SBM teams, they were reluctant to relinquish the formal authority of the traditional principal role.
Transactional style. To a degree, Osterman and colleagues (1997) suggested that the tendency of principals to use a transactional style of leadership, even among those who espoused transformational principles, might derive from a realistic appraisal of the situation encountered in the field. Many principals in the study had been assigned to schools where new leadership was hired to deal with the pervasive problems of student achievement, staff competence, low morale, and limited resources. The researchers proposed that, "confronted by these problems, it is possible that even administrators who envision themselves as transformational leaders might adopt more traditional bureaucratic strategies, particularly when the primary expectations from their key constituents focus on more traditional aspects of the role" (p. 389). To attempt to institute transformational leadership in such a situation would entail extensive support. Moreover, Osterman et al. noted that the principals in their study were focused on the school organization, while apparently ignoring the political dynamics of the New York City school system (where political sophistication can be critical for effecting school change). The study involved a mixed methodology of quantitative and qualitative analysis (N = 158). The survey responses clearly showed that principals recognized the role of the teacher and the school community and the need to develop this relationship to promote student achievement. Adopting the transformational leadership style, the new principals envisioned more traditional bureaucratic strategies, particularly when the primary expectations from their key constituents focused on more traditional aspects of the role.
Urban schools. Ironically, this perception of the traditional role of principal comes at a time when the constituents of this group of professionals are the least traditional and the most diverse in age, ethnicity, and background. Data from a longitudinal national study of urban principals (covering three waves from 1987 to 1994) conducted by the National Center of Education Statistics (NCES) supported this trend. Just as in New York City, urban principals have become more diverse in their age, ethnicity, and background (Shen et al., 2000). Shen et al. found that urban principals had less authority over school issues such as establishing curriculum, hiring new teachers, and deciding school discipline policies. Part of this was undoubtedly due to legislative initiatives in education, although the researchers also proposed that urban principals were taking on new duties that might have priority over traditional roles. There also was minimal indication of teacher empowerment in urban schools. Principals viewed teachers as having slightly more power in school-specific issues, although they perceived that teachers' authority had declined with respect to determining curriculum and discipline policies.

The urban principals who participated in the Shen et al. (2000) study were highly educated and experienced in teaching or other curriculum-related areas. Virtually all had a Master's degree, and more than 10% had doctorates or professional degrees, indicating the school district's preference for administrators with a strong background in instructional leadership. There was also a marked trend toward participation in district-sponsored professional development programs similar to the New York City program described by Osterman et al. (1997).
In summary, a transformational leadership style with elements of shared goals, collaboration, and high performance expectation creates a positive work environment and school culture. Principals who demonstrate transformational behaviors earn the respect of their teachers and staff and create job satisfaction and professional commitment. However, traditional views of leadership continue to obstruct the development of transformational behaviors in principals who fear a loss of authority when encouraging empowerment in others.

Teacher Job Satisfaction

The purpose of this study was to investigate teacher job satisfaction as it relates specifically to student achievement. Despite a very large number of studies on teacher job satisfaction since 1930, this important area of study remains incomplete, primarily due to the increasing diversity of teachers. The teaching workforce is composed of individuals from varied backgrounds and educational experiences whose career decisions continually affect the makeup of the teaching corps and the available supply of teachers. These career decisions are frequently made on the basis of job satisfaction. Therefore, due to the absence of literature directly correlating teacher job satisfaction to student achievement, the research that is cited in this study examined how teacher job satisfaction in relation to other variables directly impacts student achievement. Many of these studies have highlighted the direct impact of teacher self-efficacy and teacher leadership upon teacher job satisfaction and hence indirectly upon student achievement.
Frederick Herzberg created a useful model for analyzing job satisfaction: motivation-hygiene theory. Also termed two-factor theory, this model addresses such pertinent factors as job tasks, responsibility, and growth.

**Herzberg's Model of Job Satisfaction**

The leadership quality of any organization has a direct impact upon the quality of life of the organization's members. Several studies have explored the relationship between leadership style and employee satisfaction, finding that transformational leadership qualities are an element of the organizational characteristics that lead to job satisfaction. Herzberg (1966) proposed a theory of job satisfaction that remains current in its application. Coined motivation-hygiene, or two-factor, theory, in this theory job satisfaction has two distinct sets of dimensions. The first are called hygiene factors and involve the environmental surroundings or extrinsic aspects of a job, such as supervision, salary, interpersonal relations, working conditions, and status. The second are motivational factors or intrinsic aspects of a job that relate to job tasks, job content, recognition for achievement, the work itself, responsibility, and growth.

Herzberg (1966) found that satisfying hygiene factors cannot lead to job satisfaction by itself, but might serve to prevent job dissatisfaction. Conversely, satisfying motivator factors can lead to job satisfaction, but failing to satisfy them will not lead to job dissatisfaction. Further, job satisfaction is related to two distinct possibilities for employees: participation and performance (Sergiovanni, 1991). Participation involves minimal commitments in return for fair monetary rewards. Participation does not tend to
drive a person to go beyond minimal commitments, and is mainly viewed as extrinsic satisfaction (Sergiovanni, 1991). Performance rewards such as recognition, achievement, feelings of competence, empowerment, and meaningful work opportunities are intrinsic as performance tends to be voluntary (Sergiovanni, 1991). Organizational leaders can only require that employees participate, but they cannot require that employees perform at a high level.

Prior to the development of Herzberg's (1966) theory, single scales had been used to measure job satisfaction, with high scores generally representing high levels of job satisfaction. Empirical evaluations of the motivator-hygiene theory have applied different scales for job satisfaction and dissatisfaction: the theory positions job satisfaction and little satisfaction as two opposing variables (laciqua, Schumacher, & Li, 1995).

Knoop (1994) investigated Herzberg's model in a study of 245 teachers, 100 department heads, and 41 principals from five school boards in a large metropolitan area of Canada. Knoop asked these educators from 18 Canadian secondary schools to report the degree to which they were committed to work values and experienced dimensions of teacher job satisfaction. Extrinsic variables (pay and benefits) related to only one dimension of job satisfaction, whereas intrinsic variables (achievement, influence over work, value of work, knowledge and abilities, and autonomy) were related to all five identified dimensions of job satisfaction: (a) the work itself, (b) work outcomes, (c) the job per se, (d) job outcomes, and (e) coworkers. Regression analyses identified the best predictors for each of the five dimensions of teacher job satisfaction. Although Herzberg originally categorized job status as an extrinsic variable, in Knoop's study it emerged as
an intrinsic factor. Job status can be associated with esteem and recognition for work as well as the degree of autonomy afforded employees. The results of Knoop's research supported and extended Herzberg's theory and merit attention.

Evans (2001) compared the responses of primary and secondary school teachers with a sample of higher educators. In comparison to the relative autonomy given the academics in higher education, head teacher (principal) leadership did indeed have a tremendous impact on the experience of the teachers because it could create a learning environment that could be characterized as an "ideal job," satisfying teachers' personal requirements for job satisfaction.

Teacher Self-Efficacy and Job Satisfaction

Clearly, teacher job satisfaction is in part related to principal leadership, as well as to the extrinsic variables of pay and benefits. However, researchers have found that job satisfaction is more a function of the individual teacher and his or her belief that effective change results from his or her participation in the teaching profession, or teacher self-efficacy. Specifically, self-efficacy involves "people's judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute the course of action required to attain designated types of performance" (Bandura, 1986, p. 391). Although the concept of teacher efficacy was not directly derived from social cognitive theory, researchers inevitably linked teacher efficacy with Bandura's model of self-efficacy. In the realm of teaching, efficacy is related to teachers' perceptions that they can influence student achievement and motivation. Individuals with perceived high self-efficacy in a given domain are more
likely to persist in the face of challenges; thus, efficacious teachers are more resilient and more likely to persist despite barriers to student achievement.

*Teacher self-efficacy and student achievement.* Taylor and Tashakkori (1995) addressed teachers’ participative decision-making and school climate as factors underlying teachers’ job satisfaction and perceived efficacy ($N = 9,987$). Data for the study were derived from teachers’ responses to questionnaires used in the National Educational Longitudinal Study conducted by the NCES. Regression analyses were performed to predict teachers’ sense of efficacy and teacher job satisfaction resulting from decision participation and school climate. Teachers’ perceived sense of efficacy was consistent with Bandura’s (1986) concept of efficacy expectation. Teachers felt efficacious to the extent they believed they were capable of influencing student achievement. School climate emerged as a strong predictor of teacher job satisfaction and appeared to influence perceived efficacy. Teachers who viewed their students as academically capable and well behaved and believed that the principal’s leadership supported their professional expertise and autonomy were most satisfied with their work. According to Bandura, participation in decision-making had minimal impact on either job satisfaction or perceived efficacy.

The influence of teacher efficacy on curriculum-based measurement (CBM) and student achievement was studied by Allinder (1995), who focused specifically on special educators. As a type of formative evaluation, the emphasis in CBM is on progress over time rather than performance. The authentic assessments advocated by education
reformers also represent formative evaluation. Allinder noted that teachers vary in their implementation of these measures, although they demand high-quality implementation to achieve the aim of fostering student achievement. In the study's sample of 19 special educators from a large Midwestern school district, teacher efficacy did influence the teachers' use of CBM and students' subsequent math achievement. Each teacher selected two students with whom to implement CBM. Threats to internal validity of statistical regression existed because the student participants were selected on the basis of having an Individualized Education Program and being classified as having a learning disability. Results should be cautiously generalized because of the small sample size and violation to statistical assumption.

Results of Allinder's (1995) study indicated that teachers with high personal and high teaching efficacy made significantly more adjustments in the goals they set for their students, and, overall, set more ambitious goals for mathematical progress than did teachers with low teacher efficacy. The higher goals were linked with greater gains in math achievement. Based on the assumption that more efficacious teachers have more confidence in their ability to influence learning outcomes, Allinder (1995) suggested that these teachers are likely to put more effort into working with students who are struggling academically. Moreover, they engage in behaviors that convey high expectations for student achievement and focus on attaining them. Experiencing success with student achievement leads to greater teacher job satisfaction.
Teacher empowerment. Shann (1998) disagreed; he recommended empowerment practices as a means to enhance teachers’ job satisfaction. Wu and Short (1996) examined this prominent issue in a survey of 624 teachers from 39 elementary, middle, and secondary schools. Pearson product moment correlations and stepwise regression statistical procedures were used. An evaluation of assumptions yielded no violations. The procedures and methodology used in the study were sound; therefore, the results merit attention. The dimensions of empowerment with the strongest impact on job satisfaction and organizational commitment were self-efficacy and professional growth; in fact, the authors suggested that teachers would be unlikely to leave an environment that fostered personal mastery and professional growth. Status was also a strong predictor of both satisfaction and organizational commitment. In addition to making teachers feel recognized and appreciated for their work, Wu and Short proposed that “it may be that teachers in this study who perceived greater empowerment and found a greater sense of status in their work, perceived that the goals and values of the organization more closely aligned with their expectations” (p. 88). Using Evans’ (2001) model, these teachers perceived greater congruence between their ideal and their actual workplace conditions, which translated into stronger organizational commitment. Wu and Short made a clear connection between teacher empowerment and teacher job satisfaction. Increasing teacher job satisfaction is a win-win proposal for the students as well. In addition to possible increases in academic achievement, classroom environment improves.
Professional development. Professional development programs are becoming an integral part of school reform efforts and are often presented as a vehicle for enhancing teacher empowerment and job satisfaction. Fritz and Miller-Heyl (1995) investigated the impact of the “DARE to be You” (DTBY) program on the efficacy perceptions of 130 program participants and 111 control teachers from parallel school districts. DTBY is a developmentally appropriate program designed to promote self-esteem, internal locus of control, and prosocial behavior in students in grades K–8. Central to the program’s design is the key role of the teacher in creating a positive learning environment.

A particularly interesting finding of the study was that despite the control group having a higher proportion of teachers with advanced degrees and membership in professional organizations, the teachers who participated in the DTBY program displayed higher levels of efficacy and personal confidence (Fritz & Miller-Heyl, 1995). The teachers who learned and implemented the DTBY curriculum showed increased feelings of competence in meeting the needs of their students, perceived fewer limitations on student learning, and reported greater satisfaction with their professional teaching roles and their ability to integrate their professional role with other aspects of their lives. The gains in self-efficacy and satisfaction were sustained or increased over the course of the school year, providing strong support for advocates of professional development activities.

Professionalism. Teacher efficacy produces professional confidence that in turn influences professional behavior. Discussions of professionalism in teaching have been
ubiquitous in the literature on school reform. Although the purported goal has been to enhance the status of teaching through greater emphasis on professionalism, definitions have varied as to what constitutes teacher professionalism. In general, the focus of such definitions has been on a set of ethical standards that determine best practices of the teaching profession.

Cheng (1996) explored the concept of professionalism and its influence on teachers' attitudes and student achievement in Hong Kong, where an ethical code for the education profession was adopted in 1990. The survey encompassed 1,476 teachers, 58 principals, and 7,969 (primarily sixth-grade) students. The professional code had the most powerful influence on classroom management, suggesting that subscribing to a professional code influences the way teachers direct the daily activities of their students. Cheng found that commitment to the ethics of the teaching profession enhanced teachers' sense of professional efficacy, thus eliciting greater respect from students for the teachers' expert knowledge and competence. Teachers with a strong sense of professionalism tended to be more satisfied with extrinsic rewards (i.e., salary, benefits, job security), job autonomy and opportunities for decision-making, and perceptions that the workload was fair and the job meaningful. They were also more confident about fulfilling their professional obligations (Cheng).

A higher sense of professionalism was not simply a matter of adopting a code of ethics, however; organizational conditions played a significant role in reinforcing teachers' sense of professionalism (Cheng, 1996). The schools that fostered a professional orientation appeared to be most consistent with the learning organization...
model. Such schools had highly professional faculties characterized by strong leadership support, collegiality, autonomy, and a commitment to the mission of teaching, namely promoting high academic achievement. These characteristics conform to those of transformational leadership in schools.

Burrows et al. (1996) have supported the premise that a sense of professionalism enhances teachers’ job satisfaction. The researchers studied 116 high school teachers, with professional orientation used as a substitute for principal leadership. Higher intrinsic benefits and reduced social distance between teacher and principal increased teachers’ job satisfaction, although higher professional orientation had an inverse relationship to organizational commitment. Thus transformational leadership qualities of the principal, such as encouraging teachers’ leadership roles and providing professional development, led to increased teacher satisfaction. Burrows et al. suggested that teachers who are committed to the profession are less willing to adapt to a school environment that does not support their professionalism.

*Principals’ leadership and teacher satisfaction: The ideal job.* In Evans’ (2001) study comparing the survey responses of primary and secondary school teachers with those of a sample of higher educators, principals’ leadership influence upon teacher satisfaction was “less simple and straightforward” than the author had previously assumed. Rather, it appears that leadership works indirectly to create a learning environment that is either congruent or incongruent with the qualities that educators...
expect from their "ideal job." For both groups of educators in Evans' study five specific issues shaped the conception of the ideal job:

1. Equity and justice,
2. Pedagogy or andragogy,
3. Organizational efficiency,
4. Collegiality, and
5. Self-conception and self-image.

These five themes have appeared prominently in research on teachers' job satisfaction, with the overarching theme being that school leadership plays a powerful role in the degree to which the workplace matches the ideal.

Evans' (2001) research project highlighted the powerful influence that school leaders exert on the school culture, which impacts teachers' job satisfaction. Principals who effectively worked toward creating a school culture that most closely resembled the teachers' ideal were responsible for eliciting the highest job satisfaction in their teachers. Evans' findings were consistent with the belief that an organization that is congruent with teachers' professional ethics is the most intrinsically satisfying, and subsequently leads to teachers' satisfaction with extrinsic rewards as well. Evans used the term "compromise" to denote an organization that does not respect or support teachers' ethical standards. In effect, a school that forces teachers to compromise their professional ideal exerts a negative effect on teachers' job satisfaction, morale, and motivation. In contrast, school leadership and management that effectively create "work contexts that are congruent with individuals' values, ideologies, and expectations in relation to the six issues" of equity
and justice, pedagogy, organizational efficiency, interpersonal relations, collegiality, and self-conception and self-image generate high job satisfaction, morale, and motivation for a committed teaching staff (Evans, p. 303). Leadership support in Evans’ study had a tremendous influence on teachers’ satisfaction with the learning environment. Conversely, dedicated teachers working under an authoritarian principal were invariably dissatisfied with their job, but would seek out a more supportive learning environment rather than leave the teaching profession.

