Principals' Self-Efficacy as Instructional Leaders of Literacy

by

Kathleen Rachel Durance

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education

in

Educational Administration and Leadership

Department of Educational Policy Studies
University of Alberta

Abstract

This qualitative study was designed to address gaps in understandings of how school principals experience self-efficacy as instructional leaders of literacy in a context of standardized performance expectations. Anchored in Bandura's (1977; 1997; 2012) social cognitive theory of human agency, it explored principals' experiences with self-efficacy, collective efficacy, and proxy efficacy through semi-structured interviews with eight participants. Utilizing principles of qualitative research (Cresswell, 2015) and constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2014), analysis of findings suggested school principals with varied backgrounds experience accountability pressure for the literacy performance of their students as they grapple for credibility, negotiate locus of control through instructional actions, and develop their sense of self-efficacy through successful creation of instructional climates to promote students' measurable literacy growth. Conclusions drawn from these findings are: (a) instructional leadership of literacy occurred across a spectrum and (b) self-efficacy, collective efficacy, and proxy efficacy can be developed and intersect with literacy leadership in various ways along an instructional leadership spectrum. Recommendations include a process for utilizing the instructional leadership spectrum as a reflective tool for personal practice, policy analysis, and application of professional resources. Future research is invited to analyze the potential uses of this process as well as the Instructional Leadership Spectrum Model and the Model of Intersections and Sources of Self-Efficacy.

Keywords: Self-efficacy, collective efficacy, proxy efficacy, instructional leadership, literacy, school principals, instructional leadership spectrum, constructivist grounded theory

Preface

This thesis is an original work by Kathleen Rachel Durance. The research project, of which this thesis is a part, received research ethics approval from the University of Alberta Research Ethics Board, Project Name “PRINCIPALS’ SELF-EFFICACY AS INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERS OF LITERACY”, No. Pro00093864, October 22, 2019.

Dedication

To my principal participants, thank you for entrusting me with your experiences and insights and for inspiring me in my own leadership journey.

As a tribute to the healthcare professionals who became both public and private heroes during the COVID 19 pandemic, I have chosen pseudonyms for my participants that represent the doctors, nurses, respiratory therapists, and other health professionals whose perseverance and courage inspired me as I wrote this thesis.

Acknowledgements

With deep appreciation and thanks, I wish to recognize the following for their roles in support of this work:

Dr. Jose da Costa, my supervisor and mentor on this doctoral journey, for your patient determination to ensure I achieved my goal. I am indebted to your indefatigable kindness and exhortation.

My committee, Dr. Darryl Hunter and Dr. Noella Steinhauer, for your wisdom and willingness to partner with me in this exploration of school leadership.

George Hoyt, my principal throughout my doctoral program, for your unflagging support and encouragement as I balanced my roles as assistant principal and graduate student.

The Edmonton Public School Division for tuition support and the professional improvement leave that enabled me to engage in this research.

And finally:

Without the patience, sacrifice, and encouragement of my family, friends, and colleagues, this doctoral journey would have been impossible. To my husband, Jason, and daughter, Georgia, no one else will understand what you have given me in full-heartedly supporting your nerdy wife and mother. I love you!

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Chapter One—Introduction

I am a literacy specialist who finds instructional leadership of literacy challenging. Fifteen years of teaching language arts from kindergarten through grade nine and a Masters' degree in Language and Literacy have supported my ability to act as a leader of instruction, but I still encounter challenging complex literacy leadership issues. For the first time in history, school principals in Alberta must now hold and adhere to credentials based on a Leadership Quality Standard whose nine competencies are imbued with a heavy emphasis on instructional leadership. Evaluation of school principals' success in instructional leadership is tied to teacher assigned marks and standardized divisional and provincial assessments that require literacy skills in all subject areas. In school divisions utilizing site-based decision making, principals have sole authority over the literacy programming in their schools. Even for those with extensive literacy training and experience, such as I have at this point in my career, that responsibility is daunting. I come to this research with concern for school leaders who feel their knowledge of literacy instruction is limited and a desire to understand how school principals with diverse backgrounds cope with the high expectations laid out in the Leadership Quality Standard.

My first love was science. When I decided to become a teacher, I wanted to specialize in high school biology, but I did not enjoy higher mathematics. I compromised by pursuing an elementary degree with a plan to work in upper grades where the science was most interesting. I also loved music and thought I might work overseas someday, so all my optional courses revolved around English as a second language (ESL) and music. My entire Bachelor of Education degree included only one obligatory course in language arts curriculum and instruction which was shaped by the research interests of the given

instructor; the section I enrolled in featured a heavy emphasis on the professor's research interests in the speaking and representing strands of language arts through drama, and little on reading and writing. My enthusiasm for science must have shone through. Soon after I started teaching, I was invited by my science curriculum professor to participate in a two-year research project with the university aimed at beginning elementary science teachers. I was set to fulfill my science centred educational career, but the reality of teaching was not what I expected.

In the fall of 1999, I was offered my first long-term temporary contract: a combined class of grades one and two. It had taken almost a year to get into the school system so, with some trepidation, I took the job, planning to move up in grade levels as soon as possible. The school was small, the principal new, and the budget limited. I walked into a room with no books or reading materials beyond an old set of basal readers. The university science teachers' project kept my heart in the game and opened my eyes to the ways that young children learn but I was woefully unprepared and unskilled in teaching these young children how to read and write. Thankfully, my principal found some money and bought an updated set of leveled readers recommended by a district consultant. Between those and the help of my room-mate's mother, who was an elementary principal in another city, I survived that first year and most of my students did learn to read and write. The next year, my principal heard about a new district initiative providing professional learning sessions and coaching in literacy instruction. At a significant cost of time and resources, he signed up three of us, all new teachers, his entire kindergarten through grade three staff. I am at a loss to imagine how I could have continued in my career without that intervention. Unexpectedly, as my skills in teaching

language arts increased, I began to fall in love with emergent literacy; that moment when a child first realizes that they are a reader is magical.

I completed two years of district training in their literacy instruction program and continued with two follow-up years of extension work. It had a powerful, positive impact on my teaching. However, I still struggled with meeting the needs of all my students, especially those who still struggled with reading and writing. So, in 2005, with the support of my second principal, I began a Master of Education degree in Elementary Language and Literacy. To my disappointment, I discovered there was no silver bullet to solve all student reading challenges but, as with my district training, my skills as a literacy teacher improved. Over the next decade of my career, I devoted significant professional learning to literacy instruction and remediation. My second principal, like my first, was a secondary trained male with a mathematics and science background. He supported every endeavor I took to improve my literacy instruction and by the time we both ended up in another school together, he relied heavily on me for the literacy direction of the school. By the time he left for a new school, I was working as a full-time literacy coach and literacy intervention teacher.

As I have moved into progressively challenging formal leadership roles myself, I have seen first-hand the pressure principals were under to successfully lead their schools to higher results in reading and writing as measured by standardized tests, frequently without any prior background in language or literacy. Again, I continue to wonder how principals with diverse backgrounds cope with the pressures involved in acting as instructional leaders of literacy.

Even though the concept of role has been contested in sociology (Connell, 1979), the experienced role of a school principal is, without question, a complex endeavor and has become increasingly so over time. Not only are principals responsible for the overall management of their school site, they also must effectively cope with the often-conflicting demands of both internal and external stakeholders (Federici & Skaalvik, 2012; Fullan, 2014). Fifty years ago, school administration was viewed through a modernist lens where systems mirrored factory mechanization, the role of school had clear boundaries, and the hierarchical organization chart was predominant (Mombourquette, 2013; Sackney & Walker, 2006; Shafritz, Ott, & Jang, 2016). Our contemporary school principals work in contexts "characterized by a global community, a pluralistic social order, a multi-textured goal set, accountability, new technologies, and a diverse teaching and learning cadre" (Sackney & Walker, 2006, p. 341). Within this new complexity is a rising expectation of principal accountability for measurable student achievement, an expectation for principals to act as effective instructional leaders (Barber, Whelan, & Clark, 2011; Dufour & Marzano, 2011).

Alberta Professional Practice Standards and Certification

The Alberta Government's (2020) *Education Act* states principals must "provide instructional leadership in the school" (p. 131). On February 7, 2018, the Minister of Education for Alberta signed into law a new *Leadership Quality Standard* (*LQS*) coming into effect on September 1, 2019 and forming the basis for new principal certification requirements. The standard reads, "Quality leadership occurs when the leader's ongoing analysis of the context, and decisions about what leadership knowledge and abilities to apply, result in quality teaching and optimum learning for all school students" (Alberta

Education, n.d., p. 3). This standard is described through nine different competencies with lists of indicators for each. The *LQS* document goes on to explain principal accountability for fulfilling the competencies:

> The Leadership Quality Standard applies to all leaders employed in a school authority. All leaders are expected to meet the Leadership Quality Standard throughout their careers. Principals as defined under the School Act [*now Education Act*] are accountable for the demonstration of all the competencies. (p. 3)

Of the nine competencies in the *LQS*, inferences to instructional leadership occur throughout and are specifically addressed in competency number six: *Providing Instructional Leadership.* As school principals in Alberta anticipate formal certification requirements and processes for the first time, understanding and implementing the standards in the *LQS* is imperative.

Provincial leadership certification had two stages. Prior to September 1, 2019, all current principals, assistant principals, and central office leaders who held Alberta teaching credentials, were required to complete a government approved two-day training course on the new *LQS* and then to apply for certification. Any teachers moving into a formal principal position after September 1, 2019, are now required to complete approved university coursework prior to applying for certification.

The Significance of the Principal as an Instructional Leader of Literacy

A growing body of empirical literature has drawn the conclusion that effective principals, those defined as bringing about gains in student achievement on standardized assessments, have carried out actions characterized as instructional leadership (Bush &

Glover, 2014; Fuller, Hollingsworth, & Liu, 2015; Hattie, 2009; Hallinger, Dongyu, & Wang, 2016; Kaplan, Owings, & Nunnery, 2005; Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005; Newton, Tunison, & Viczko, 2010; Smith, Guarino, Strom & Adams, 2006). While principals appear to impact student achievement through pathways of influence on school conditions, classroom conditions, and teacher efficacy, explanations of causation vary and are contextually bound (Kurt, Duyar, & Calik, 2012; Kruger, Witziers, & Sleegers, 2007; Leithwood & Louis, 2012; Robinson, Lloyd, & Rowe, 2008). Day, Gu, and Sammons (2016) explained:

> There is no one single leadership formula for achieving success. Rather, successful school principals draw differentially on elements of both instructional and transformational leadership and tailor (layer) their leadership strategies to their particular school contexts and the phase of development of the school. (p. 253)

Instructional leadership as a construct itself remains definitionally nebulous in research literature. One way the importance of principals' instructional leadership has been explained is through measures of the efficacy and self-efficacy of teachers in a principal's school (Bellibas & Liu, 2017; Lambersky, 2016; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2008). Though limited in scope, quantitative research employing rating tools and statistical correlations have attempted to explain the impacts of principal self-efficacy on teacher self-efficacy or student achievement levels and to describe the factors impacting principals' self-efficacy (Bedard & Mombourquette, 2015; Dimmock & Hattie, 1996; Hillman, 1986; Smith & Guarino, 2006; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2004). Qualitative studies of factors in principal self-efficacy are scarce, often incorporated into mixed-

methods quantitative-based studies (Fernandez, Bustamante, Combs, & Martinez-Garcia, 2015; Goolamally & Ahmad, 2014). As Versland and Erickson (2017) pointed out in one of those rare qualitative single case studies, there is much more to "discover about the behaviors and actions of highly efficacious principals on organizational culture, participants, and group outcomes" (p. 4).