In a comparison of special educators \((n = 463)\) and regular educators \((n = 463)\) on measures of job satisfaction and professional and organizational commitment, Billingsley and Cross (1992) found comparable responses in both groups. Separate regression analyses were used to study job satisfaction. For both groups of teachers, job satisfaction was enhanced by strong leadership support, work involvement, and minimal role conflict. Lower levels of stress and role ambiguity also predicted job satisfaction for special educators. Professional commitment was inversely linked with stress and positively linked with job involvement for both teacher samples. Not surprisingly, leadership support was associated with organizational commitment, but not with professional commitment. Littrell, Billingsley, and Cross (1994) confirmed the importance of leader support for teacher job satisfaction in a study of a sample of 613 special and 613 general education teachers. Regression analyses were used to determine the extent to which demographic and work-related variables were predictive of perceived support. Teachers who experienced strong support from principals reported higher job satisfaction and higher organizational commitment. Emotional support, ranking highest, provided

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teachers with a sense of belonging that drove motivation, performance, and involvement with school, and this factor even had an effect on physical health, perhaps by reducing stress. Appraisal support was a correlate of emotional support that was demonstrated by respecting teachers' professional expertise and autonomy and providing relevant feedback. Next in importance, instrumental support was associated with being an effective school manager. Informational support was shown by principals who provided opportunities for continuous learning and professional development. Although there was enough distinction for the different aspects of leader support to be ranked hierarchically, both special and general educators awarded high value to each one.

Inclusive and special education and teacher satisfaction. Teachers may perceive a lack of principal support when confronting the challenges of an inclusive classroom setting and a subsequent loss of job satisfaction. The current trend toward inclusive schools places new demands on regular general educators for managing classrooms that contain students with learning disabilities or emotional problems. Soodak and Podell (1993) chose teacher efficacy as a mechanism for understanding teachers' special education referrals and placements. The sample consisted of 96 regular educators and 96 special educators in the New York City school system. As the researchers anticipated, a teacher's perceived efficacy had a significant bearing upon his or her assessments used to determine whether a student with learning or behavior problems belonged in the regular classroom. Regular educators with a strong sense of efficacy were more likely to deem it appropriate for "problem" students to remain in the regular classroom, reflecting their
expectation that they could overcome obstacles to facilitating their classroom achievement. Teachers with low perceived efficacy were far more likely to believe that students with problems should be placed in special education. Perceived efficacy had no influence on the assessments made by special educators. For regular educators, placement decisions demonstrated an interaction between personal efficacy and teacher efficacy; that is, whereas teachers may have perceived themselves as capable of working with challenging students, they were also aware of external factors that might preclude their ability to teach special needs students in the regular classroom. Students with both learning and behavioral problems were most frequently identified for special education placement.

According to Soodak and Podell (1993), it is probable that the negative effect of mainstreaming on regular educators’ job satisfaction is linked at least partially to perceived lack of efficacy due to inadequate preparation. Soodak and Podell recommended that regular educators be given adequate preparation for working with special needs students. It would be logical to conclude that the challenge of teaching special needs students without sufficient preparation would diminish the job satisfaction of regular educators, as well as impact the achievement of at-risk students.

Lobosco and Newman (1992) contended that as classrooms become more inclusive and demand collaboration by special and regular educators, it is essential to understand the influence of working with special needs children on job satisfaction. In this cross-section of teachers ($N = 573$), working with gifted or talented students was a positive predictor of teacher job satisfaction, whereas working with students with
learning disabilities was either not related or negatively related to teacher job satisfaction. The effect was particularly strong for regular educators who had not been prepared to work with students with special needs. The benefits of working with gifted students may be associated with higher professional status; Lobosco and Newman surmised that regular educators may associate teaching students with learning disabilities with a decline in status.

Another element affecting job satisfaction may be the fact that “regular educators, for the most part, have had a very limited role in the discussion” about mainstreaming students with learning disabilities (Lobosco & Newman, 1992, p. 25). Thus, teachers may view inclusive mandates as infringements upon their professional autonomy. Furthermore, lacking competence to address adequately the particular needs of mainstreamed students, coupled with a lack of specialized support network, erodes teachers’ sense of professional expertise. Lobosco and Newman advocated regular educators being trained to work with both gifted/talented and learning-disabled students “in a way that will allow the teacher to gain satisfaction from the challenge of the slow learner as well as the accelerated learner” (p. 26).

In short, a teacher’s feelings of job satisfaction can directly impact the learner. Teachers who have strong support from principals enjoy higher job satisfaction and higher organizational commitment. This shows a link between teacher job satisfaction and principal transformational leadership.
Teacher Leadership and Job Satisfaction

A teacher's feelings of job satisfaction stem from a collection of conditions within the professional environment, but, according to the literature, feelings of competence and efficacy are essential elements of those conditions. Teacher leadership opportunities provide an important vehicle for enhancing professional confidence and self-efficacy. As Leithwood and Jantzi (1999, 2000) observed, teachers assume positions of leadership in several formal and informal ways.

Rinehart and Short (1994) compared teachers' and teacher leaders' experiences of job satisfaction and empowerment in a sample of Reading Recovery teachers. Participants in this quantitative study were 38 Reading Recovery teacher leaders, 192 Reading Recovery teachers, and 88 classroom teachers. A computerized random sampling procedure was utilized to equalize sample sizes to avoid violation of statistical assumptions. Data were submitted to univariate analysis (ANOVA) and followed with post hoc tests to analyze significant results. As part of the implementation of Reading Recovery, the widely used strategy for struggling first-grade readers, Reading Recovery teacher leaders are trained and mentored for one year at a specific training site, after which they return to their home school to direct the program, teach students, and train prospective Reading Recovery teachers. Their administrative duties include writing an annual research report, distributing information, and recruiting new candidates for teaching Reading Recovery. Specially trained Reading Recovery teachers spend half their day teaching the program and the other half as regular classroom teachers.
When teachers assume school leadership roles, this has a positive effect on teacher job satisfaction and sense of empowerment. Reading Recovery teacher leaders scored highest on both dimensions (Rinehart & Short, 1994). Like the teachers whose efficacy increased after completing the DTBY curriculum (Fritz & Miller-Heyl, 1995), the Reading Recovery teacher leaders had mastered a curriculum of specific teaching strategies and techniques. They reported enhanced understanding of the reading process and a belief that they could influence the achievement of at-risk children. The positive effect was only apparent for the Reading Recovery teacher leaders, however. Leaders, enjoying the status of formal leadership positions, had more freedom in scheduling than their teacher colleagues and more involvement in school decisions related to program planning. Mastery of the Reading Recovery curriculum may not have been enough to override organizational constraints on professional autonomy for the Reading Recovery teachers. In view of their finding, Rinehart and Short recommended that teachers be included in school governance activities that award them a voice in school decision-making as well as provide them opportunities for professional development. They also emphasized that teachers need recognition from administrators for their professional contributions to the school.

*Teacher leadership and student achievement.* On the other hand, Leithwood and Jantzi's findings have not supported a causal link between teacher leadership and student achievement. Leithwood and Jantzi (1999, 2000) have surmised that it may be more valuable to support teachers' educational expertise and to enhance their status as teachers.
than to focus more effort on enlisting teachers in leadership roles. The findings of Taylor and Tashakkori (1995) also supported Leithwood and Jantzi’s claim, although research has been inconsistent on the question of whether participation in school decisions enhances teachers’ job satisfaction.

*Other Factors in Teacher Job Satisfaction*

Most school reform initiatives involve efforts to redesign the traditional bureaucracy with a less hierarchical governance structure, thus creating a more democratic working environment. Advocates of learning organization and collegial models argue that the “mechanistic” bureaucracy of the Industrial Age breeds alienation, whereas a communal or “organic” governance structure fosters collegiality, empowerment, and job satisfaction. Verdugo and Greenberg (1997) explored the validity of this perspective in a survey of 1,585 members of the National Education Association. The data were analyzed using multivariate analysis. The validity of the study, however, was threatened by selection in gathering data; the researchers frequently made decisions about which observations to exclude from their analysis. In the exclusion of data, the lambda procedure was used to adjust for any resultant bias.

Results of the national stratified study suggested that the researchers’ “quest to identify school governance traits that positively affect teachers’ satisfaction with their job is on the right track” (Verdugo & Greenberg, 1997, p. 50). A sense of community, as hypothesized, was associated with higher job satisfaction, although the governance structure specifically was not a decisive factor. Of importance was the fact that the
teachers attached legitimacy to the school governance regime, not the form it assumed. In other words, if the structure of governance was effective, teachers experienced greater professional autonomy and higher job satisfaction. It must be noted, however, that the proxy used to measure legitimacy was the extent to which teachers were involved in school decisions, thus providing support for advocates of a greater role for teachers in decision-making. Professional autonomy emerged as the strongest predictor of job satisfaction; in fact, satisfaction with job autonomy was virtually equivalent to overall job satisfaction.

A sense of autonomy would be strongest for principals and administrators in comparison to teachers in the average school district. Whereas Knoop (1994) did not differentiate between predictors of job satisfaction for teachers and administrators, Derlin and Schneider (1994) found notable distinctions between teachers and administrators in terms of the way they perceived their jobs and the conditions that influenced job satisfaction. In general, principals were more influenced by extrinsic rewards, and the reverse was true for teachers. Consistent with the administrative role, the primary contributors to principals' satisfaction across venues were factors such as pay, job security, and advancement. Teachers were most concerned with factors that supported their professional status as educators and helped them achieve their own professional development goals.

In addition, an important study by Derlin and Schneider (1994) found different motivators for educators in urban and suburban schools. In Knoop’s (1994) study, job status was the primary predictor of satisfaction in suburban teachers, coupled with pay.
Knoop attributed this finding to the affluence of the sample, who might have linked status with salary and social position. The high value suburban teachers placed on staff recognition might indicate that status has more importance in a more affluent setting. However, Derlin and Schneider attributed the different responses of urban and suburban teachers to an observation that suburban teachers generally work under conditions that satisfy their motivation to promote student achievement. Student achievement is generally high in suburban settings where teachers do not have the issues and challenges of urban settings that impact upon student achievement.

Conditions related to school climate and work environment were more important to job satisfaction for urban teachers than for their suburban counterparts (Derlin & Schneider, 1994). The study examined teacher \( (n = 5,496) \) and principal \( (n = 442) \) data collected in the Milwaukee metropolitan public schools. Survey data for six subject groupings were examined: total teachers, urban teachers, suburban teachers, total principals, urban principals, and suburban principals. Derlin and Schneider compared job satisfaction responses using confirmatory factor analysis to evaluate observed differences. Urban teachers' job satisfaction was strongly linked with (a) the extent to which they felt capable of providing their students with an effective education, (b) the school environment and the degree to which they felt it was conducive to learning, (c) the control they had over factors related to academic achievement, and (d) a school climate that fostered motivation for learning new teaching strategies.

In contrast, suburban teachers gave high priorities to staff recognition, participative decision-making, district support of school staff, and learning new teaching
strategies. Derlin and Schneider (1994) suggested that urban principals could increase teachers' job satisfaction by focusing on issues related to students and student achievement, whereas suburban principals could enhance teachers' job satisfaction by concentrating on teachers' involvement and empowerment. Interestingly, the job satisfaction of urban principals was most strongly correlated with extrinsic benefits (salary), whereas suburban principals were more concerned with the work environment (Derlin & Schneider).

Shann (1998) investigated professional commitment and job satisfaction among teachers in urban middle schools. The data were drawn from a 3-year project on school effectiveness, which explored teacher satisfaction in schools considered to be effective in promoting student achievement. The school-based members of the interview teams consisted of two administrators and four teachers from each school. The data were collected through face-to-face interviews with a representative sample of 58 teachers. The teachers were virtually unanimous in what they liked best about teaching: "the kids!" (p. 69). Student-teacher relationships were ranked highest by all respondents as the key contributor to job satisfaction. Those who were least satisfied with their job named job security as a major concern. This response was attributed to extensive layoffs, which had become a racially and culturally charged issue because minority preferences and bilingual capability had superseded seniority and performance as the basis for retention. Using Evans' (2001) framework for the conditions of the ideal workplace, a perceived lack of fairness in the dismissal process might have intensified the impact of job insecurity on a teacher's sense of job satisfaction.
Salary was not an issue for the middle school teachers, although Shann (1998) noted that they were a highly paid group. The teachers ranked student achievement and their own participation in decision-making as highest in importance for their sense of job satisfaction. The only factor that the teachers gave high importance to, yet reported low satisfaction with, was the issue of parent involvement. Across different school settings, teachers were unanimous in their desire to get more parents involved. This was especially true for teachers in the lower achieving school. Interestingly, the lowest achieving school in the study had a positive social climate and the highest level of parent involvement. The school was the largest in size and served a high proportion of bilingual Hispanic students, thus language may have been a factor in the school’s low achievement. However, due to the principal's efforts, the school compared favorably with higher achieving schools on some social and behavioral measures (Shann).

Mueller, Finley, Iverson, and Price (1999) addressed the issue of school racial composition on the job satisfaction and organizational and professional commitment of 838 teachers in 405 schools within a large urban school system. Survey data on schools from both state and city records were used. The researchers mailed teachers a questionnaire, receiving a 57% response rate. Regression analysis was used to analyze the data. The researchers found that White teachers in predominantly White schools received stronger support from coworkers, experienced less role conflict, were awarded greater autonomy in decision-making, and had adequate resources, which collectively contributed to enhanced job satisfaction.
Teaching in a school where they were in the minority had a stronger negative impact on White teachers than on Black teachers, who were capable of adapting to the racial context of the school. Mueller and colleagues (1999) observed that Black teachers in predominantly White schools were less committed to the teaching profession as a whole. In view of this finding, the researchers suggested that although efforts to create a diverse teaching staff are theoretically sound, an inadvertent consequence might be a decrease in the number of teachers of color remaining in the teaching profession.

Although data on student achievement were not available, the researchers proposed that the greater support and autonomy afforded White teachers in White schools might have enhanced their perceived influence over student achievement, which in turn translated into higher job satisfaction.

Researchers investigating teacher job satisfaction have concluded that many variables impact upon each teacher's experience. To a lesser extent, external factors influence satisfaction with the profession, whereas the majority of the factors related to job satisfaction rest within the teacher as intrinsic factors. To be satisfied, teachers must feel they can make a positive change in a student's academic performance, they must feel they are valued as professionals by the public, and they must feel supported and recognized by their leadership for their contributions.

Researchers studying teacher job satisfaction as it relates to student achievement have implied that professional satisfaction improves teaching. Improved teaching surely results in greater academic achievement for students. Many of the studies reviewed herein have supported this connection between teacher job satisfaction and student
achievement tangentially, although more research needs to be conducted to prove this link conclusively. In addition, because researchers have found links between transformational leadership by principals and job satisfaction in their teachers, it can be surmised that leadership style has an indirect affect on student achievement.

Socioeconomic Effects

This section contains a discussion of literature that has correlated SES with student achievement. SES is an umbrella term encompassing such conditions as extreme poverty, at-risk categorization, economic disadvantage, and low-income schools. Existing research on SES in relation to student achievement has covered two main areas: school climate and parental involvement.

Socioeconomic Status and School Climate

Just as many elements work together to create principal leadership style and teacher job satisfaction, many elements collectively create a socioeconomic climate that impacts a student’s learning experience and achievement. The most obvious indication of a low-SES school is a school plant in poor condition with insufficient textbooks, desks, equipment, and learning resources. Moreover, the SES of a school’s population affects student expectations as well as teachers’ skills, attitudes, and instructional methods. Finally, parental involvement and students’ engagement with school appear to be a function of SES. With per-pupil spending being equal across a district, researchers have indicated that educational funding alone does not mitigate low SES of students.
In 1935, a study conducted by Columbia Teachers College for a large metropolitan school board listed dismal conditions faced by children attending working-class schools. School buildings were in "significant decline" with bathrooms "indescribably unclean," reading and mathematics were taught in "an exceedingly formal and isolated manner," and teachers were underqualified and frequently absent (cited in Esposito, 1999). Although some of the details of the description may have changed, Esposito noted that the environment of urban schools serving low-income students is scarcely more conducive to learning today.

Adverse environmental conditions in inner-city schools are among the myriad of variables that have been examined in the quest to understand the specific factors underlying the persistent gap in academic achievement relative to SES. According to Vandenberghe (1999), the result of research by Coleman et al. (1977) and Hanushek (1992) was that SES is a decisive predictor of school achievement; however, understanding the causal mechanism remains elusive. Vandenberghe suggested that the key factor in school "quality" that impacts academic outcome derives from differences in teachers' skills that are not easily captured by empirical research.

Coleman and colleagues' (1977) research became a landmark study, grounding research in the field. The Equality of Educational Opportunity Study, also known as the "Coleman Report," was commissioned by the United States Department of Health, Education, and Welfare in 1964 to assess the availability of equal educational opportunities to children of all colors, religions, and national origins (Coleman, Campbell, Hobson, McPartland, Mood, Weinfeld et al., 1966). The study consisted of
600,000 students and teachers in 4,000 schools. According to the Coleman Report, family background had a distinct impact on student achievement. Further, low-income Black students did better academically after being placed in integrated middle-class schools. This finding led courts and policy makers to introduce mandatory busing to promote integration in schools.

The Equal Education Opportunity Survey used in the report (Coleman et al., 1966) did not investigate the effects of family background factors in detail, but was designed to control for as much of their effect as possible before examining school factors. The researchers did compare the percentage of school-to-school variance on achievement accounted for by these background factors with the total degree of school-to-school variance. The family background differences measured in the study were clustered in eight variables:

1. Urbanism of background, based on the community where the student and mother grew up;
2. Parents' education;
3. Structural integrity of the home (signifying the presence or absence of the father);
4. Size of family;
5. Items in the home such as TV, telephone, record player, refrigerator, automobile, and vacuum cleaner (signifying SES status);
6. Parents' interest (i.e., did the student talk with parents about school, did anyone read aloud to the student);
7. Parents' educational desires (i.e., how good a mother or father did parents claim to want to be, attendance at PTA meetings); and

8. Reading material in the home such as a dictionary, encyclopedia, daily newspaper, magazines, and books.

According to the Coleman Report (Coleman et al., 1966), the family background factors measured by these eight variables accounted for about 10–25% of variance in individual achievement. Specifically, in the sixth grade, students' report of items in the home, which indicated their economic level, had the highest relation to achievement for all minority students, and parents' education had the highest relation to achievement for White students. For later grades, parents' education had the highest relation to achievement for nearly all students. For Black students at grade 12, the urban environment and small family size had the same impact on student achievement as parents' education. The structural integrity of the home (the father's presence or absence) had very little relation to achievement for Black students, although it had a strong relation to achievement for other minority groups. Finally, the relative importance of educational attributes of the home (parents' education, reading matter) compared to economic status was greater for White students than for minority children.

Overall, Coleman et al. (1966) concluded that the single most important family background factor on student achievement, particularly minority student achievement, was SES. In addition, when comparing school-to-school variance, the researchers found not only students with parents with higher SES had higher scholastic achievement, but also students who attended school with peers whose parents had high SES had higher
scholastic achievement. The result of this finding was a strong push toward racial and SES integration in schools, to mitigate the potential negative impact of students' family backgrounds on their achievement.

In the years since its publication, researchers have found flaws in the Coleman Report (Coleman et al., 1966). According to Payne and Biddle (1999), the findings of the study led the public to believe that schools had little impact on student achievement, and that family background had been "proven" to be the primary factor. Payne and Biddle maintained that the study was flawed. Among other things, Coleman et al. failed to use available scaling techniques to validate procedures, made serious mistakes when assigning indicators to major variables, and failed to measure crucial variables associated with school effects. Worse, flawed procedures were used for statistical analyses, which produced inflated estimates for the effects of family background factors. Coleman corrected these flaws in 1972, but, according to Payne and Biddle, the reanalyses were ignored.

However, in a response to Payne and Biddle's (1999) article, Taylor (2000) maintained that they misunderstood the work of a diverse group of economists cited in their study. Further, they failed to provide any synthesis of the methodology innovations and the theoretical insights of the three decades since the release of the Coleman Report.

Researchers have agreed on the conclusion that students attending schools in districts with more resources tend to have achievement levels at least as high as students attending schools in districts with fewer resources. The central disagreement among researchers—from Coleman et al. (1966) to Hanushek (1992)—is whether available
empirical evidence can measure the relationship between school outcomes and the level of funding. The primary concern is that it may be impossible to control adequately for family background factors. Other factors affecting student achievement (such as family background) may be related to funding levels, leading to biased measures of the effect of school resources on student achievement.

An alternative perspective is that it may not be teachers' skills per se, but rather the attitudes that govern the way teachers employ them in different school contexts that affect academic outcomes in schools serving different communities. Solomon and Battistich (1996) addressed this issue as part of a research project evaluating an intervention program in 12 schools, with another 12 schools serving as a control. The schools were divided into low-, medium-, and high-poverty categories, with the proportion of students receiving free lunches serving as the index of poverty. In Solomon and Battistich's study, the percentage of White students increased in inverse proportion to poverty level and the reverse was true for the percentage of Black and Hispanic students.

Solomon and Battistich (1996) derived data from classroom observations and a teacher questionnaire that evaluated educational attitudes and beliefs, feelings about teaching, and perceived school climate. Participants were 476 regular education elementary school classroom teachers in six school districts throughout the country. The researchers found that the "formal and isolated manner" that characterized teaching in low-income schools decades ago was still prevalent in 1996. Instruction in high-poverty school classrooms was more teacher directed, with minimal evidence of constructivist
teaching practices, cooperative learning, self-directed learning opportunities, student displays, or other techniques that have been found to engage at-risk students in learning.

Solomon and Battistich (1996) acknowledged the common belief that students in high-poverty schools are more unruly, and thus the perceived need for teachers to maintain stricter control of behavior. However, they noted that when classrooms are organized to foster a sense of community and belonging, the students become more involved in learning, and teachers spend less time engaged in behavioral management. In a notable finding, teachers maintain different expectations of academic and behavioral capabilities of students from different income levels, despite student performance being equivalent. Solomon and Battistich observed instances when teachers' interactions with students conveyed high expectations for student performance across different income levels. However, significant differences remained in the opportunities awarded students to interact with classmates, engage in class meetings, or design classroom displays. The significance of this finding is that the instructional approaches that have demonstrated the most promise for improving the academic performance of at-risk students were least apparent in the schools where they were most needed. Overall, according to Solomon and Battistich, teachers' assumptions about low-income students work to create a classroom environment with the potential to alienate a student population already labeled "at-risk."

Schools in inner cities with high concentrations of low-income, minority students are plagued by persistent problems that undermine academic performance. To examine the effect of inner-city school climate on academic performance, Esposito (1999) surveyed the families of Head Start graduates as the children completed first and second
grade. The potential influence of the nonquantifiable teacher qualities proposed by Vandenberghe (1999) as explanation for the persistent influence of SES was evident in the parents’ perceptions of their children’s school adjustment. School climate in general, but especially student-teacher relationships, became an increasingly significant influence on children’s adjustment through second grade (Esposito). The parents’ perceptions were reinforced by the teachers’ assessment of students’ behavior. Esposito acknowledged that certain aspects of school climate such as school maintenance and security and community-school collaboration affect academic achievement. However, the element of school culture that has the most potent influence on low-income students’ prospective academic outcomes is the one over which teachers have the most direct influence: establishing positive relationships with students and conveying high expectations for their academic success.

Through survey data and direct classroom observation, Waxman and Huang (1997) explored the conditions that distinguish effective from ineffective elementary schools serving inner-city African American students living in extreme poverty. The ineffective schools exhibited some of the alienating characteristics observed by Solomon and Battistich (1996) in low-income schools, although this was observed to some degree in the effective schools as well. Waxman and Huang observed far less student-teacher interaction in the ineffective schools and virtually no interaction over 60% of the time. This effect was reversed in effective schools, where students interacted with teachers at least 60% of the time. Teachers in ineffective schools relied more heavily on whole-class
instruction, whereas students in effective schools spent more time in individualized or independent activities.

Student survey data revealed that students in effective schools had more favorable attitudes toward the learning environment, which fostered higher academic aspirations and motivation (Waxman & Huang, 1997). Although there were distinct differences between the effective and ineffective schools, Waxman and Huang noted that both were primarily teacher directed. As with the schools studied by Solomon and Battistich (1996), the intellectual level of classroom learning was generally low and there was minimal evidence of learning groups, authentic learning experiences, or constructivist practices.

In an analogous study, Gaziel (1997) investigated the distinctions between effective and less effective (average) high schools serving economically disadvantaged high school students in Israel. The sample included 20 public secondary schools. Data were collected from teachers at the 20 schools using an inventory questionnaire. An ANOVA was performed to compare the schools with respect to academic emphasis. Gaziel found that the most prominent feature of an effective school was a strong academic emphasis. In effective schools, academic achievement was awarded top priority, followed by continuous school improvement, and then orderliness. In average schools, orderliness came first, with teamwork next, and academic achievement last. Despite the cultural and geographic difference, the attitude of the Israeli teachers in the less effective schools was remarkably similar to that of many inner-city school teachers: They believed they had to focus on order before they could improve academic achievement. This was precisely the teacher behavior examined by Solomon and
Battistich (1996) in disadvantaged schools; in both cultures the emphasis on order was counterproductive to high academic achievement.

Goddard, Sweetland, and Hoy (2000) focused on academic emphasis in their exploration of the influence of school climate on the reading and mathematics performance of urban elementary school students. The data were derived from surveys of 442 teachers representing 45 schools from one large urban school district. The school district provided student data on gender, race and ethnicity, and free and reduced-price lunches (a proxy for SES). The researchers obtained student achievement and demographic data for all schools in the sample from the central administration office of the district. Academic emphasis was operationalized as a collective environment in which teachers set reasonable goals and had high expectations that their students would work hard to achieve those goals and would respect their peers. Although orderliness was a priority, teachers viewed it as an extension of academic emphasis rather than a prerequisite.

As Goddard et al. (2000) anticipated, strong academic emphasis elicited higher student achievement in math and reading. The authors stressed the fact that more than two thirds of the students qualified for subsidized lunches and the school population was 60% African American. In sum, a school culture characterized by strong academic focus has the power to override the potentially negative effects of poverty and minority status on academic achievement. The procedures and methodology used in this study were sound; therefore, the results merit attention.
Unfortunately, a teacher's lack of knowledge and experience may impede the ability to stress academics and maintain high expectations of student performance. According to the findings of Okpala, Smith, Jones, and Ellis (2000), teachers' educational level influences children's mathematics achievement. The study offered support for the theory that the historical assignment of underqualified teachers to low-income schools is a factor in undermining academic achievement (Esposito, 1999).

The study of Okpala et al. (2000) was followed by research on a fourth-grade sample that examined school expenditure as a possible factor in the observed effect of SES on academic performance (Okpala, Okpala, & Smith, 2001). The effect of school spending was negligible, as some low-, middle-, and high-income schools were allotted comparable funds for resources and per-pupil expenditure. Sutton and Soderstrom (1999) found school expenditure to have negligible value in predicting student outcomes in an Illinois study. Although school expenditure has been a focal point for judicial action as well as ongoing debate, there appears to be no clear or consistent association between per-pupil expenditure and student achievement (Vandenberghe, 1999).

After studying the Class Size Reduction initiative in California, Ogawa and Huston (1999) suggested that the ambitious project might ultimately prove counterproductive. The initiative's massive effort to staff schools needing more teachers to accommodate a greater number of classes has resulted in schools being forced to rely on teachers lacking appropriate certification.

Although California has made structural adjustments to equalize school funding, experienced and qualified teachers have not been equally assigned. Ogawa and Huston
(1999) found that the quality of teachers varied considerably across districts. This was particularly significant in districts serving higher proportions of Hispanic students, where the least experienced teachers were hired to reduce class size. The alleged purpose of reduced class size is to enhance student achievement; however, if the initiative results in the perpetuation of inequities in school staffing, the positive effect of small class size can easily be negated. In addition to the practical implications, Ogawa and Huston emphasized the need to reexamine school policies that tend to reinforce social inequities instead of addressing them fairly.

To address these social inequities, researchers have focused on the influence of sociocultural factors on students' perceptions, which might contribute to disparities in academic achievement. For example, Trusty and Peck (1994) examined the interaction of SES, academic achievement, and self-concept in a culturally and geographically diverse sample of 392 fourth-grade students across Mississippi. The researchers collected achievement and SES data by means of questionnaires completed by counselors and teachers in the 14 schools sampled. Multivariate analysis of variance was performed. Not unexpectedly, high-achieving students from high-income backgrounds were the least vulnerable to negative self-concepts, and low-achieving, low SES students were at highest risk for negative self-concepts. For low-achieving students, high SES was not a buffer against low self-concept. These students were vulnerable to low self-esteem and low school-related self-concepts. Conversely, high academic achievement seemed to foster resilience in low-income students, who displayed high self-esteem and positive perceptions relating to peers and school (Trusty & Peck).
Although the findings from the study demonstrated that academic achievement can mitigate the potentially negative effect of poverty on self-concept, a disturbing finding was that low-income students, irrespective of academic standing, showed evidence of anxiety (Trusty & Peck, 1994). Students might have feelings of insecurity or lack of safety due to environmental stressors associated with poverty.

In the Trusty and Peck (1994) study, teacher affiliation and peer affiliation showed a fairly strong relationship to academic achievement, consistent with the Head Start study (Esposito, 1999), which confirmed the importance of student-teacher relationships in achievement. Across social classes, academic achievement played a salient role in the self-concepts of these Mississippi fourth graders.

Mooney and Thornton (1999) used causal attribution theory to determine if SES and race play a role in students' attributions of mathematics success or failure. The sample consisted of 264 White and African American seventh-grade students from five urban schools. Socioeconomic status was determined by whether a student received free or reduced-price lunches. Students who did not receive free or reduced-price lunches were designated as higher SES status. Of the total participating students, half were identified as low SES, and half as higher SES. Two forms of data analysis were performed, and a two-way analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was used to analyze the survey. No significant differences emerged between groups. Qualitative analyses of interview data were used to determine patterns that might illuminate trends in the quantitative analysis. Across ethnicity and SES, the students attributed success in math to effort; even those who deemed themselves high in ability placed emphasis on effort as the
basis of their achievement. Similarly, regardless of SES background or ethnicity, the students tended to attribute their failure to lack of effort. All students defined success or failure in terms of their performance on tests. The emphasis on effort over ability was so consistent that the researchers posited that efforts to improve students' math scores should not be difficult; educators must simply create an environment that drives student motivation.

However, creating a motivating school environment in a low-SES setting is a challenge. Clearly, many schools are characterized by a climate that depresses, rather than enhances, student motivation to succeed. Lee (2000) utilized data from NELS: 88 to investigate the interaction of school climate, SES, and ethnicity. School size emerged as an important variable in predicting academic success, especially for economically disadvantaged students. Both very large and very small schools (which typically serve a higher proportion of low-income students) showed poorer academic outcomes than those of moderate size. (Optimum high school size tended to be 600 to 900 students.)

Borland and Howsen (1999) provided additional insight into the influence of school size in their study of highly rural and highly urban school districts in Kentucky. Both types of communities have conditions that undermine quality of life. Rural areas of Kentucky (primarily coal mining regions) are characterized by poverty, unemployment, poor access to health care, and inadequate housing. Urban areas have similar problems, exacerbated by high crime rates and gang violence.

In their study of rural and urban Kentucky, Borland and Howsen (1999) documented that both rural and inner-city students exhibited weak academic
performances, even after accounting for other SES factors. These findings corresponded to the NELS: 88 data on school size. With respect to the impact of teachers on student performance, Lee (2000) found that schools where educators took collective responsibility for learning enrolled more socially and economically disadvantaged students; however, collective accountability for student achievement created a learning environment committed to the principle that all students can learn. These schools were both more equitable and more effective, demonstrating that teachers' willingness to take responsibility for student learning overrides sociodemographic factors in generating positive academic outcomes.

Lee (2000) noted that the collective commitment to learning that drives effective schools is commonly found in private schools. Schools with high levels of collective responsibility enroll students from families of higher SES. Although independent private schools can facilitate high achievement via selective admissions criteria, Catholic schools typically enroll students whose demographic and academic characteristics parallel those of public-school students. However, researchers consistently have documented that Catholic schools do not have the achievement gap typically found in public schools, and the dropout rate for all students is extremely low (Lee, Chow-Hoy, Burkam, Gevardt, & Smerdon, 1998).

Lee and colleagues (1998) hypothesized that the positive effect of Catholic high schools on the achievement of disadvantaged students was due to the rigorous academic coursework required of all students. Whereas tracking practices have been harshly criticized for streaming poor and minority students into nonacademic courses, the
demanding curriculum of Catholic high schools provides all students with college
preparatory mathematics courses.

Using data from NELS: 88, Lee et al. (1998) found that regardless of
demographic or academic backgrounds, students attending both independent and Catholic
private schools take more advanced math courses than their public school peers. They
also observed that Catholic schools exert a stronger influence over engaging students in
rigorous coursework, which makes the environment particularly equitable for
economically disadvantaged students who might not have equivalent opportunities in
public schools. The researchers attributed strong academic emphasis for the success of
Catholic schools in promoting academic achievement of students who might be labeled
“at-risk”.

Anderson and Keith (1997) selected the High School and Beyond Longitudinal
Study (HSB) rather than NELS: 88 as their data source for a longitudinal study of at-risk
students. The two factors showing the strongest impact on academic outcomes were
individual student ability and completion of academic coursework. Quality of schooling
had an indirect, although distinctly significant influence, and student motivation was no
less important. “Ability” is a double-edged concept. As Mooney and Thornton (1999)
observed, students award higher priority to effort than to ability for their academic
success or failure. However, motivation did predict favorable academic outcomes in the
HSB study, thereby supporting Mooney and Thornton’s recommendations. In the HSB
study, students at highest risk for dropping out of school completed few academic
courses.
These findings stand in sharp contrast to the high academic achievement and low dropout rates of at-risk students attending Catholic schools, reinforcing the argument of Lee et al. (1998) that public high schools should encourage all students to enroll in rigorous academic courses.