Research on principals as instructional leaders of literacy is limited (Dowell, Bickmore, & Hoewing, 2012; Sun, Frank, Penuel, & Kim, 2013). In their 25-year review of topics covered in *The Reading Teacher*, Mohr et al. (2017), reported that only 0.75% of articles published focused on school administrators, with only two published in the last ten years. Overholt and Szabocsik (2013) pointed out that principals' instructional leadership typically involves evaluating and supporting technical instructional skills such as "questioning strategies, wait time, managements skills, and engagement techniques" (p. 53) but rarely apply subject specific content and pedagogy outside the principal's own instructional experience. When it comes to instructional leadership in literacy, "the prevailing perspective of many administrators is that they do not understand literacy nor how to lead literacy initiatives" (Dowell, Bickmore, & Hoewing, 2012, p. 8). The few sources addressing principal leadership of literacy are primarily anecdotal and theoretical rather than empirical, focused either on building a principal's knowledge base of literacy or sharing guidelines for implementing school-wide professional development (Beers, Beers, & Smith, 2010; Booth & Roswell, 2007; Morrow & Gambrell, 2018; Meidl & Lau, 2017; Ontario Principals' Council, 2009; Padgham & Chatto, 2013). Research on the impact of principal perceptions on their literacy leadership has begun to appear in these types of sources (Dempster et al., 2017) but is generally scarce.

The Why

The paucity of research and empirically based professional discourse on the literacy leadership perceptions and sense of efficacy of school administrators is troubling when literacy has taken a central position in current understandings of success. Fisher, Frey, and Hattie (2016) argued literacy is one of the major antidotes for poverty and "soon becomes the currency of other learning" (p. 3). A UNESCO (2005) report on the *Education for All Movement* asserted literacy is a justifiable human right because of the benefits it "confers on individuals, families, communities and nations" (p. 137) through empowerment to engage in informed decision making and participation in both local and global contexts. And while the urban myth of grade three reading levels being used to plan future prison capacities has been repeatedly debunked, the correlation of low literacy and incarceration is overwhelming (Hudson, 2012). Pertinent to the pending certification process for Alberta school principals, investigating principals as instructional leaders of literacy recognizes Western educational policy "nearly always places literacy at the heart of accountability for students, teachers, and schools" (Walpole & McKenna, 2015, p. 415). Principals are being held accountable for processes that may not be clearly understood (Berebitsky, Goddard, & Carlisle, 2014; Fuller, Hollingsworth, & Liu, 2015).

Purpose Statement and Research Question

The purpose of this study was to address gaps in our understandings of how principals perceive themselves as instructional leaders of literacy from an agentic perspective (Bandura, 1999; Bandura, 2001) and how their perceptions have shaped their instructional leadership actions. As Bandura (2000) explained:

> Perceived efficacy plays a key role in human functioning because it affects behavior not only directly, but by its impact on other determinants such as goals and aspirations, outcome expectations, affective proclivities, and perception of impediments and opportunities in the social environment. (p. 75)

My exploration of the experiences of principals in interpreting and implementing instructional leadership in literacy included what they attributed as influencing their sense of agency. Attributes in other principal leadership studies have included age, gender, professional certificates and qualifications, content- or pedagogy-specific training, length of teaching experience, grade levels taught, and personality traits (Durance, 2017a). My study also set out to analyze the connections principals made between three modes of human agency: self-efficacy, collective efficacy, and proxy efficacy (see table 1).

Table 1

Human Agency Modes

Mode	Description
Self-efficacy	Perceived self-efficacy refers to beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments (Bandura, 1997, p. 3).
Collective efficacy	Peoples shared beliefs in their collective power to produce desired results (Bandura, 2001, p. 14).
Proxy efficacy	In this socially mediated mode of agency, people try by one means or another to get those who have access to resources or expertise or who wield influence and power to act at their behest to secure the outcomes they desire (Bandura, 2001, p. 13).

Bandura (2001) defined agency as "acts done intentionally" (p. 6). In contrast to behaviorist explanations of human conduct as reactions to stimuli, he explained the role of intention in human response:

> Human transactions, of course, involve situational inducements, but they do not operate as determinate forces. Individuals can choose to behave accommodatively or, through the exercise of self-influence, to behave otherwise.
>
> An intention is a representation of a future course of action to be performed. (p. 6)

The following literature review chapter will describe the conceptual framework of human agency and these modes in more detail.

Research Question

The research question guiding my inquiry was: In a context of standardized performance expectations and varying professional backgrounds, how do school principals experience self-efficacy as instructional leaders of literacy? Embedded within this research question were supporting questions:

- How do principals perceive the impact of background on their sense of self-efficacy?
- What experiences do principals ascribe to the evolution of their self-efficacy?
- How does a principal's sense of self-efficacy intersect with experiences of collective efficacy and proxy efficacy?