**Socioeconomic Status and Student Family Involvement**

Student motivation and support for education is in part derived from a student’s family background. Leithwood and Jantzi (1999) selected family educational culture as a proxy for the conventional measure of SES with the rationale that it targets a more precise dimension of the global SES measure. Statistically, the effect paralleled that typically found for SES on achievement. On the surface, the findings of Leithwood and Jantzi (1999) appeared to support the 1966 Coleman Report, which generated ongoing debate over the extent to which students’ family backgrounds influence their academic achievement. Several sources reviewed for this project refer to Coleman’s research (Caldas & Bankston, 1997; D’Agostino, 2000; Desimone, 1999; McNeal, Hartless, & Dyk, 2001; Lee, 2000; Sutton & Soderstrom, 1999). However, none concurred with Coleman and colleagues’ conclusion that schools apparently have no effect on student achievement. In fact, virtually all of the authors reviewed embarked on their research with the intent of identifying precisely those factors under school control that interact with family background variables to produce the persistent effect of SES on student achievement.
Leithwood and Jantzi (1999) considered the student’s family educational background a more exact measure of family status than income, but this, unlike SES, is within the scope of the school’s ability to ameliorate the negative factors in a child’s education. By forming collaborative partnerships with families, schools can effectively coach parents to engage their children in home learning activities and to enhance their own learning and parenting skills, regardless of income or educational attainment.

Researchers, however, have found that more affluent students derive greater benefits from parent involvement than do low-income and minority students (Desimone, 1999; McNeal et al., 2001). Few sources have disputed Leithwood and Jantzi’s (1999) assertion that for this correlation to change, school leaders have to develop initiatives that reach out to parents to establish productive working relationships between home and school.

Some researchers have indicated that association with affluent peers seems to have a positive impact upon the achievement levels of less affluent peers. Caldas and Bankston (1997) focused on the influence of school income level on the academic achievement of individual students within the school culture. The data were drawn from all tenth-grade, public, regular-education high school students in Louisiana, where students must pass the Louisiana Graduation Exit Examination (GEE) to graduate. The dependent variable in the analysis was a measure of student achievement on the GEE. A series of regression analyses were performed to indicate the relative effect of each variable (family poverty status, family social status, school-level measure of SES, race, and school-engaged activities) on academic achievement.
Caldas and Bankston (1997) found that school and individual income levels exerted an influence on students' academic performance. Low family income had a small inverse effect on individual student performance. However, attending school with higher-income peers held significant power to raise students' achievement. Counter to Coleman's (1966) assertion that family background is the strongest predictor of academic success, Caldas and Bankston found that the family background of more affluent peers could effectively negate much of the negative effect of low family income. Thus the school culture had more influence than individual family background on the creation of social capital.

In Louisiana the interaction of race and SES was particularly evident due to the fact that "the disadvantages of economic standing are associated so closely with the disadvantages of race because of continuing racial inequality" (Caldas & Bankston, 1997, p. 275). Whereas a relatively affluent school culture measured by family social capital showed a positive influence on the academic performance of low-income students, schools with a predominance of African American students exerted a negative impact on students, irrespective of their family income level, a phenomenon the researchers attributed to the dual disadvantages of race and class in the target state. Caldas and Bankston suggested that in other parts of the country, the significance of race may have decreased as an independent predictor apart from SES, an assumption that received some modest support in Desimone's (1999) finding that income was more intractable to the influence of parent involvement on academic outcomes than race or ethnicity.
Other factors appear to interact with SES to determine student achievement. Jones and Ellis (2000) explored the connection between teachers' qualifications, school characteristics, and SES on the reading and math achievement levels of fourth-grade students ($N = 4,256$). The selected variables had differing effects on achievement in the two academic subjects. Class size and, to a smaller extent, school size had a significant impact on students' reading achievement, but had no significant effect on math scores. In contrast, teachers' educational backgrounds (i.e., the proportion of teachers with Master's degrees) had a significant relationship to mathematics achievement, but none to reading achievement.

Consistent with the body of research, Jones and Ellis (2000) further established that low SES had an inverse effect on both math and reading achievement, whereas higher parental educational levels predicted higher achievement in reading and math. The only variable with no apparent effect on student achievement was whether or not a child's parent volunteered at school.

Parental involvement in the school has been viewed as a means to ameliorate the effects of shortages in money, staff, and resources for education. However, the benefits of parent involvement in the school do not appear to have consistent effects upon the achievement levels of the students whose parents volunteer in the school. In studies by Okpala and colleagues (2000, 2001), parent involvement was operationalized as volunteering at school for a discrete number of hours. In a study by McNeal et al. (2001), which employed data from the NELS: 88, parent-child discussions emerged as the single form of parent involvement that was consistently linked with positive outcomes (i.e..
reducing truancy and increasing high school completion). However, the effect was reduced for families below the average SES. Interpreting their findings according to social capital theory, McNeal et al. discovered that families of higher SES operated within networks that placed high value on education as a means of maintaining or raising their social status; thus parents transmitted these values when they engage their children in discussions about school. Equivalent levels of parent involvement showed no effect in equalizing academic performance across income levels.

Using the same NELS: 88 data as McNeal et al. (2001), Desimone (1999) found that it was not only family income that affected the impact of parent involvement on academic outcomes, but SES combined with ethnicity. Parent involvement was more predictive for White, Asian, and middle-income students than for African American, Hispanic, and low-income students. An analysis discounted the possibility that school quality might be the mediating factor, leading the author to suggest that, for low-income and certain minority students, the positive influence of parent involvement might be undermined by organization and social structure, tracking, peer group influences, and discrimination.

Desimone’s (1999) in-depth study disclosed two interesting findings. The first was that parent involvement was more strongly linked with grades than test scores for students across all demographic groups. Because grades are more subjective than standardized test scores, the author proposed that parent involvement, which affects homework completion and attendance, might alter teachers’ perceptions of students but might not affect actual cognitive learning. The second factor was that parent involvement
in the school PTA or parent-teacher organization (PTO) was a greater predictor of grades for African American students than for any other group. Parent involvement in school organizations was more predictive of test scores for Hispanic and African American students than the top predictor for middle- and upper-income students, parent and child discussions.

Desimone (1999) suggested that the involvement of Black parents might serve as a cultural bridge between the school and a traditionally disadvantaged group. For Hispanic families, PTO involvement might signify higher English proficiency, which affects standardized test scores. That ethnicity rather than income was the predictive factor led Desimone to suggest that, “although school-family relations may be able to mitigate some of the negative effects associated with racial-ethnic barriers and differences, the disadvantages associated with economic deprivation may be less amenable to change through family-school linkages” (Desimone, p. 16).

However, regardless of the degree to which such a relationship can ameliorate all the factors associated with SES, those factors remain important and it appears likely that bolstering school engagement of students can create family-school partnerships.

Leithwood and Jantzi (1999) explored this issue in a study focused on the relative effects of teacher and principal leadership (formal and informal) upon the school engagement of students. Engagement with school encompasses a behavioral dimension (participation in school activities) and an affective dimension (extent to which students identify with the school and feel they belong). Disengagement from school often predicts students’ failure...
to complete their education; engagement with school, conversely, predicts success and achievement.

Leithwood and Jantzi (1999) collected data about leadership, school and classroom conditions, student engagement, and family educational culture through surveys. Regression analysis was performed. The population studied included 2,465 teachers of kindergarten through ninth grade, and 44,920 students in those grades within the district. The researchers used two instruments: one to collect data from the teachers on school conditions and leadership, the other to collect evidence from the students on their engagement with school and their family’s educational culture.

Leithwood and Jantzi (1999) found that only goals and purposes had a significant impact on student engagement, although the effect was small. The overriding influence on school engagement proved to be family education culture, accounting for a substantial proportion of variance in students’ engagement with school. The procedures and methodology were valid, and the results of the study warrant attention.

To further explore the influences of school leadership and organizational variables on students’ engagement with school, Leithwood and Jantzi (2000) replicated their 1999 study with a comparable sample of teachers ($n = 1,818$) and students ($n = 6,490$). Responses of individual teachers and students to the surveys were aggregated to the school level. As in the prior study, family educational background accounted for a sizable proportion of variance in student engagement; in fact, the effect was stronger in the second study (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000). In this in-depth analysis, affective engagement predicted greater participation in school activities, and organizational conditions had a
direct impact on students' identification with the school. The effects of principal leadership were weak but significant, whereas the effects of teacher leadership were not significant. Principal and teacher leadership both had significant effects on school (but not classroom) conditions, although the relative influences of principal and teacher leadership mirrored those in the first study. Based on these findings, Leithwood and Jantzi (2000) concluded that family educational culture has a direct influence upon a student's engagement with school and academic achievement.

Student engagement with school relative to achievement was also examined in the Prospects study, which was originally conceived as a longitudinal evaluation of Chapter 1 schools. The Prospects design included three longitudinal grade cohorts in grades 1, 3, and 7. D'Agostino (2000) applied Prospects data to examine the effects of school climate and instructional quality on students' reading and math achievement. There was a threat to mortality because many of the sampled students could not be retained for analyses, as they either were missing key variables or changed schools during the study period. The study's results did not support the "coupling" model, which postulates that school organizational features influence teaching practices, which in turn drive student achievement. In fact, the interrelationships among variables did not conform to any of the popular models for studying school effects.

However, D'Agostino (2000) successfully documented the powerful influence of SES, even in the earliest grades. By the start of the first-grade year, low-income students already lagged months beyond their more advantaged peers in reading and math achievement and continued to progress at a slower rate. The achievement gap reached a
plateau by fourth grade, but there was no reversal of the effect. Effective teaching practices varied according to grade level. Direct instruction tended to be more effective in the primary grades, although a constructivist approach was more appropriate for advancing progress in the upper elementary grades. The most effective teachers were able to synthesize the two approaches to produce high academic outcomes. Results should be cautiously generalized to a larger population.

Teachers' participation in decision-making, planning, and development showed an unexpected negative impact on math scores, which D'Agostino (2000) suggested might be due to time constraints on combining school governance with teaching. Although D'Agostino acknowledged that this finding is difficult to interpret, it offers some support for the contention of Leithwood and Jantzi (1999, 2000) that it may ultimately be more productive to focus on enhancing teachers' professional status as educators than to promote teacher leadership in school governance. D'Agostino (2000) concurred with the studies of Leithwood and colleagues as well as with Evans (2001) on one prominent issue: strong principal leadership. Strong principal leadership is a driving force in creating a learning community characterized by a shared mission and sense of collective responsibility for learning, which holds the greatest promise for fostering high academic aspirations and transcending socio-demographic characteristics to help all students attain them.

Summary
Student achievement, the holy grail of education, drives the dynamics that have shaped every wave of educational reform. The quest to understand the factors that create the optimal learning environment for raising student achievement will undoubtedly continue, regardless of any researchers' claims that they have discovered the missing element. As suggested in this chapter, the dynamics between variables, and indeed those within variables, perhaps especially SES, are much too complex to make simplistic assertions about the role of one factor to the exclusion of all others in student achievement. The key to realizing student achievement in any setting is understanding the relationship between the variables that prevent or allow the optimal learning environment to exist and to flourish.

Researchers in the reviewed literature have indicated conclusively that many variables interact in differing degrees and in different settings to create effective learning environments. Thus, the motivation for this study was to discover to what degree a principal's leadership style, a teacher's sense of job satisfaction, and a school's SES impacted upon student achievement levels as independent and dependent variables.

Landmark studies including evaluations of literature on principal leadership styles have revealed that transformational leadership behaviors not only earn the respect of teachers, but also create effective learning environments where teachers can be professionally satisfied (Jantzi & Leithwood, 1999; Leithwood et al., 1997, 1998; Vandenberghe, 1999). Researchers studying teacher job satisfaction have indicated that satisfied teachers who feel competent and effective work within a professional code of ethics that motivates and encourages them to use best teaching practices to raise
academic expectations and achievement levels in all students. Moreover, high academic expectations can mitigate the effects of SES, according to some researchers (Goddard et al., 2000; Lee, 2000; Trusty & Peck, 1994). When students are motivated to achieve because of engagement with school and high teacher expectations, and when they have a positive relationship with their teacher and family involvement, the learning outcomes for low SES students can equal those of their higher SES peers (Lee; Solomon & Battistich, 1996). By retracing the chain of evidence, it becomes apparent that each variable logically supports the other in the dynamics that create student achievement. The greatest challenges arise when an element of the dynamic is not supported, thus preventing the existence of an effective learning environment and making improvements in student achievement perhaps impossible to attain.

Chapter 3 contains descriptions of the methodology utilized in this study. This study further investigated a viable approach to improving student achievement that links teacher job satisfaction, the degree to which the principal’s leadership style can be described as transformational, and the SES of the school population.
Chapter 3
Methodology

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to investigate the potential links between the variables of transformational leadership style, teacher job satisfaction, and the SES of a school in relation to student learning outcomes as measured by the 2001 Virginia SOL tests. This study utilized a quantitative design based on data collected through questionnaires and databases. Relationships between the variables were determined through the use of multiple regression analyses.

This chapter contains descriptions of the research design, the participants used in the sample, instrumentation, the data collection procedure, and data analysis of this study.

Design

This study explored the effects of teacher job satisfaction, SES, and transformational leadership on student achievement in high schools in the Commonwealth of Virginia. The unit of analysis for this study was a group of Virginia high schools with a configuration of grades 9–12. Participants from each school completed the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ–5X) and the Minnesota Job Satisfaction Questionnaire–Short Form (MSQ), basing their responses on their experiences within the building. Using these assessment instruments, teachers evaluated the leadership behaviors of their school principals and the level of satisfaction
experienced in the work place. The study was designed to find a potential link between transformational leadership, teacher job satisfaction, and SES and the outcomes of student learning as measured by the 2001 Virginia SOL tests administered to high school students in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Correlation between the variables was analyzed through the use of multiple regression analyses.

Participants

The convenience sample for this study consisted of high school teachers randomly selected from 10 of the 15 school divisions that comprise Region 2 of the Commonwealth of Virginia. The chosen school divisions represented the diversity found among school environments, culture, and SES in schools throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia. Institutions of all sizes and populations (small, medium, and large) were represented, as well as schools characterized as urban, rural, and suburban. The school systems that were included in the study were Accomack, Chesapeake, Franklin City, Newport News, Norfolk, Northampton, Portsmouth, Southampton, Virginia Beach, and York County.

A total of 114 teachers from 31 schools participated in this study. Surveys were sent out to 155 teachers at these 31 schools, with a 74% return rate on the surveys. Only schools with at least 3 teacher respondents were included in the study. To develop the school-level data, the teachers from each school were aggregated to form a "school-wide rating" for that institution. For the 31 schools in the final sample, 16 schools (51.6%) had three teacher raters, 9 schools (29.0%) had four teacher raters, and 6 schools (16.1%) had five teacher raters.
Participants were informed that the data collected from the survey instruments would be used for research purposes only and would be confidential and anonymous. Names of individuals, schools, and divisions were not used in reporting results. Each participant was entered into a drawing as an incentive for participating in the study. Participants were given an index card to print their name and address and to indicate if they would participate in the drawing and/or their desire to obtain a copy of the survey results (see Appendix E).

**Instrumentation**

Four instruments were used to collect data for analysis. The MLQ-5X developed by Avolio and Bass (1995) was used to collect leadership orientation data. The MSQ developed by Weiss, Dawis, England, and Lofquist (1967) was utilized to evaluate teachers’ job satisfaction levels in various educational settings. Demographic data on the participants were collected using the MSQ. The spring 2001 Virginia SOL test scores for high school students were used as a measure of student achievement in the following curriculum areas: English, mathematics, social studies, and science. All tests assess cumulative knowledge, understanding of concepts, basic skills, and critical thinking skills in each subject domain. Scores were combined to obtain one score for each school in each core area. The English scores reflect assessments of reading/literary analysis, writing, and research skills. The math scores reflect assessments of mastery of Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II. The social studies scores reflect assessments of understanding of U.S. History, World History and Geography from prehistory to 1000 A.D., and World
History and Geography from 1000 A.D. to the 20th century. The science scores include assessments of understanding of Biology, Earth Science, and Chemistry. The Virginia SOL test results for the May 2001 testing session were obtained through the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) Web site. Finally, the SES score for each school was obtained through the VDOE Web site. Each of these instruments is described in the following sections.