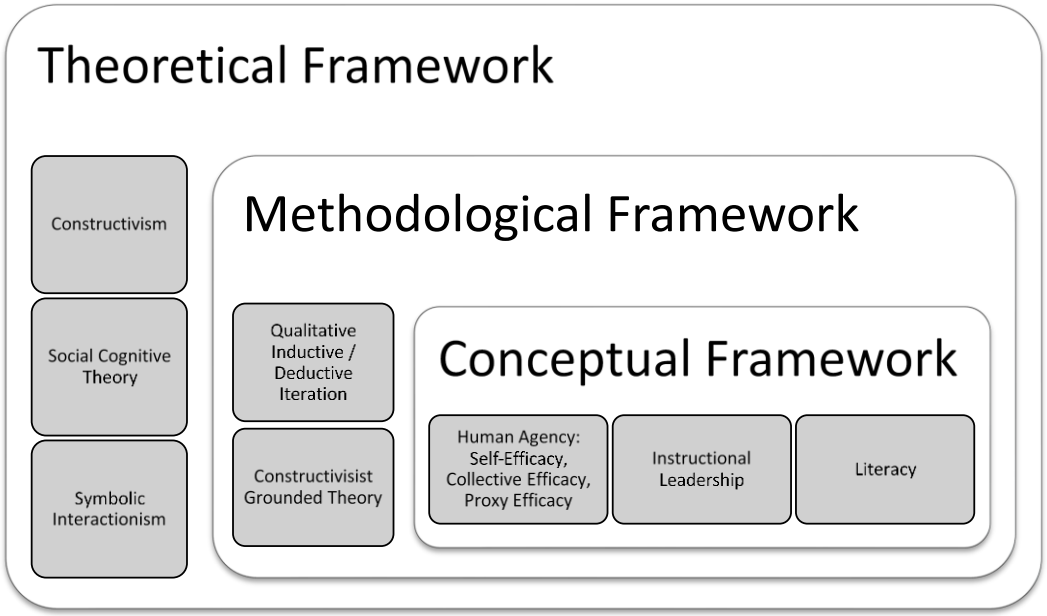
My goal, through this study, is to understand how to better support principals and their growth as instructional leaders, especially in our current political context where accountability pressures are rising, and may continue to, for the foreseeable future. I

recognize my study is one small piece of a very large puzzle, but I believe the results will have credibility and transferability in service of future research and leadership development programs.

In the next chapter, I specify the theoretical framework underpinning my research question. Vygotsky's social constructivism, Blumer's symbolic interactionism, and Bandura's social cognitive theory together form the basis of my understanding of human learning and meaning making and have guided both the concepts I desire to research and the methodology I have chosen to apply. I will also establish my conceptual framework. Modes of human agency, instructional leadership, and literacy were the three concepts whose intersection I analyzed in the findings. In Chapter 3, I explain my methodological framework and research method. Elements of constructivist grounded theory in recursive cycles of induction, abduction, and deduction informed my qualitative approach. The methodology I employed relied on my theoretical framework as a lens through which to study how these concepts related to each other in the experiences of school principals (see Figure 1 on following page). I will describe and discuss findings in three parts in Chapters 4, 5, and 6: each chapter addressing one research sub-question. In Chapter 7, I provide an overview of findings in relation to my research question, drawing two conclusions and suggest recommendations for policy, practice, and theory.

Figure 1.

Relationships of theoretical, conceptual, and methodological frameworks



Chapter Two—Literature Review

The process by which principals develop their understandings of instructional leadership of literacy may impact how they perceive their capacity to lead. In this study, I established a theoretical framework from elements of social cognitive theory, social constructivism, and symbolic interactionism. Together with the concepts of modes of human agency, instructional leadership, and literacy, I adopted this theoretical framework to examine the interaction of contextual environment and cognition on principals' sense of self-efficacy in literacy leadership. In the previous chapter, I laid out the relationship of the theoretical, methodological, and conceptual frameworks for my research. In this chapter, I will provide a review of the theoretical and conceptual frameworks for this study through literature and will conclude with the operational model I employed to define instructional leadership of literacy in this study. In the Methods Chapter to follow, I will describe my methodological framework and the research method I used to apply the theoretical framework in a way that allowed me to examine my conceptual framework to address my research question.

Theoretical Framework

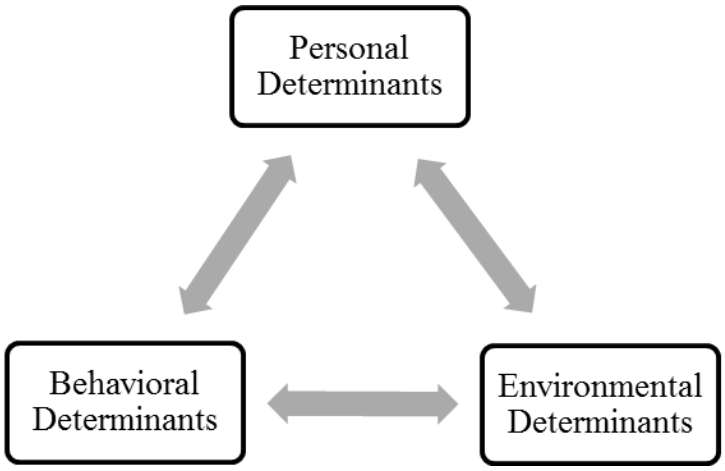
The theoretical foundation of this study emerges from Bandura's social cognitive theory and its intersections with Vygotsky's social constructivism and Blumer's symbolic interactionism. All three theories recognize "the socially constructed nature of even the most basic learning that forms the mind, self, will, and reason" (Fleury & Garrison, 2014, p. 33). These theories contend the understandings individuals develop are environmentally contingent on a "social world that is simultaneously interpersonal, cultural, and historical" (Tudge & Winterhoff, 1993, p. 75).

Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory

In counterpoint to behaviorist notions of autonomic human response to stimuli, Albert Bandura (1977) theorized, "people process, weigh, and integrate diverse sources of information concerning their capability, and they regulate their choice behavior accordingly" (p. 212). What began as an experimental study of treating patients with extreme phobias by building their belief in their own capacity to overcome fear soon developed into a robust theory. Social cognitive theory is based on the concept of human agency in which "human functioning is a product of the interplay of intrapersonal influence, the behavior individuals engage in, and the environmental forces that impinge upon them" (Bandura, 2012, p. 11). This causal model is depicted as triadic reciprocal determination between personal, behavioral, and environmental factors (see Figure 2).

Figure 2

Relationships of theoretical, conceptual, and methodological frameworks



Human agency develops from this triad, primarily in the form of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977; Bandura, 1997). Recognizing the interplay of socio-structural and psychological factors on behavior, social cognitive theory posits "in agentic transactions, the self-

system is not merely a conduit for external influences. The self is socially constituted but, by exercising self-influence, human agency operates generatively and proactively on social systems, not just reactively" (Bandura, 2000, p. 77). In other words, Freudian theory posited a one-way relationship from inner personal psychology to behavior; Skinner's behaviorist theory saw a one-way relationship from environment to behavior (Davidson, 2003). Bandura's social cognitive theory states that interactions between inner person, outer environment, and a person's choice of behavior in that environment can all impact each other.

The interactions of an individual within this reciprocal triad are a function of the core properties that define Bandura's (2006) conceptualization of human agency. "To be an agent" he explained, "is to influence intentionally one's functioning and life circumstances" (p. 164). In addition to intentionality, human agency is also characterized by forethought, self-reactiveness, and self-reflectiveness. Bandura (1997) postulated that humans develop their efficacy beliefs through four different sources:

> *enactive mastery experiences* that serve as indicators of capability; *vicarious experiences* that alter efficacy beliefs through transmission of competencies and comparison with the attainments of others; verbal *persuasion* and allied types of social influences that one possesses certain capabilities; and *physiological and affective states* from which people partly judge their capableness, strength, and vulnerability to dysfunction [emphasis added]. (p. 79)

Humans engage with agency every day, in a variety of modes: within themselves (individual self-efficacy), together with others (collective efficacy), and in reliance on

others (proxy efficacy). Current research on these modes of human agency will be described further in the conceptual framework chapter.

Bandura's concept of human agency is a central notion in the study of principals' perceptions of their own capacity to act as instructional leaders of literacy. Social cognitive theory's core principles and triadic reciprocal determination provide a lens for considering how principals build their conceptualizations of literacy and instructional leadership, and how these conceptualizations intersect with their personal and observed experiences with literacy leadership. This construction of concepts intersects with the meaning making theories of Vygotsky's social constructivism and Blumer's symbolic interactionism.

Vygotsky's Social Constructivism

Lev Vygotsky, influenced by the work of Goethe, Hegel, and Marx, developed theories of social learning and meaning construction that included understandings as developing, constructed gestalts (Blunden, 2011) and the zone of proximal development where gestalts grow (Fani & Ghaemi, 2011). Vygotsky's lifework was focused on how children learn, emphasizing human interactions with experts like teachers and parents. The tenets of social contructivism have expanded and pervade current research and educational pedagogy. The zone of proximal development continues to undergird research in learning across age levels and fields of study (Chew, Snee, & Price, 2016; Clara, 2017; Gan, & Zhu, 2007; Norton & D'Ambrosio, 2008). Gestalt is a term now used in a number of fields including language acquisition theory (Bain, 1996), studies of Autism Spectrum Disorder (Hadad & Ziv, 2015; Fitch, Fein, & Eigsti, 2015),

professional learning (Sum & Shi, 2016) and psychotherapy (Novack, Park, & Friedman, 2013; Polinek, 2016).

For the purposes of this study, social constructivism provided an explanation of the function of context for how principals constructed meanings of literacy leadership and of themselves as instructional leaders. Tudge and Winterhoff (1993) saw Vygotsky's social constructivism as "the clearest example of contextual theory" meaning "[i]ndividual development cannot be conceived outside a social world, and that social world is simultaneously interpersonal, cultural, and historical" (p. 75). Fleury and Garrison (2013) described genuine social constructivism as "a philosophical anthropology wherein mind and self are contingent, emergent, and evolving, even if relatively stable, social constructions" (p. 20). The formulation of contextualized conceptualizations occurring via social cognition is further explained through symbolic interactionism.

Blumer's Symbolic Interactionism

Herbert Blumer, a student and Chicago school colleague of Mead, used the concept of symbolic interactionism to explain the construction of meaning between the world "out there" and personal perceptions. As Wright and Losekoot (2012) explained, "people act toward things based on the meaning those things have for them; and these meanings are derived from social interaction and conditioned by their environment" (p. 418). Similar to the building of a Vygotskian gestalt, symbolic interactionism postulates individuals build a concept, or symbolization, of an idea, object, or event based on the situational, social context of their encounters with it that build over time. This iterative, interpretive process involves determining what should be assigned a meaning and then

cognitively acting to "select, rearrange, discard, modify and transform meanings relevant to the situation and people's own dispositions, directions, goals, attributes, etc." (Redmond, 2015, p. 18).