The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire Form 5X (MLQ-5X)

Developed in 1995 by Avolio and Bass to measure leadership behavior, this instrument is a 45-item questionnaire answered by respondents using a 5-point Likert scale. Respondents rate the leadership behaviors and characteristics of the individual being measured with qualifiers that range from not at all to frequently, if not always. This instrument was developed for the empirical measurement of leadership style, particularly transformational leadership. The MLQ-5X measures nine leadership qualities that comprise three leadership styles. According to Avolio and his associates (1995), the instrument is the most commonly used and widely accepted measure of transformational leadership behavior available today.

Transformational leadership requires the building of highly effective relationships; thus, effective transformational leaders exhibit the following measurable behaviors as defined by the test: Idealized Influence (IIA and IIB), Inspirational Motivation (IM), Intellectual Stimulation (IS), and Individualized Consideration (IC). Idealized Influence can be viewed as a behavior and as an impact (on the follower). It
includes the following subset of behaviors as delineated by the test: Idealized Influence Attributed (IIA) and Idealized Influence Behavior (IIB).

As stated previously, the MLQ–5X measures a range of leadership behaviors, including transactional leadership behaviors. Transactional leadership has three measurable leadership behaviors as delineated by the test: Contingent Reward (CR), Management-by-Exception Active (MBEA), and Management-by-Exception Passive (MBEP). Laissez Faire (LF) represents nonleadership behavior.

The MLQ–5X (short form) also measures followers' perceptions of leaders' effectiveness (EFF), their satisfaction with the leader (SAT), and their willingness to give extra effort for the leader (EE). For the purposes of this study, the MLQ–5X was used to measure only the degree to which the principal's leadership behavior can be described as transformational. Again, transformational leaders exhibit these measurable behaviors as defined by the test: IIA and IIB, IM, IS, and IC. The scores were calculated based on these subscales, which are consistent with previous use of this instrument.

The authors of the instrument used two powerful confirmatory behavior analyses to refine the instrument and selected 45 items to be included in the MLQ–5X (short form). They selected four items for each leadership behavior that represent the needed content and the best fit (Avolio et al., 1995). Reliabilities for each leadership factor scale ranged from .74 to .94. All of the scales' reliabilities were generally high, exceeding standards for the internal consistency recommended in the literature.

Avolio and associates (1995) indicated that more than 200 researchers in doctoral or Master's degree programs have used the MLQ–5X since 1990, thus highlighting its
continued relevance as a research tool. Psychometric analysis of the MLQ-5X from nine studies representing $N = 2,080$ are listed in Table 1.

Table 1

MLQ-5X Means, Standard Deviations, and Internal Consistency Reliabilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MLQ-5X Factors</th>
<th>$M$</th>
<th>$SD$</th>
<th>$R$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Idealized Influence (IIA)</td>
<td>2.56</td>
<td>.84</td>
<td>.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idealized Influence (IIB)</td>
<td>2.64</td>
<td>.85</td>
<td>.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspirational Motivation (IM)</td>
<td>2.64</td>
<td>.87</td>
<td>.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intellectual Stimulation (IS)</td>
<td>2.51</td>
<td>.86</td>
<td>.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individualized Consideration (IC)</td>
<td>2.66</td>
<td>.93</td>
<td>.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contingent Reward (CR)</td>
<td>2.20</td>
<td>.89</td>
<td>.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management-by-Exception Active (MBEA)</td>
<td>1.75</td>
<td>.77</td>
<td>.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management-by-Exception Passive</td>
<td>1.11</td>
<td>.82</td>
<td>.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laissez-Faire (LF)</td>
<td>.89</td>
<td>.74</td>
<td>.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extra Effort (EE)</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td>.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effectiveness (EFF)</td>
<td>2.62</td>
<td>.72</td>
<td>.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction (SAT)</td>
<td>2.57</td>
<td>1.28</td>
<td>.94</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. $N = 2,080$ (Avolio et al., 1995)
The Minnesota Job Satisfaction Questionnaire—Short Form (MSQ)

The MSQ was developed as a result of research by the Minnesota Studies in Vocational Rehabilitation, also known as the Work Adjustment Project, on the general problem of adjustment to work. The MSQ is designed to identify a group’s level of satisfaction, and rates participants’ responses on a 5-point scale, with each item having a value of 1–5.

The MSQ measures the job satisfaction of employees in a number of fields, including education. Researchers have used the MSQ on a variety of educational careers since the 1980s, including vocational teachers, superintendents, librarians, special education administrators, special education teachers, and business educators (Bradfield, 1993; Cummings, 1994; Eickholt, 1994; Garcia, 1980; Griesgraber, 1988; Mello, 1986; Swe, 1981; Toukenon, 1981). In short, an extant body of research in education has depended upon the utilization of the MSQ. In addition to the reliability and validity of the instrument, it has a history of utility and relevance in assessing the job satisfaction of educators; thus, it is appropriate for use in this study.

The MSQ consists of 20 items rated on a 5-point Likert scale. There are five response selections for each item: 1 = very satisfied, 2 = satisfied, 3 = neither (dissatisfied or satisfied/average satisfaction), 4 = dissatisfied, and 5 = very dissatisfied (Weiss et al., 1967). Job satisfaction was measured by 20 items on the MSQ—Short Form.

The MSQ has three scales: intrinsic satisfaction, extrinsic satisfaction, and general satisfaction. The scale scores are determined by calculating the weights for the responses...
chosen for the items in each scale. The total score was the measure used in this study to represent the general satisfaction level of the participants.

Reliability of the MSQ. The MSQ reliability coefficient is high. The coefficients varied from .77 to .82 for the extrinsic satisfaction scale. For the intrinsic satisfaction scale, the coefficients range from .84 to .91. The median reliability coefficients were .86 for intrinsic satisfaction, .80 for extrinsic satisfaction, and .90 for general satisfaction (Weiss et al., 1967).

Validity of the MSQ. The validity of an instrument concerns the extent to which it measures what it is supposed to measure. The MSQ was designed for the purpose of appraising constructs (Ary, Jacobs, & Razavich, 1990). The validity of the MSQ–Short Form was based on a subset of the Long Form items; therefore, validity may be inferred from the validity of the Long Form. The MSQ provides reliable, valid, and well-normed information about intrinsic, extrinsic, and general satisfaction levels using 20 items.

Demographic information profile. Demographic information on participants was collected using the MSQ–Short Form. Each study participant was asked the following questions:

1. What is your gender?
2. When were you born?
3. What is the number of years of schooling you have completed, including postgraduate work?

4. What is your present job called?

5. What do you do at your present job?

6. How long have you been at your present job?

7. What would you call your occupation or usual line of work?

8. How long have you been in this line of work?

Virginia Standards of Learning

Virginia schools have a relatively new accountability system that includes standardized test scores as criteria for school accreditation. The test scores are derived from the students’ performance on the Virginia SOL assessments in several subject areas. Virginia adopted the SOL tests in June of 1995. The SOL tests outline achievement expectations for students in the four core areas of English, mathematics, science, and social studies. The SOL tests are designed to show how well a child has mastered the standards of learning in each content area. The SOL tests do not measure one student against another, but rather measure each student against a specific body of skills and knowledge. Schools receive an accreditation rating once they meet the standards set forth in the Standards of Accreditation. The potential accreditation ratings are as follows:

1. Fully Accredited—Schools that meet all standards set forth in the Standards of Accreditation.

2. Provisionally Accredited—Schools that meet annual progress benchmarks.
3. Accredited with Warning—Schools whose scores are 20 or more percentage points below annual progress benchmarks.

The first SOL tests were administered in the spring of 1998 to students in grades 3, 5, and 8 as well as those in certain high school courses. Each subsequent year, the SOL tests are administered in the spring; retakes are given in the summer and fall unless directed otherwise by the Virginia Board of Education. The SOL tests are scored on a scale from 0–600. The pass/proficient score is 400–499, and the pass/advanced score is 500–600. Failing scores fall below 400. Close analysis of the data from the 1999 spring SOL test scores shows that many of the division’s schools recorded substantial gains. Statewide scores reported in August of 1999 showed gains in all subjects at all grade levels. In 1999, only seven schools statewide met accreditation standards that will take effect in 2006–2007 (VDOE, 1999). Thus, it is important to investigate the variables, as in the present research, to account for the improvement in test scores in some schools and the lack of improvement in others (i.e., the role teachers, SES, and administrators play in this reform effort).

The Virginia Standards of Learning Assessments

The spring 2001 English, math, social studies, and science SOL scores for high school students were used for this study. The data on the SOL scores were collected from the VDOE Web site. For the purposes of this study, the scores were combined by core subject.
Reliability of the Virginia SOL assessments. The developers of the Virginia SOL tests used the Kuder-Richardson Formula #20 (KR-20) as the statistical measure of test reliability. The SOL English: Writing assessment is the only exception as person separation reliability was used. The KR-20 is a traditional procedure designed to determine the degree to which the test questions consistently measure the same body of content and skills. The KR-20 values on the high school SOL tests ranged from .85 on the geometry assessment to a high of .91 on the World History and Geography prehistory to 1000 A.D. assessment (VDOE, 1999). Reliability coefficients for each test are listed in Table 2.
### Table 2

**KR-20 Reliability Coefficients for High School SOL Tests**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOL test</th>
<th>Number of test questions</th>
<th>KR-20</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English: Reading/Literature &amp; Research</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>0.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Algebra I</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>0.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geometry</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>0.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Algebra II</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>0.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. History</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>0.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World History/Geography to 1000 A.D.</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>0.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World History/Geography from 1000 A.D.</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>0.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biology</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>0.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earth Science</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>0.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemistry</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>0.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>31(^a)</td>
<td>0.86(^b)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\) 30 multiple-choice items and 1 writing prompt

\(^b\) person separation reliability

Validity of the Virginia SOL assessments. The developers of the Virginia SOL assessments followed three procedures to ensure the validity of the tests. The first procedure ensured content validity. Virginia educators with experience and expertise in the targeted content area and grade level were selected to serve on a Content Review Committee. The committee procedurally reviewed test items and determined their field-test status. For the second validity procedure, the committee reconvened after field testing and used field-test statistics to determine if questions would appear in operational test forms. The following statistical procedures were used: Traditional Item Statistics, Rasch Item Statistics, and Differential Item Functioning. The third type of validity evidence was based on a correlation between the SOL tests and other similar standardized tests administered to Virginia students. Validity coefficients were used to assess the relationships between the SOL tests and the Stanford 9 and the Literacy Passport Test. The results are presented in Table 3.
Table 3

Pass Rates on Certain High School SOL Tests Correlated with National Percentile Ranks on the Grade 11 Stanford 9 Tests

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Certain high school SOL test (Spring 1998)</th>
<th>Grade 11 Stanford 9 test (Spring 1997)</th>
<th>Spearman rank order correlation coefficients (Number of schools)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SOL English: Reading/Literature and Research with Stanford 9 Reading Vocabulary</td>
<td>.57 (315)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOL English: Reading/Literature and Research with Stanford 9 Reading Comprehension</td>
<td>.64 (315)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOL English: Reading/Literature and Research with Stanford 9 Total Reading</td>
<td>.62 (315)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOL English: Writing with Stanford 9 Language</td>
<td>.71 (313)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOL Algebra I with Stanford 9 Total Mathematics</td>
<td>.53 (312)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOL Geometry with Stanford 9 Total Mathematics</td>
<td>.71 (308)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOL Algebra II with Stanford 9 Total Mathematics</td>
<td>.66 (307)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. Source: Virginia Department of Education Web site, February 1999.*
Socioeconomic Status

Information on SES was obtained through the VDOE Web site and was represented by the percentage of students at each school receiving free and reduced-price lunches in the school lunch program (see Appendix G). These data are admittedly less accurate at the high school level than for elementary and middle schools, but no more satisfactory method has been developed for determining SES at the high school level.

Data Collection Procedures

The following steps were taken to gather the data necessary to conduct this study. First, the publishers and copyright holders of the material granted permission to use the MLQ-5X and the MSQ instruments in this study (see Appendixes A and B). The SES score was collected from the VDOE Web site. Next, each of the participating school divisions was contacted via telephone or e-mail to obtain information regarding procedures for gaining permission to conduct research (see Appendix C).

Once procedural processes were established, the necessary requirements to conduct research in Region 2 school divisions were completed. The principals from each participating high school were contacted for the purposes of explaining and garnering support for the study. They were informed of the study and its purpose, assured of the confidentiality of their teachers’ responses, and invited to submit questions via phone, fax, mail, or e-mail. Many of the principals desired confirmation from their central office before the survey packet was sent to their school. In total, 31 schools agreed to participate.
out of the 49 schools in Region 2. There were four school divisions that chose not to participate and one that did not meet the timeframe guidelines.

Once permission was obtained from the principal, mail-coded instrumentation packets and human subjects participant consent forms were assembled and mailed to the participating schools. Principals were instructed to give the packets out to 5 randomly selected teachers. As a follow up, a personalized note was written to the principals thanking them for their valuable time and commitment to participate in the study. Additionally, principals were reminded to look for the quantitative instrumentation packets to arrive at their schools within 2 weeks. To generate more participants for the study, any school division that did not respond to the initial letter soliciting participation received five instrumentation packets—specifically, the packets were sent at random to high schools. This process generated inclusion of 5 more high schools.

Each packet included: a cover letter outlining directions for completing the surveys, the informed consent form, one MLQ–5X survey, one MSQ, a return postcard to enter a cash drawing and/or to request study results, and a return envelope. Surveys were coded for tracking purposes in the event incomplete surveys were returned. A survey with more than 25% of the questions unanswered would have been considered incomplete. Incomplete surveys received prior to 1 week before the deadline would have resulted in a personal phone call to the teacher in an attempt to solicit additional answers. Any incomplete surveys received within 1 week of the deadline would not have been included in the study. These contingency plans for incomplete surveys were not utilized, however, as all surveys submitted were complete. If completed surveys were not received
within 2 weeks of the mailing, follow-up telephone calls were made to the building principal and reminders were sent to the teachers requesting the survey's return. There was one school division that granted the researcher permission but did not meet the timeframe to conduct the study.

Once an acceptable quantity of surveys were returned, the MLQ-5X survey, the MSQ-Short Form, the SES, and the test scores representing each subject area were entered in an Excel spreadsheet and imported into SPSS, a statistical software program. The demographic information was organized as it was collected from each participant, then entered into an Excel spreadsheet and imported into SPSS.

Data Analysis

Out of 155 teachers were asked to complete the informed consent, the MLQ-5X, the MSQ-Short Form, and the demographic information profile data sheet included on the MSQ. 114 teachers responded to the surveys. After 3 of the 5 teacher surveys from a single school had been collected, that school was included in the study. The returned MLQ-5X and MSQ forms were segregated by school and scored individually. The sums of the scores for each instrument were combined to represent one composite for the transformational leadership score for the MLQ-5X and one composite score for the MSQ-Short Form (general satisfaction). Thus, each school in the study had the following numerical measures: the MLQ-5X, the MSQ, SES, and the SOL score for each core subject. Statistical analysis was performed on the data collected following the data reduction.

---
Research Question

The following research question guided this inquiry: Can transformational leadership, teacher job satisfaction, and SES predict student achievement?

To address the research question, student achievement was regressed over the measures of transformational leadership, teacher job satisfaction, and SES to determine if any or all of these measures affected student achievement. A multiple regression analysis beginning with an evaluation of the full model was performed. Coefficients of determination were reported as a means of assessing the levels of student achievement variability accounted for by teacher job satisfaction, principal leadership style, and the SES of the school.

Summary

This study was designed to explore the relationships between principal leadership style, teacher job satisfaction, school SES, and student learning outcomes. Chapter 3 contained details regarding the research procedures and instrumentation used to conduct this study as well as the sample participants and methodology. The results of the data analysis are presented in chapter 4.
Chapter 4

Results

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between three predictor variables and student achievement scores. The three-predictor variables were (a) transformational leadership style of the building principal, (b) teacher job satisfaction, and (c) SES. Thirty-one high schools participated in the study. Of those 31 schools, 114 teachers provided responses to survey questions on the MSQ-Short Form and the MLQ-5X that rated their job satisfaction and principal’s leadership style. The spring 2001 Virginia SOL scores for English, mathematics, social studies, and science were obtained from the VDOE Web site to determine achievement performance levels of each high school. The SES of each school was also obtained from the VDOE Web site and was denoted as a percentage indicating the ratio of students within the school’s population who had applied and qualified for free and reduced-price lunches (see Appendix G).

Chapter 4 contains the results of the analyses of the data, the research findings of this study in tabulated form, and a summary of the findings.

Results of the Analyses

A total of 114 teachers from 31 schools participated in this study. Only schools with at least 3 teacher respondents were included in the data. To develop the school-level data, the teachers from each school were aggregated to form a school-wide rating for that
institution. For the 31 schools in the final sample, 16 schools (51.6%) had three teacher raters, 9 schools (29.0%) had four teacher raters, and 5 schools (16.1%) had five teacher raters.