Summary of Theoretical Framework

This theoretical framework stipulated the structure of my research. Drawn from existing theories, it provided the foundation from which I articulated my research question. My theoretical framework also guided the format of my methodology which will be described in Chapter 3. In the next section, I will describe the conceptual framework for my research.

Conceptual Framework

Whereas the theoretical framework lays the foundation of my research model, the conceptual framework describes the constructs I investigated to address my research question. The theoretical framework laid out in the previous section supports the understanding of individually constructed meaning within a social context. With that framework in place, I can explore principals' understanding of their experience around three concepts: modes of human agency, instructional leadership, and literacy.

Human Agency or Agency Theory

Human agency within Bandura's social cognitive theory and the concept of agency in agency theory put forward by Mitnick (2014) and others in branches of organizational theory are overlapping constructs, paralleling but rarely intersecting in the literature. Both theories assign a sense of capability to impact outcomes to the term agency but in different ways. Note the following descriptions of agency. First, from the psychology perspective:

> People are partly the products of their environments, but by selecting, creating, and transforming their environmental circumstances they are producers of their environments as well. This agentic capability enables them to influence the course of events and to take a hand in shaping their lives. (Bandura, 2000, p. 75).

Next consider the descriptions of agency from organizational theory. In his argument that agency theory extends beyond economics, Mitnick (2014) stated: "Agency as a descriptive theory of service and control ought to be capable of providing increased understanding of the dilemmas produced in the pervasive agency relations of business" (p. 5). Similarly, Saam (2007) maintained, "agency theory makes implicit assumptions on the power relation between principal and agent" a relation he hypothesized "assumes an asymmetry in power in favour of the principal" (p. 826). Agency theory describes human actions in terms of principal and agent, risk and incentive. Human agency describes human actions in terms of perceived efficacy. Both consider an individual's belief in their power to act or achieve desired results.

The nuance appears to be where each lies on a continuum from internal to external. Social cognitive theory grew out of psychology, focused on the inner person, and agency theory grew within organizational theory, primarily but not limited to economics, focused on the external systems that interact with the individual. Since public school principals act as agents of their districts and the government to lead the instructional work of a school, it seems there should be crossover between the two discussions of agency when we consider principals' perceived efficacy to carry out a political mandate. However, the number of studies that cite both agency theory and Bandura's social cognitive theory are extremely limited.

One suggested merger of the two ends of the agency continuum comes from a study of decision maker attitudes and institutional isomorphism in Indian business schools. In it, Dutta (2016) concluded "while traditional psychology concerns itself with the mind-body problem and current organization theory with organization-environment problem, cognitive organization theory concerns itself with the mind-environment problem" (p. 359). Dubnick (2005) concluded his study questioning the belief that accountability produces performance by pointing to the potential of joint social cognitive and organizational theory as "fertile ground for exploring the linkages that give life" to accountability assumptions (p. 402). Eisenhardt's (1989) earlier criticism of agency theory was that, in its organizational realm, it presented only a "partial view of the world that, although it is valid, also ignores a good bit of the complexity of organizations" (p. 71.) She too, called for additional perspectives on agency. So far, of the literature review I conducted, only Dubnick and Dutta had any reference to both Bandura's social cognitive theory and organizational agency theory.

Later in this chapter, I address studies of principals' self-efficacy in relation to burnout. This is an area where the impact of policy demands and extrinsic accountability on principals' sense of agency is most salient.

Modes of Human Agency: Self-Efficacy, Collective Efficacy, and Proxy Efficacy

The umbrella of my research falls under the accountability of school leaders as defined in the new Leadership Quality Standard (LQS) and its newly contingent principal certification. In future research, I hope to dig deeper into the accountability and performance aspects of principals' agency as instructional leaders. However, the scope for this study is focused on how that sense of agency develops in relation to the modes of

human agency used by Bandura and others in the field of social cognitive theory: self-efficacy, collective efficacy, and proxy efficacy.

Self-Efficacy. The most frequently explored aspect of human agency, Bandura (1977) defined self-efficacy as "the conviction that one can successfully execute the behavior required to produce the outcomes" (p. 193). Individuals' self-efficacy varies across domains and situations and develops through mastery experiences, social modeling, social persuasion, and situational emotional or physical states (Bandura, 2012). This belief in one's capacity is "the foundation of human agency" (Bandura, 1999, p. 28).

In the field of education, a modest amount of peer-reviewed research to date centers on the impact of students' self-efficacy on their own learning (Ekholm, Zumbrunn, & DeBusk-Lane, 2018; Honicke & Broadbent, 2016; Mahmood, 2017; Purzer, 2011; Steenbergen-Hu, Olszewski-Kubilius, & Calvert, 2020; Unrau et al., 2018) and on the impact of teachers' self-efficacy on their own instructional and organizational performance and stress-levels (Aloe, Amo, & Shanahan, 2014; Brown, 2012; Kim & Seo, 2018; Klassen & Tze, 2014; Leithwood, 2006; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2008; McCollum, Kajs, & Minter, 2006; Rolland, 2012). In comparison, the study of self-efficacy in educational leadership, while growing, is still in its infancy (Daly et al., 2011; Liu & Hallinger, 2018; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2008).