Table 4 displays the demographics of the teacher sample. Approximately three quarters of the teachers (76.3%) were female, and the mean age of the teachers was 44.50 years ($Mdn = 44.50$), with a standard deviation of 8.67 years. The mean total years of education was 17.87 years ($Mdn = 18.00$), with a standard deviation of 1.36 years. The number of years spent at the currently assigned school ranged from 1 year to 34 years, with a mean of 13.21 years ($Mdn = 11.00$), and a standard deviation of 9.09 years. The number of years in the teaching profession ranged from 1 year to 38 years, with a mean of 17.99 years ($Mdn = 18.00$), and a standard deviation of 8.85 years (see Table 4).
Table 4

Demographics of the Teacher Sample (N=114)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Mdn</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>23.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>76.3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age of teacher</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>44.50</td>
<td>8.67</td>
<td>44.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26–29 years</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30–39 years</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>22.8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40–49 years</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>38.6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50–63 years</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years of education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>17.87</td>
<td>1.36</td>
<td>18.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16–17 years</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>36.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 years</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>36.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19–20 years</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>28.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Table 4 continues)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Mdn</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Years at school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1–4 years</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>13.21</td>
<td>9.09</td>
<td>11.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5–9 years</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>21.1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10–14 years</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>25.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15–19 years</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20–29 years</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30–34 years</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years in profession</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>17.99</td>
<td>8.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1–4 years</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5–9 years</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10–19 years</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>38.6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20–29 years</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>30.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30–38 years</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5 displays the reliabilities for selected factors based on the summarized data for the 31 participating schools. For the MSQ–Short Form, the Cronbach alphas for intrinsic satisfaction, extrinsic satisfaction, and general satisfaction collected were $r = .86$, $r = .86$, and $r = .90$, respectively. Principal leadership was measured using three scales of the MLQ–5X that assess Transformational ($r = .97$), Transactional ($r = .38$), and Laissez-Faire ($r = .69$) leadership behaviors (see Table 5).

Table 5

**Reliabilities for Selected Factors ($N = 114$)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>$M$</th>
<th>$SD$</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>High</th>
<th># of Items</th>
<th>Alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher satisfaction (MSQ–Short Form)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intrinsic</td>
<td>51.87</td>
<td>3.64</td>
<td>44.40</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extrinsic</td>
<td>20.70</td>
<td>3.83</td>
<td>11.67</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General</td>
<td>80.33</td>
<td>7.49</td>
<td>65.50</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal leadership (MLQ–5X)$^a$</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transformational</td>
<td>3.06</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td>1.40</td>
<td>3.70</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transactional</td>
<td>2.13</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>2.83</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laissez-Faire</td>
<td>0.66</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$^a$ Scale ratings: 0 = *Not at all* to 4 = *Frequently, if not always.*
Table 6 displays the Pearson product moment correlations between measurements of school characteristics and school performance based on the school's English, math, social studies, and science scores. School characteristics included the three measures of (a) principal leadership with regard to transformational leadership style (MLQ-5X), (b) teacher satisfaction (MSQ-Short Form), and (c) SES (percentage of students qualifying for a free or reduced-price lunch). The percentage of SES students had strong negative or inverse relationships with the school’s English, math, social studies, and science SOL test scores. All correlations were significant at the $p < .005$ level (see Table 6).
Table 6

Correlations Between School Characteristics and School Performance ($N = 31$)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Math</th>
<th>Social Studies</th>
<th>Science</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher satisfaction (MSQ–Short Form)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intrinsic</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extrinsic</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SES</td>
<td>-.65****</td>
<td>-.51***</td>
<td>-.68****</td>
<td>-.75****</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal leadership (MLQ–5X)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transformational</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transactional</td>
<td>-.40*</td>
<td>-.26</td>
<td>-.38*</td>
<td>-.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laissez-Faire</td>
<td>-.17</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td>-.16</td>
<td>-.13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .005$. **** $p < .001$. 

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Table 7 displays the comparison of selected factors based on the school’s level of accreditation. This comparison was made using a discriminant function analysis. The independent variables included principal’s degree of transformational leadership, teacher job satisfaction, and the SES of the school. Schools with a provisional rating had a higher percentage of low-SES students \( (p < .001) \). Teacher job satisfaction and transformational leadership were not significant predictors in the model (see Table 7). Overall, 18 of the 31 schools (58.1\%) were provisionally accredited. The resulting classification table (Table 8) correctly classified 83.9\% of the schools. More specifically, the model correctly classified 14 of 18 provisionally accredited schools (77.8\%) and 12 of 13 fully accredited schools (92.3\%) (see Table 8).
Table 7

Comparison of Selected Factors Based on Level of Accreditation: Discriminant Function Analysis (N = 31)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Provisional</th>
<th>Full accreditation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transformational lead</td>
<td>.034</td>
<td>3.02 (0.67)</td>
<td>3.12 (0.47)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher satisfaction</td>
<td>-.283</td>
<td>53.97 (21.19)</td>
<td>62.23 (20.19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SES</td>
<td>.971</td>
<td>37.34 (16.25)</td>
<td>14.79 (8.25)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Wilks' lambda test of equality of group means

**** p < .001

\(^2\) Wilks’ lambda test of equality of group means
Table 8

*Classification Analysis for Level of Accreditation (N = 31)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predicted group membership</th>
<th>Provisional</th>
<th>Full accreditation</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Actual membership</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provisional</td>
<td>14 77.8</td>
<td>4 22.2</td>
<td>18 100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full accreditation</td>
<td>1 7.7</td>
<td>12 92.3</td>
<td>13 100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Overall percentage of correctly classified cases = 83.9%

*Research Question*

Can transformational leadership, teacher job satisfaction, and SES predict student achievement?

*Findings*

Multiple regression analyses were conducted to determine if the SOL scores on each of the core tests could be predicted using the three predictor variables of transformational leadership, teacher job satisfaction, and SES. Four regressions were tabulated using each of the SOL tests (English, math, social studies, and science) as the
criterion variable. All four regression analysis models demonstrated significant effects at the .05 level. Specifically, the models are displayed as follows: English (Table 9), Math (Table 10), Social Studies (Table 11), and Science (Table 12).

As shown in Table 9, the English performance level was predicted based on the three variables. Overall, the full regression model was significant \( \left( p = .001 \right) \). An inspection of the beta weights indicated that the SES of the school was inversely related to English performance levels and was the only variable of the three that significantly contributed to the prediction of SOL English performance.

Table 9

Multiple Regression of School English Performance Predicted by Selected Factors
\((N = 31)\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>( B )</th>
<th>( SE )</th>
<th>Beta</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transformational leadership</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General teacher satisfaction</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SES</td>
<td>-.30</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>-.65****</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\* \( p < .05 \). ** \( p < .01 \). *** \( p < .005 \). **** \( p < .001 \).

\( F (3, 27) = 7.00, p = .001, R^2 = .44 \)
As shown in Table 10, math performance level was predicted with these three variables. Overall, the full regression model was significant ($p = .04$). An inspection of the individual beta weights revealed that the SES of the school was inversely related to math performance levels and was the only variable of the three that significantly contributed to the prediction of SOL math performance ($p = .01$).

Table 10

*Multiple Regression of School Math Performance Predicted by Selected Factors (N = 31)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>$B$</th>
<th>$SE$</th>
<th>Beta</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transformational leadership</td>
<td>-1.67</td>
<td>6.37</td>
<td>-.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General teacher satisfaction</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SES</td>
<td>-.44</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>-.49**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .005$. **** $p < .001$.

$F(3, 27) = 3.15, p = .04$. $R^2 = .26$

The social studies performance level was predicted based on the three variables (see Table 11). Overall, the full regression model was significant ($p = .001$). An inspection of the individual beta weights revealed that only the SES of the school was inversely related to the school's performance in social studies as measured on the SOL tests and was the only independent variable of the three that significantly contributed to the prediction of SOL social studies performance.
Table 11

*Multiple Regression of Social Studies Performance Predicted by Selected Factors*

*(N = 31)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>Beta</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transformational leadership</td>
<td>-1.85</td>
<td>3.76</td>
<td>-0.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General teacher satisfaction</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SES</td>
<td>-.42</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>-.66****</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .05. ** p < .01. *** p < .005. **** p < .001.*

\[ F (3, 27) = 7.92, \ p = .001. \ \ \ \ R^2 = .47 \]

As shown in Table 12, the science performance level was predicted based on the three variables. Overall, the full model was significant *(p = .001)*. Inspection of the individual beta weights revealed that only the SES of the school was inversely related to its science scores taken from the SOL tests *(p = .001)*, and was the only variable of the three that significantly contributed to the prediction of SOL science performance (see Table 12).
Table 12

Multiple Regression of Science Performance Predicted by Selected Factors ($N = 31$)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>$B$</th>
<th>$SE$</th>
<th>Beta</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transformational leadership</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>3.26</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General teacher satisfaction</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>-.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SES</td>
<td>-.46</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>-.75****</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .005$. **** $p < .001$.

$F (3, 27) = 11.79, p = .001. R^2 = .57$

Additional Findings

An additional series of models were created by adding the principal's transactional leadership score to the independent variables of transformational leadership, general teacher satisfaction, and SES. These models were examined in relation to the English scores, math scores, social studies scores, and science scores of the Virginia SOL tests. All four regression analysis models demonstrated significant effects at the .05 level. Specifically, the models are displayed as follows: English (Table 13), Math (Table 14), Social Studies (Table 15), and Science (Table 16).

As shown in Table 13, the English performance level was significant ($p = .001$). Inspection of the individual beta weights revealed that SES was inversely related to the
English performance ($p = .001$), as well as to the principal's transactional leadership style ($p = .01$).

Table 13

*School English Performance Predicted by Selected Factors With Transactional Leadership Score ($N = 31$)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>Beta</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transformational leadership</td>
<td>3.08</td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td>.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transactional leadership</td>
<td>-10.18</td>
<td>3.81</td>
<td>-.37**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SES</td>
<td>-.28</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>-.63****</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* $p < .05$.  ** $p < .01$.  *** $p < .005$.  **** $p < .001$.

$F (4, 26) = 8.22, p = .001$.  $R^2 = .56$

As shown in Table 14, the math performance level was significant ($p = .05$) as well. Inspection of the individual beta weights revealed that only SES was inversely related to the school's performance in math ($p = .01$).
Table 14

School Math Performance Predicted by Selected Factors With Transactional Leadership

Score (N = 31)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>Beta</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transformational leadership</td>
<td>.52</td>
<td>6.56</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transactional leadership</td>
<td>-11.60</td>
<td>9.52</td>
<td>-.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General teacher satisfaction</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SES</td>
<td>-.43</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>-.48**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p < .05. ** p < .01. *** p < .005. **** p < .001.

$F (4, 26) = 2.77, p = .05. R^2 = .30$

As shown in Table 15, the social studies performance level was significant ($p = .001$). Inspection of the beta weights revealed that the SES was inversely related to the social studies performance ($p = .001$). Moreover, the principal's transactional leadership score was also inversely related ($p = .04$).
### Table 15

*School Social Studies Performance Predicted by Selected Factors With Transactional Leadership Score (N = 31)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>Beta</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transformational leadership</td>
<td>.38</td>
<td>3.65</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transactional leadership</td>
<td>-11.78</td>
<td>5.30</td>
<td>-.31*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General teacher satisfaction</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SES</td>
<td>-.40</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>-.64****</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* * p < .05. ** p < .01. *** p < .005. **** p < .001.

\[ F(4, 26) = 8.04, p = .001. R^2 = .55 \]

Lastly, as shown in Table 16, the science performance level was significant \( p = .001 \) as well. Inspection of the individual beta weights revealed that only the SES of the school was inversely related to the school's science scores \( p = .001 \).
Table 16

*School Science Performance Predicted by Selected Factors With Transactional Leadership Score (N = 31)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>Beta</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transformational leadership</td>
<td>1.49</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>0.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transactional leadership</td>
<td>-6.88</td>
<td>4.84</td>
<td>-0.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General teacher satisfaction</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>-0.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SES</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>-0.74***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p < .05. ** p < .01. *** p < .005. **** p < .001.

F (4, 26) = 9.68, p = .001. R² = .60

Although no links were found between transformational leadership and student achievement, some were found between transactional leadership and student scores. Specifically, the degree of the principal’s transactional leadership style adversely affected student scores in English and social studies.

*Summary*

Three instruments were used to analyze the data: the MLQ-5X on leadership, the MSQ-Short Form on job satisfaction, and the spring 2001 Virginia SOL test scores. The purpose of this research was to determine if the full regression model—transformational leadership of the principal, teacher job satisfaction, and the SES of the school—could
predict student achievement as measured by the percentage of high school students passing the SOL tests.

Through the use of quantitative, statistical procedures, significant relationships were found to exist between the SES variable and student achievement. Of the three variables, the SES variable was found to have the strongest relationship to student achievement. According to the results, no significant relationships existed between the transformational leadership style of the principal or teacher job satisfaction and the percentage of students passing the SOL tests.

The single persistent and significant relationship determined from the data was that between the SES of the school and student achievement. The percentage of students who had passed the SOL tests was higher in schools where very few students were enrolled in the free or reduced-price lunch program. The SOL scores were lower in schools where a high percentage of students were enrolled in the lunch program. A negative correlation existed between a school's SES and student achievement scores across all four subject areas.

In summary, the significant relationships to student achievement across the board were found only within the SES variable. No significant relationships were found between student achievement and the transformational leadership and the teacher job satisfaction variables. A significant inverse relationship was found between transactional leadership and student achievement in English and social studies. Therefore, transformational leadership and teacher job satisfaction were not demonstrated to be significant predictors of student achievement. However, the relationship between
transactional leadership and lower student achievement implies that principal leadership does affect student achievement, albeit indirectly. Chapter 5 contains the interpretation and discussion of these results as well as implications for future research.
Chapter 5
Interpretations, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the potential links between the principal’s leadership style (specifically, the degree to which his or her leadership style can be described as transformational), teacher job satisfaction, and the SES of the school’s students and student achievement. In this chapter, the research findings are interpreted, including limitations of the study. Conclusions of the study and recommendations for implementation as well as suggestions for future research are also presented.

Interpretation of the Findings

In review, this research study sought to answer one research question: Can transformational leadership, teacher job satisfaction, and SES predict student achievement? The dependent variable in this study was student achievement as determined by students’ scores on the Virginia SOL tests. The three independent variables were the principal’s leadership style, teacher job satisfaction, and SES.

Study participants included 114 teachers from 31 schools across Virginia, with a survey return rate of 67%. Only schools with at least 3 teacher respondents were included in the study. To develop the school-level data, the teachers from each school were aggregated to form a school-wide rating for that institution. For the 31 schools in the final
sample, 16 schools (51.6%) had three teacher raters, 9 schools (29.0%) had four teacher raters, and 6 schools (16.1%) had five teacher raters.

To address the research question, student achievement was regressed over the measures of transformational leadership, teacher job satisfaction, and SES to determine if any or all of these measures affected student achievement. A multiple regression analysis beginning with an evaluation of the full model was performed. Coefficients of determination were reported as a means of assessing the variability of student achievement accounted for by principal leadership style, teacher job satisfaction, and the SES of the school’s students. A series of multiple regression analyses were conducted to determine the combination of independent variables that had significant impact upon the dependent variable. The .05 significance level was the criterion for the t and F statistic.

According to the demographic data, the studied group averaged 18 years of teaching experience and 13 years at their current location, which could account for the results: the majority of teachers were veterans of both the profession and their buildings, thereby limiting the effect of outside influences on their behavior. This fact also could have influenced the level of reported teacher satisfaction in ways as yet to be determined. An analysis of the data revealed that there were no significant relationships between the degree to which the principal’s leadership style could be defined as transformational, teacher job satisfaction, and percentage of students passing the Virginia SOL tests.

Due to unexpected results, two additional analyses were performed. First, a discriminant function analysis was conducted to determine if the level of school accreditation for selected variables made a difference in the findings. Next, a
classification analysis for level of accreditation was performed. The results of both analyses found no significant findings based on the level of school accreditation.

The single persistent and significant factor predicting student achievement as indicated by the data was the SES of the school. The percentage of students passing the SOL tests was higher in a school where very few students were enrolled in the free/reduced-price lunch program, and the SOL scores were lower at a school with a high percentage of students enrolled in the lunch program. In fact, a negative correlation was found to exist between a school’s SES and student achievement scores across all four subject areas.

Limitations of the Study

Several limitations of the study may have influenced the results. Specifically, although the findings of this inquiry may generalize to other geographical areas in the Commonwealth of Virginia and to high schools, this study focused on randomly selected teachers at high schools with a configuration of grades 9–12. Consequently, the findings are delimited to that population.

Additionally, the instrument used to measure student achievement in this inquiry may have inherent limitations. Some critics of the Virginia SOL program have questioned the reliability and validity of the Virginia SOL assessment instrument. Critics of standardized tests feel they generally do not adequately take into account the experiences of low-income students. However, the Virginia Department of Education has
taken the position that the instrument is a valid and reliable measure of student achievement.