Petridou, Nicolaidu, and Williams (2014) defined leadership self-efficacy in an educational context as "the school leader's own judgment of his/her capabilities to lead and so enhance their school, staff and pupils' performance on set tasks" (p. 230). Principals' self-efficacy has been equated with their ability to act as agents of change

(Dimmock & Hattie, 1996. Zimmerman, 2011). McDaniel and McCarthy (2011) contended:

> Leadership self-efficacy is critical to leader performance and success. It relies on the leader's internal locus of control and belief in the potential of leadership to make a difference in particular situations. It also relies on the leader's belief that she has the requisite leadership knowledge, skills, and abilities to mobilize resources and strategies to effect the change. (p. 670)

Self-efficacy is a contributing factor to a principals' professional learning on the job (Machida & Schaubroeck, 2011; Veelen, Sleegers, & Endedijk, 2017). A principal's sense of self-efficacy has been shown to have positive impacts on the self- and collective efficacy beliefs of teachers (Cansoy & Parlar, 2017; Hallinger, Hosseingholizadeh, Hashemi, & Kouhsari, 2018; Paglis, 2010; Versland & Erickson, 2017). Principals with high levels of self-efficacy usually rely on internally based proactive sources of power, such as expert and referent, when compared to principals with lower levels of self-efficacy who tend to resort to less proactive positional, reward, and coercive forms of power (Shafritz et al., 2016; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2004). These transformational leadership traits have been found to positively impact teacher's sense of self-efficacy and supportive working conditions (Goolamally & Ahmad, 2014; Kurt, Duyar, & Calik, 2012; Sun, Chen, & Zhang, 2017). Principals' self-efficacy has also been tied to their capacity to lead through inquiry (Butler, Schnellert, & MacNeil, 2015; Louis & Wahlstrom, 2011; Uiterwijk-Luijk, Kruger, Zilstra, & Volman, 2017; Wahlstrom & Louis, 2008). In what Paglis (2010) described as a Pygmalion effect, school leaders with

high levels of self-efficacy can have a transfer effect of that feeling of efficacy onto their followers, subsequently having a positive impact on group performance.

Collective Efficacy. Collective efficacy is shared beliefs in agency greater than could be achieved individually (Bandura, 1999; Bandura, 2000; Bandura, 2002). Individual's self-efficacy has been shown to impact collective efficacy (Alavi &McCormick, 2018; Arslan, 2017) but collective efficacy is not considered a result of additive personal self-efficacies. Strong collective efficacy is a result of the combined strength of individual's beliefs that the group can succeed (Bandura, 1997). Bandura (1997) defined perceived collective efficacy as "a group's shared belief in its conjoint capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given levels of attainment" (p. 477). In a school context, he pointed to the potential impact of collective instructional efficacy:

> Schools in which the staff collectively judge themselves as relatively powerless to get their students to achieve academic success are likely to convey a group sense of academic futility that can pervade the entire life of the school. In contrast, schools in which staff members collectively judge themselves highly capable of promoting academic success are likely to imbue their schools with a positive atmosphere for sociocognitive development. (p. 248)

Collective efficacy, though not always directly named, is a foundational aspect of professional learning community movements in education (Dufour, Dufour, Eaker & Many, 2010; Dufour & Marzano, 2011; Earkens & Twadell, 2012; Kanold, 2011; Katz, Dack, & Malloy, 2018; Leithwood & Louis, 2012 Marzano et al., 2005; Sackney & Walker, 2006; Zahed-Babelan, Koulaei, Moeinikia, & Sharif, 2019) and to instructional

leadership in literacy (Bean & Dagan, 2020; Booth & Rowsell, 2007; McAndrew, 2005; Ontario Principals' Council, 2009). This is particularly salient when collaborative work includes cycles of data inquiry around evidence of student learning (Ezzani, 2020; Tremont & Templeton, 2019; Wilson, Katz, & Greenleaf, 2020). It is also connected to a principal's ability to lead learning through professional capital (Fullan, 2014; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012) and the significant impact of teachers' collective efficacy on student achievement (Fisher, Frey, & Hattie, 2016).

One extension of the concept of *LSE* is Leadership Collective Efficacy (*LCE*). Leithwood and Jantzi (2008) described the two types of school leader efficacy as "beliefs about one's self-efficacy for improving instruction and student learning (*LSE*) and beliefs about the collective capacity of colleagues across schools in the district to improve student learning (*LCE*)" (p. 498). District level collective efficacy can be both a result of, and a factor in, principals' self-efficacy. When district-level administrations created conditions within the district that supported networking and open collaborations, principals' sense of efficacy increased, especially in terms of organizational change (Bedard & Mombourquette, 2015; Daly et al., 2011; Eaker & Keating, 2012; Leithwood et al., 2008). This type of collective efficacy has been shown to be especially important in schools with at-risk populations (Kaplan et al., 2005).

Proxy Efficacy. Proxy efficacy is a socially mediated means of advocating for, or allowing, others to act on one's behalf (Bandura, 1999; Bandura, 2001). Originally introduced by Bandura (1997) as proxy control, he later described the role of proxy efficacy in relation to self-efficacy:

> In many activities, however, people do not have direct control over social conditions and institutional practices that affect their lives. Under these circumstances, they seek their well-being and security through the exercise of proxy agency. In this socially mediated mode of agency, people try to get other people who have expertise or wield influence and power to act on their behalf to get the outcomes they desire. (2000, p. 75)