The size of the sample used for this study is another possible limitation. In conducting multiple regression procedures, smaller sample sizes limit the statistical power. This study involved 114 teachers and 331 schools; obviously a larger sample would make violations of the assumptions more robust. However, solid predictors were aggregated in the study, confirming that minimum requirements were met.

Another limitation to the study was the response rate of the sample. Twenty-six percent of the sampled teachers did not respond to the surveys. Although in terms of statistical validity, this was a perfectly acceptable rate of response, obviously the more data obtained the more variability is reduced.

The assessment instruments used to measure teacher job satisfaction and principal leadership behaviors may have presented another limitation to this study because the possibility always exists that a given instrument does not fully capture the construct it seeks to measure. The MSQ-Short Form and the MLQ-5X, however, have both been field tested extensively.

The wide range of teaching experience found in the sample could have posed another limitation to the study. The experience of the teacher sample ranged from 1 year to 38 years. In this study, the sample contained 4 teachers in the profession for 1–4 years, 16 for 5–9 years, 44 for 10–19 years, 35 for 20–29 years, and 15 for 30–38 years. The mean was 18 years of teaching experience. Thus, the sample’s variation in level of teaching experience alone could have accounted for some of the findings. More
experienced teachers may well view these issues of leadership or variables dramatically differently than beginning teachers. For example, a first-year teacher hired upon the recommendation of the principal may perceive principal's leadership behavior much differently than a teacher who has been in that school for 20 or 30 years. Older teachers also may not view newer methods of administration favorably based solely upon criteria that have to do with long experience under hierarchical leadership systems. Veteran teachers have had the opportunity to work with many different administrators, so their responses may differ from new teachers with limited exposure to different principal leadership styles. Moreover, teacher job satisfaction perceptions may be significantly higher or lower for veteran teachers than for novices. For example, the fact that a teacher has remained in the profession for a number of years could be interpreted to indicate a high level of job satisfaction, whereas newer teachers have yet to decide whether to remain a teacher or not. In short, the research mechanism did not delineate these complex possibilities.

Finally, the means of determining SES may serve as a limitation in the study. The SES variable was very pervasive in its effects and may have reduced the emergence of the other variables. Also, using data on free and reduced-price lunches as the means of determining SES is more difficult at the high-school than at the elementary level. A variety of factors make older students less likely to apply and qualify for free and reduced-price lunches, such as peer pressure, early release, and lack of school-parent communication (see Appendix G).
Conclusions

The primary focus of this study was to test for an empirical link between the variables of principal leadership style, teacher job satisfaction, and SES and student achievement. This process assessed whether any of the variables predicted student achievement in isolation and/or in combination. Specifically, the type of leadership considered for the study was the model of transformational leadership proposed by Bass and Avolio (1994). Student achievement was regressed over the measures of transformational leadership, teacher job satisfaction, and SES; and all four regression analyses models demonstrated significant effects at the .05 level.

In examining the dependent transformational leadership variable in isolation, however, no overall link was found between the principal’s transformational leadership and student achievement in these schools, despite effective schools research that has resulted in suggestions of a direct connection between strong principal leadership and student achievement. Leithwood and Jantzi (1999, 2000) have pointed out that, according to the research, the behaviors, decisions, and attitudes of principals are associated with student achievement. Their findings were not directly supported by this study.

However, incidental findings indicate that a principal’s transactional leadership style negatively impacts student achievement in English and social studies. The more rigidly the principal adheres to transactional leadership behaviors, the lower the student standardized test scores are in both English and social studies. This not only implies a relationship between leadership style and student achievement, although not the strong
link expected, it also demonstrates an indirect link involving transformational leadership style. One might assume that the opposite would then be the case, with transformational leadership having a positive impact on student achievement in English and social studies. Burns (1978) described transactional and transformational leadership styles as being at opposite ends of a single spectrum. Bass and Avolio (1988, 1990) extended the construct considerably, but considered a continuum with transactional and transformational leadership styles falling at either end.

In examining the teacher job satisfaction dependent variable in isolation, no overall link was found between teacher job satisfaction and student achievement in these schools, either—in spite of multiple studies whose authors have concluded that teachers have an important role in student achievement (Allinder, 1995; Bandura, 1986; Cheng, 1996; Fritz & Miller-Heyl, 1995; Shann, 1998). Intuitively happy, dedicated, motivated, enthusiastic teachers do a better job of teaching students. The connection between teacher job satisfaction and student achievement was central to many studies. However, authors of those previous studies did not indicate whether an SES variable was taken into account relative to this assertion that teacher behavior effects achievement.

In examining the SES dependent variable in isolation, SES proved to be the single most persistent and significant factor in predicting student achievement. Currently, 12.3% of the population in Virginia, or approximately 795,000 people, live in poverty. Relevant to educational reform, 17.7% of Virginia children live in poverty (VDOE, 2000). As this study shows, SES affects student achievement significantly, more than school leadership practices or teacher job satisfaction. Coleman (1966) was among the first to point out that
SES is the best predictor of school success, and several other studies have related SES to student achievement as well. Although schools work diligently to raise student achievement scores and to lessen the gap between the various economic strata of students, the findings of this study indicate that SES does indeed make a difference in the educational performance of students. In short, poverty is the single most important variable, nearly to the exclusion of the others.

**Recommendations for Implementation**

After extensive review of the literature on this topic and careful examination of the relationships between the variables in this research, it becomes apparent that schools, as well as students, would benefit from changes that address all aspects of the student achievement facilitation model presented in Figure 2, especially the impact of SES. To this end, the following recommendations for the individual school sites, school divisions, and educational leaders are offered for consideration.

1. School improvement has been a political focus for the last two decades, but it is a topic easier to discuss than to remediate. Standardized tests are easily administered, and test scores are easily compared between neighboring schools in the media, but it is not easy to bring about actual improvement in test scores that suggests parity in the quality of education from one school to the next. Blame and responsibility are too easily placed when the outcomes are less than favorable. However, in spite of the predominance of SES as the variable that most affects test scores, the model of transformational leadership
proposed by Bass and Avolio (1994), and as used in this study, seems to be a model of utility for producing real school improvement.

Although this study does not support the link between transformational leadership and student achievement, it does suggest an inverse link between transactional leadership and student achievement. This study demonstrated, to a limited extent, that transformational leadership has potential in educational studies and practice (Jantzi & Leithwood, 1996; Leithwood, 1994; Leithwood et al. 1998; Vandenberghe, 1999). Transformational leadership was conceptualized in 1978, empiricized by Bass in 1985, and suggested for educational purposes by Sergiovanni in 1990. However, Leithwood has asserted that little research has been directed to the effects of transformational leadership in an educational setting. Certainly Leithwood and his associates have led the way in the first half of the 1990s in filling that gap, but much remains to be learned. Additional research in public schools will assist administrators interested in achieving the maximum level of motivation among their staff. This implication leads to the recommendation that administrators identified as transformational be recruited for employment and be retained within the school division as career leaders.

2. Although not found in this study, the literature review showed that teacher job satisfaction can be shaped by an individual's perception of the work site. Kim and Loadman (1994) indicated that teachers were driven by the desire to serve society and the public. Their professional interests are child centered, as they view teaching as a way to change the future by fostering the individual student. Teachers traditionally do not enter the field of teaching for monetary gain, but for the intrinsic gratification. Despite
compensation and extrinsic rewards not being the primary elements that attract teachers to the profession, they are necessary components that produce satisfied workers in the long run. This study does not support a link between teacher job satisfaction and student achievement; however, it is evident that leadership and management can encourage positive job-related attitudes by helping to create and to sustain work contexts that are conducive to high job morale, job satisfaction, and motivation (Evans, 2001; Knoop, 1994; Sergiovanni, 1991; Shann, 1998). The logical conclusion is that professionally satisfied principals and teachers indirectly increase the level of student achievement in their schools by expecting excellence and high performance from students.

3. Academic achievement is most closely linked to SES. The education and income disparities in this country are large, and worse, they are growing. Subsequently, gaps in student achievement across economic strata are also growing. The SES of a school proved to be an extremely powerful variable in this study. Many factors strongly related to a school’s SES—nutrition, abuse and neglect, time spent without parental supervision—impact student achievement but operate outside of the classroom. Therefore, state legislators should investigate these SES-related factors and their effects on achievement to address the issue of effective school reform. Noting the high incidence of poverty in the Commonwealth of Virginia, it is recommended that state legislators support mandates that have the potential to increase the income and benefits of families with children and support school programs that build strong family-school partnerships.
Recommendations for Future Research

Based upon the findings of this study, the following recommendations for further study are offered:

1. Transformational leadership, teacher satisfaction, and SES and effects on student achievement should be explored at the middle- and elementary-school levels.

2. Examining achievement over time rather than relying on a single SOL administration would be beneficial. Other researchers might look at a longitudinal study over a period of years to counter the effect of one strong or weak class, providing more accurate measures for an entire school. This suggestion is complicated by the principal turnover issue but is nonetheless a possibility.

3. This study should be replicated on a statewide level to give a broader demographic base to the findings and sample.

4. A mixed methodology study of quantitative and qualitative analysis should be conducted. The triangulation of data on subjective questions about principal leadership style, utilizing interviews to gain greater insight into their leadership behaviors, would be especially beneficial. Climate audits and surveys with respondents beyond just the teaching faculty would be helpful in correctly measuring these factors.

5. Further examination of variables such as parent educational background, race, parental supervision, nutrition, abuse, and neglect, in addition to those that were mentioned in this study that may impact SES and student achievement, would shed more light on these correlations.
Both the existing research literature and the results of this study indicate a definite link between SES and student achievement as well as probable causal links between principal leadership style and student achievement and teacher job satisfaction and student achievement. These probable links are made more complex by the impact of principal leadership style and the two-way nature of the link between teacher job satisfaction and student achievement (see Figure 2).
Transformational leadership shows promise for the uncertain future of education. If principals can be educated in the behaviors and attitudes of the transformational leader, then teacher satisfaction and commitment to the profession will grow. Teachers who are fulfilled by their professional life will teach with vigor and will ensure that public schools meet the increasingly demanding needs of the next generation of students. Caution is
needed, however, when investigating schools from neighborhoods of low SES. This is not an effort that advocates passing students along because of social or economic disadvantages. As Leslie R. Jacobs, Louisiana State Board of Education appointee, stated, “The greatest injustice we can do is continue to promote a child who can’t read, write, or think” (Hoff, 2002, p. 24). Educators, parents, and students should be held accountable. The teaching of the nation’s children is too important to be left unmonitored.

Although poverty is the single most apparent predictor of low test scores, in the absence of societal reforms that will ameliorate the conditions of poverty, both teacher satisfaction and administrative leadership seem necessary to address the immediate need for change. Furthermore, researchers have suggested positive correlations between these two factors and student achievement. There remains much that the proven techniques of transformational leadership can accomplish relative to teacher satisfaction and that both factors can accomplish relative to student achievement—even in the absence of sweeping reforms to counter the effects of poverty on students’ intellectual growth.
References


_*School Leadership & Management, 20, 415–434._*


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Appendix A

MLQ Web Permission Set Letter
Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ)

Web Permission Set

Leader Form, Rater Form, and Scoring
Key for MLQ Form (5x-Short)

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by
Bernard Bass and Bruce Avolio

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Appendix B

MSQ Permission Letter
Feb. 26, 2002

Juanita Nicholson
613 Whitenhaven Crescent
Chesapeake, VA 23325

Dear Juanita Nicholson:

We are pleased to grant you permission to use the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire 1977 short version for use in your research.

Vocational Psychology Research is currently in the process of revising the MSQ manual and it is very important that we receive copies of your research study results in order to construct new norm tables. Therefore, we would appreciate receiving a copy of your results including 1) demographic data of respondents, including age, education level, occupation and job tenure; and 2) response statistics including scale means, standard deviations, reliability coefficients, and standard errors of measurement. If your tests are scored by us, we will already have the information detailed in item #2.

Your providing this information will be an important and valuable contribution to the new MSQ manual. If you have any questions concerning this request, please feel free to call us at 612-625-1367.

Sincerely,

Dr. David J. Weiss, Director
Vocational Psychology Research
February 2002

To Whom It May Concern:

I am a practicing administrator in the Virginia Beach school system. I am also a doctoral candidate at The George Washington University. Dr. Linda Lemasters is my advisor. I am presently conducting a research project that will explore the ability to predict student achievement from the leadership style of the building principal, teacher job satisfaction, and the socioeconomic status of the school. My research will attempt to predict achievement scores.

I am requesting permission to conduct this study and include participation of high school teachers in your school division. I am further requesting that each teacher complete the following surveys: The Multifactor Leadership Behavior Questionnaire, The Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire, and the demographic profile. This will take approximately ten minutes of their time.

The results of this study will be reported collectively and will not include the names of any individuals or school divisions who participate in the study. A copy of the surveys to be used in this study is enclosed for you to review as well as a copy of my dissertation proposal.

If you have any questions or concerns about this research study, please feel free to contact me at home or at work at the numbers provided below. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Again, I thank you for your time and commitment to contributing to the enhancement and understanding.

Sincerely,

Juanita Nicholson, Ed. S.
Assistant Principal—Kellam High School
Doctoral Candidate/The George Washington University
Home: (757) 420 - 4179 Work: (757)427 - 3232

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Appendix C

Letter of Consent
To Whom It May Concern:

I am a practicing administrator in the Virginia Beach school system. I am also a doctoral candidate at The George Washington University. Dr. Linda Lemasters is my advisor. I am presently conducting a research project that will explore the ability to predict student achievement from the leadership style of the building principal, teacher job satisfaction, and the socioeconomic status of the school. My research will attempt to predict achievement scores.

I am requesting permission to conduct this study and include participation of high school teachers in your school division. I am further requesting that each teacher complete the following surveys: The Multifactor Leadership Behavior Questionnaire, The Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire, and the demographic profile. This will take approximately ten minutes of their time.

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If you have any questions or concerns about this research study, please feel free to contact me at home or at work at the numbers provided below. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Again, I thank you for your time and commitment to contributing to the enhancement and understanding.

Sincerely,

Juanita Nicholson, Ed. S.  
Assistant Principal – Kellam High School  
Doctoral Candidate/The George Washington University  
Home: (757) 420 - 4179  Work: (757) 427 - 3232
Appendix D

Letter to Teachers
Dear Associate,

You have been selected to participate in an educational study conducted by The George Washington University. This study is designed to explore whether or not there exists an empirical link between the degree to which the principal's leadership can be described as transformational, teacher job satisfaction, socioeconomic status of the school's population, and student achievement as measured by the standardized tests administered as part of the Virginia Standards of Learning initiative.

Enclosed are two surveys titled Multifactor Leadership Behavior Questionnaire and The Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire. In addition, please complete the demographic profile included on the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire. You are being asked to complete both surveys. In the first survey, you will describe the extent to which the statements describe your principal. The second survey, you will describe your level of satisfaction with your job in education. Your honesty and accuracy when completing the surveys will be greatly appreciated and important to the results of the study. The surveys should take no more than 15 minutes to complete.

You are one of several individuals who are being asked to complete these surveys: Your confidentiality and anonymity will be maintained through the entire study. No individual responses will be released or used for any purpose other than research. It is critical that you complete both surveys in order for the data set to be complete. Return both completed surveys in the envelope provided.

Thank you for your participation in this study. The small post card is for your name and address to be entered in a cash drawing and/or to request study results. Hopefully, this will encourage your participation and show my gratitude for your help. If you have questions regarding this study, or the instructions, please feel free to contact me or leave a message at the locations listed below.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Juanita Nicholson, Ed. S.
The George Washington University
Doctoral Candidate
(757) 420-4179
(757) 427-3232
E-mail: jlnichol@vbcps.k12.va.us
Appendix E

Survey Postcard
Please complete if you would like to participate in the cash drawing or if you would like a copy of the survey results. You will be notified if you are a winner.

Name ____________________________________

Address __________________________________

City ___________ State _______ Zip Code _____

Cash drawing □ Survey Results □
Appendix F

Letter of Approval From School Divisions
March 11, 2002

Ms. Juanita Nicholson
613 Whitehaven Crescent
Chesapeake, VA 23325

Dear Ms. Nicholson:

Your request to include Accomack County high school teachers in your research project is approved. The proposal presented in your letter of request is approved. Good luck to you in your study.

Should you have a question, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

William T. Winder
Assistant Superintendent for Administration and Human Resources

WTW/jt/nicholson-ltr #21
March 5, 2002

Juanita Nicholson, Assistant Principal
Kellam High School
2323 Holland Road
Virginia Beach, VA 23456-3599

Dear Ms. Nicholson,

Your request to conduct the survey submitted to our office related to principal leadership styles has been approved. You may attach this approval letter to your survey as a cover letter. This permission is granted with the understanding that the participation of the individual teachers is strictly voluntary and that no respondent is to be identified by name, school, or school division. You may not cite the name of any individual Chesapeake school involved or name the Chesapeake Public School System within the reporting of your findings without obtaining prior permission.

Best wishes for a successful completion of your study, and please contact my office if I can provide further assistance.

Sincerely,

Alan Vaughan
Supervisor of Student Services

The Chesapeake Public School System is an equal educational opportunity school system. The School Board of the City of Chesapeake also adheres to the principles of equal opportunity in employment and, therefore, prohibits discrimination in terms and conditions of employment on the basis of race, sex, national origin, color, religion, age, or disability.
March 26, 2002

Ms. Juanita Nicholson
613 Whitehaven Crescent
Chesapeake, Virginia 23325

Dear Ms. Nicholson:

The Research and Authorization Committee has met and reviewed your application to conduct the study entitled The Exploration of the Ability to Predict Student Achievement From Leadership Behaviors, Teacher Job Satisfaction, and Socioeconomic Status. I am pleased to inform you that the committee has approved your request with the following stipulations:

- Written permission from the high school principal must be obtained before conducting your study.
- Participation by building administrators and teachers will be strictly voluntary.
- No reference to Newport News Public Schools should be made in your report without written permission from the Office of Research and Program Evaluation.
- Upon completion of your dissertation, a final copy (abstract) should be sent to the Research Authorization Committee.

I wish you much success on your dissertation. Please contact me at 881-5061 ext. 112 or nstamm@tech.nn.k12.va.us if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Neil A. Stamm, Ed. D., Coordinator
Research and Program Evaluation

cc: High School Principals
March 25, 2002

Juanita Nicholson
613 Whitehaven Crescent
Chesapeake, VA 23325

Dear Ms. Nicholson,

I am pleased to inform you that your request to conduct an external study entitled “An Exploration of the Ability to Predict Student Achievement from Leadership Behaviors, Teacher Job Satisfaction, and Socioeconomic Status”, in our school division has been given conditional approval. The conditions for approval are based on voluntary participation by the school, and teachers involved, and a copy of the results of the survey be sent to the Office of Research and Evaluation, Portsmouth Public Schools upon completion. We have selected Norcom High School and suggest that you contact the principal to discuss, and agree upon the procedure to be used to select the five teachers that you need to be involved in your study.

We are sending Norcom High School a copy of this letter to inform them that this study has been approved and that you will be contacting them to request their participation.

Best wishes for continued success.

Sincerely,

Mr. Derrick Nottingham, Director

Walter Taylor, Jr., Principal
Norcom High School
1801 London Boulevard
Portsmouth, VA. 23704
Phone: (757) 465-2907

An Equal Opportunity Employer
March 5, 2002

Ms. Juanita Nicholson, Ed.S.
Kellam High School
2323 Holland Road
Virginia Beach, VA 23456

Dear Ms. Nicholson:

This letter serves as school division approval for your project, “An Exploration of the Ability to Predict Student Achievement from Leadership Behaviors, Teacher Job Satisfaction, and Socioeconomic Status.” As always, the final decision to participate rests with the principal.

Please do not hesitate to contact me at 426-5730 if you have any questions. Good luck with your project.

Sincerely,

E. Sidney Vaughn III, Ed.D.
Research Specialist

BSV/mm
pc: James R. Tucker, Assistant Superintendent for High School Education
High School Principals
March 13, 2002

Ms. Juanita Nicholson
613 Whitehaven Crescent
Chesapeake, VA 23325

Dear Ms. Nicholson:

Thank you for your recent letter requesting permission to conduct research in Williamsburg-James City County Schools. A copy of our Educational Research Policy is enclosed as a guideline for you to follow in presenting your request. Please submit your proposal to me following the attached guidelines.

Sincerely,

Raymond E. Vernall, Ed.D.
Acting Assistant Superintendent
for Academic Services

Encl.
Appendix G

Free and Reduced-Price Lunch Application
Dear Parent/Guardian:

The school serves nutritious meals every school day. Students may buy lunch for $1.40 in elementary schools and $1.50 in secondary schools. Students may also buy breakfast for $1.00. Students may receive free or reduced price meals. All meals served must meet standards established by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. However, if a child has been determined by a doctor to be disabled and the disability prevents the child from eating the regular school meal, the school will make substitutions prescribed by the doctor. If a substitution is prescribed, there will be no extra charge for the meal. If your child needs substitutions because of a disability, please get in touch with us for further information.

If you now get food stamps or Virginia Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) for your child, your child may get free meals. If your total household income is at or below the amounts on the income chart, your child may get free meals or reduced price meals for 40 cents for lunch, and 30 cents for breakfast. If you have a foster child who is the legal responsibility of the court, that child may be eligible for benefits regardless of your income.

HOW TO APPLY

Households that are receiving food stamps or VA TANF for their children do not have to fill out an application. School officials will notify you of your child's eligibility and your child will be provided free benefits, unless you tell the school that you do not want benefits. If you are not notified by September 6, 2002, submit an application at that time. The application must contain your child(ren)'s name(s), the food stamp number, and the signature of an adult household member.

If you do not receive food stamps benefits for your child, you must carefully complete the application and return it to the Office of Food Services. If you do not list a food stamp or VA TANF case number for the children you are applying for, then the application must have the students' names, the names of all household members, the amount and source of income each person received last month. An adult household member must sign the application and include his/her social security number. If he/she does not have a social security number, the word "NONE" must be written in the space provided.

INCOME CHART

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household Size</th>
<th>Annual</th>
<th>Monthly</th>
<th>Weekly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>16,391</td>
<td>1,366</td>
<td>316</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>22,089</td>
<td>1,841</td>
<td>425</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>27,787</td>
<td>2,316</td>
<td>535</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>33,485</td>
<td>2,791</td>
<td>644</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>39,183</td>
<td>3,266</td>
<td>754</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>44,881</td>
<td>3,741</td>
<td>864</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>50,579</td>
<td>4,215</td>
<td>973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>56,277</td>
<td>4,690</td>
<td>1,083</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you are applying for a foster child, who is the legal responsibility of the courts, the application must have the child's name, the child's "personal use" income, and the signature of an adult household member. We must have a separate application for each foster child.

An application that is not complete cannot be approved.

Before applying, refer to this chart, which lists the maximum family income allowed to qualify for reduced price meals.

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MILITARY INCOME GUIDELINES: Report all cash income (entitlements) before deductions. In addition to base pay, include monthly allowances for off-base housing, variable housing allowance, food subsistence, clothing maintenance, sea pay, etc. Military personnel should refer to their most current Leave and Earnings Statement (LES). If a military parent is deployed or is stationed in a location other than where the family resides, do not include him or her as a household member and report only the allotment sent home to the family. When deployment is over, or the parent returns to the location where the family resides, submit a new application to include him/her as a household member and report total monthly entitlements.

OTHER BENEFITS: Your child may be eligible for other benefits such as the Virginia children's health insurance program and Medicaid. The law now allows the school division to share your free or reduced price meal eligibility information with Medicaid and the Virginia children's health insurance program called Family Access to Medical Insurance Security (FAMIS). Medicaid and FAMIS can only use the information to identify children who may be eligible for free or low-cost health insurance, and to enroll them in either Medicaid or the Virginia children's health insurance program. These agencies are not allowed to use the information from your free or reduced price meal application for any other purpose. Medicaid officials or officials with the children's health insurance program may contact you to get more information. You are not required to allow us to share this information with Medicaid or the FAMIS program. Your decision will not affect your children's eligibility for free and reduced price meals.

If you do not want your information shared please check the appropriate box in Part 4 of the Free and Reduced Price Meal Application.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND NOTICE OF DISCLOSURE: School officials use the information on the application to determine if your child is eligible to receive free or reduced price meals and to verify eligibility. As authorized by the National School Lunch Act, the school division may inform officials connected with other child nutrition, health, and education programs of the information on your application to determine benefits for those programs or for funding and/or evaluation purposes.

VERIFICATION: School officials may check your eligibility at any time during the school year. School officials may ask you to send information to prove that your child should receive free or reduced price meals.

FAIR HEARING: If you do not agree with the decision of the school on your application or the results of verification, you may wish to discuss it with the school. You also have the right to a fair hearing. You can do this by calling or writing the following official:

Name: ____________________________ Phone: ____________________________
Address: ____________________________

REPORTING CHANGES: If your child receives free or reduced price meals based on your income, you must tell the school if your household size decreases or your income increases by more than $50 per month or $600 per year. If your child is eligible for free meals because he or she receives food stamps or VA TANF, you must tell the school when you are not receiving food stamps or VA TANF. You must then fill out another application giving new income information.

REAPPLICATION: You may reapply for free and reduced price meals any time during the school year. If you are not eligible now but have a change, such as a decrease in household income, an increase in household size, become unemployed or get food stamps or VA TANF for your child, fill out an application at that time.

LOST MEAL TICKETS: If your child's school uses meal tickets, three ticket replacements or special milk arrangements will be allowed for lost or stolen meal tickets. After three replacements, the student and parent(s) will be given at least one written warning prior to the refusal of additional meal ticket replacements. This warning will explain that the student has had numerous tickets replaced, and that the student will be expected to either bring their lunch from home or pay full price for school lunch.

IF YOU NEED HELP FILLING OUT THE APPLICATION FORM, PLEASE CONTACT THE OFFICE OF FOOD SERVICES AT ____________________________

You will be notified when your child's application is approved or denied.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Avenue SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (202) 720-5964 (voice and TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.
PART 1 - HOUSEHOLDS WITH A FOSTER CHILD COMPLETE PARTS 1, 2, 4, and 5.

A foster child is the legal responsibility of a welfare agency or court.

1. In Part 1, check the appropriate box to indicate that the child is a foster child and write the child’s personal use income in the space provided. Write “U” if the foster child does not get a personal use income. “Personal use” income is (a) money given by the welfare office identified by category for the child’s personal use, such as for clothing, school fees and allowances; and (b) all other money the child gets, such as money from his/her family or money from the child’s full-time or regular part-time jobs.

2. In Part 2, write the child’s full name, age, school, and grade.

3. In Part 4, check the appropriate box(es) if you do or do not want your information shared with various other programs. You are not required to complete this section in order to obtain meal benefits.

4. In Part 5, a foster parent, guardian or other representative of the child must sign and date the application.

PART 2 - STUDENT INFORMATION: ALL HOUSEHOLDS COMPLETE PART 2.

1. Print each student’s full name, age, school, and grade. Use another piece of paper if you need more space.

2. If applicable, list current Food Stamp or TANF case number(s) for each child. This number is in your approval letter from Social Services. If you list a Food Stamp or TANF number, you do not need to list names of household members or income. Skip part 3 and proceed with parts 4-5.

3. If the student has income from a full or part-time job, social security benefits, etc., list the gross income amount (before any deductions) in the Student Income column.

PART 3 - ALL OTHER HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS:

1. Write the names of all the members of your household that are NOT attending Virginia Beach City Public Schools. Include yourself, your spouse, all other children, grandparents, and other related and unrelated people living in your household. Use another piece of paper if you need more space.

2. Write the amount of income each family member receives before taxes or any other deductions are made. You MUST indicate how often this person receives this amount (Monthly, Biweekly, Weekly). Put the amount in the appropriate column: Job Earnings, Welfare/Child Support/Alimony, Pensions/Retirement/Social Security/etc., or Any Other Monthly Income. If any amount was more or less than usual, list that person’s usual income.

PART 4 - OTHER BENEFITS: Check the appropriate box(es) if you do or do not want your information shared with various other programs. You are not required to complete this section in order to obtain meal benefits.

PART 5 - SIGNATURE AND SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER: ALL HOUSEHOLDS COMPLETE PART 5.

1. All applications must be signed and dated by an adult household member.

2. The application must have the social security number of the adult who signs. If the adult does not have a social security number, write “none” in this space. If you listed a food stamp or TANF number for each child or if you are applying for a foster child, a social security number is not needed.

PRIVACY ACT STATEMENT: Section 9 of the National School Lunch Act requires that, unless your child’s food stamp or TANF case number is provided, you must include the social security number of the adult household member signing the application or indicate that the household member does not have a Social Security number. Provision of a social security number is not mandatory, but if a social security number is not given or an indication is not made that the signer does not have such a number, the application cannot be approved. The Social Security Number must be used to identify the household member in carrying out efforts to verify the correctness of information on the application. These verification efforts may be carried out through program reviews, audits, and investigations and may include contacting employers to determine income, contacting a food stamp or welfare office to determine current certification for receipt of food stamps or TANF benefits, contacting the state employment security office to determine the amount of benefits received and checking the documentation provided by household members to prove the amount of income received. These efforts may result in a loss or reduction of benefits, administrative claims or legal actions if incorrect information is reported.

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Vita
JUANITA NICHOLSON
Educational Administrator

Address: 613 Whitehaven Crescent
Chesapeake, Virginia 23325
Telephone: (757) 420-4179
E-Mail: jlnichol@vbcps.k12.va.us

FORMAL EDUCATION

• Pursuing Educational Doctorate, Administration & Policy Studies, 2003
  The George Washington University, Washington, DC
• Educational Specialist, Administration, 1999
  The George Washington University, Washington, DC
• Master of Arts, Education & Human Development, 1997
  The George Washington University, Washington, DC
• Bachelor of Science, Middle Grades Education, Endorsement in Mathematics, 1990
  East Carolina University, Greenville, North Carolina

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL, KELLAM HIGH SCHOOL
VIRGINIA BEACH PUBLIC SCHOOLS, VIRGINIA BEACH, VIRGINIA
2001 - Present

ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL, BRANDON MIDDLE SCHOOL
VIRGINIA BEACH PUBLIC SCHOOLS, VIRGINIA BEACH, VIRGINIA
1999 - 2001

ADMINISTRATIVE INTERN, TALLWOOD HIGH SCHOOL
VIRGINIA BEACH PUBLIC SCHOOLS, VIRGINIA BEACH, VIRGINIA
1999

GRADE 7 MATHEMATICS TEACHER, KEMPS LANDING MAGNET SCHOOL
VIRGINIA BEACH PUBLIC SCHOOLS, VIRGINIA BEACH, VIRGINIA
1997 - 1999

GRADE 8 MATHEMATICS TEACHER, LARKSPUR MIDDLE SCHOOL
VIRGINIA BEACH PUBLIC SCHOOLS, VIRGINIA BEACH, VIRGINIA
1994 - 1997

GRADE 6 MATHEMATICS & SCIENCE TEACHER, PLAZA MIDDLE SCHOOL
VIRGINIA BEACH PUBLIC SCHOOLS, VIRGINIA BEACH, VIRGINIA
1992 - 1994

INSTRUCTIONAL SPECIALIST
SYLVAN LEARNING CENTER, VIRGINIA BEACH, VIRGINIA
1992 - 1995

MATH, SCIENCE, & HEALTH TEACHER, FOREST HILLS MIDDLE SCHOOL
WILSON COUNTY SCHOOLS, WILSON, NORTH CAROLINA
1990 - 1992

ASSISTANT COORDINATOR OF RESIDENT EDUCATION
EAST CAROLINA UNIVERSITY, GREENVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA
1986 - 1990
COMMITTEES & ACTIVITIES

Research Chair, Virginia Beach Association of Secondary School Principals
Citywide Calendar Committee
Citywide Standards & Evaluation Task Force
Citywide Standards of Learning Technology Committee
School Planning Council
Mathematics Strategic Planning Committee
Traditional Discipline Committee
PSAT Leadership Team
Delta Sigma Theta Service Sorority

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

Association for Supervision & Curriculum Development 1999 - Present
Virginia Beach Association of Secondary School Principals 1999 - Present
Parent, Teacher, & Student Association 1992 - Present
Virginia Beach Association for Gifted & Talented 1998 - 1999
National Council of Teachers of Mathematics 1996 - 1999
National Education Association 1992 - 1999
Virginia Beach Educational Association 1992 - 1999

TRAINING & SEMINARS

Leadership Academy of Hampton Roads
William & Mary Leadership Institute
The Futures Project Principal Academy
High School Master Scheduler Course
Schedule Pro Training for Secondary Schools
Kagan Cooperative Learning Institute
Continuous Improvement Model Training
SASI Query Training
SASI Manager Training
Building a Community of Learners
Interdisciplinary Curriculum Training
Special Education Leadership Workshop
Facilitation Training
Assistant Principal’s Academy, The George Washington University
Administrators Summer Conference
New Administrator Orientation
National Council of Teaching Mathematics Conference
The Conference for Women

PUBLICATION & PRESENTATION

- Guest Lecturer on “Being a New Administrator”
  The George Washington University Principal Leadership Course
- Wrote “Planning for an Accelerated School” Article
  Teaching & Learning Newsletter, The George Washington University, Hampton Roads Center

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