Proxy efficacy at times increases a sense of individual power, and other times relieves individuals of the burden of power. Children's reliance on the greater power of parents fits both modes. Constituents who elect representatives to government, or leaders for their group seek to extend their power through their proxies. Proxy efficacy can also be seen in "a college student's confidence in his or her college faculty's ability to function well on his or her behalf" (Elias & Macdonald, 2007, p. 2520). On the other hand, proxy efficacy can also serve to relieve the burden of power by sharing control. Principals who utilize distributed leadership are exercising this form of proxy efficacy (Bush & Glover, 2014; Leithwood, Harris, & Hopkins, 2008; Wong, 2009). Bandura (1997) described this type of proxy efficacy as an optimizing strategy "to free time and effort to enhance personal efficacy in other areas" (p. 207). In other words, a leader may choose to relinquish control of a part of the organization, especially if the proxy has skills that the leader does not, in order to lift the success of the organization and to free them from the energy needed to develop those skills themselves (Bandura, 1997; Bandura, 1999; Bandura, 2000). On the flip side, turning to proxy efficacy at the expense of developing personal efficacy can have negative repercussions for an individual's abilities and self-efficacy (Bandura, 2001).

Proxy efficacy has received limited attention in research to date. It occurs most often in health-related fields. It has been studied as a means of understanding how individuals rely on others to shape their food choices (Geller & Dzewaltowski, 2010; Middlestadt et al., 2013; Zarnowiecki et al., 2014) and exercise involvement (Dzewaltowski, Geller, Rosenkranz, & Kareroliotis, 2010; Jackson & Dimmock, 2012; Myers et al., 2012; Priebe, Flora, Ferguson, & Anderson, 2012). While even more limited, proxy efficacy has a small but growing educational research presence in areas such as technology use (Hanham, Ullman, Orlando, & McCormick, 2014), predictions of college performance (Elias & MacDonald, 2007), and the working relationships between school principals and their vice-principals (Wong, 2009).

One study on the potential for proxy efficacy research in the work of team leadership in organizations provided a related context to instructional leadership. In it, Alavi and McCormick (2016) argued the self-efficacy beliefs of members of a team are impacted by their beliefs in their team leader to act efficaciously on their behalf. They proposed a team member's self-efficacy, and the team's sense of collective efficacy, are positively related to both the team's perceived proxy efficacy for the team leader and the team leader's own self-efficacy for leadership. They called for future research to explore these propositions. Findings from the four participants in my pilot study indicated principals also experienced proxy efficacy when they relied on teachers with specific knowledge or ability to act as instructional leaders on their behalf, especially when the principals' level of knowledge in a specific area was less than the teacher's, which was the case for all four participants in the area of literacy (Durance, 2018).

Self-efficacy as Primary Lens. I originally intended to use the term human agency in my research question which places equal emphasis on all three modes: self-efficacy, collective efficacy, and proxy efficacy. In fall 2018, I was able to pilot parts of my research question and method as a component of a course assignment (Durance, 2018). The findings from that pilot study pointed to the relationship of collective efficacy and proxy efficacy as contributing factors to principals' self-efficacy. Adjusting my research question to look first at principals' self-efficacy as instructional leaders of literacy allowed me to better explore the connectedness and intersections of collective efficacy and proxy efficacy to how principals described their confidence in their abilities to carry out their roles with success.

Instructional Leadership

As pointed out in the previous chapter, the provincial *Education Act* (Alberta Government, 2020) requires but does not define instructional leadership. I will begin this section by examining its historical roots and evolution in educational policy. I will then describe the conceptualization of instructional leadership in current research and its intersections with research in self-efficacy and literacy leadership.

Evolution of Instructional Leadership

One-hundred-twenty years ago, the term 'principal' was an adjective attached to the teacher who had the primary, or principal, role of acting as the coordinator of the work of the school. A principal teacher in Alberta in 1900 might only have had an hour per day to tend to the operational issues of the school in addition to regular teaching duties (Mombourquette, 2013). Influenced by Taylor's principles of scientific management, Weber's model of bureaucracy and Fayol's administrative theory, the next

thirty years saw the development of the concept of principal to that of the executive manager of the business of school (Normore, 2006; Shafritz, Ott, & Jang, 2016). Post-World War two principals were predominantly male, primarily focused on the managerial tasks of schools, and facing increasing demands for schools to act as social stabilizers (Mombourquette, 2013; Normore, 2006). By the 1970's, the "roles educational leaders were to assume and the duties to which there were beholden had expanded to an almost untenable list" (Normore, 2006, para. 17). Then came the 1980's and the rise of instructional leadership as a significant component of educational administration.

The birth of instructional leadership as a concept has been traced as far back as the 1940s where articles began to appear calling for principals to be instructional leaders instead of just school managers (Hallinger, Gumus, & Bellibas, 2020; William, Johnson, & Johnson, 2018). However, principals as instructional leaders gained significant momentum due to the effective schools movement in the United States which pervaded educational policy and reform from the 1980s on (Barringer, 2010; Hallinger, Gumus, & Bellibas, 2020; Tian & Huber, 2020). Prior to that, student achievement was attributed primarily to inherent individual ability. *The Civil Rights Act* of 1964 led the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare to conduct a study of disparities in educational opportunity between white students and non-white minority groups (Coleman et al., 1966). Their report indicated that socio-economic-status and school quality might be better indicators of student achievement than individual ability alone. Edmonds' (1979) article, "Effective Schools for the Urban Poor," is cited as the foundation of the term "effective schools movement." In his article, he argued that it was not enough to recognize the disparity of access to quality education per the Coleman (1966) report.

Rather, Edmonds called for action to be taken to bring disadvantaged students up to at least the minimal level of school skills accepted for students from the predominately white middle class. In particular, he stated in an effective school, "the principal is more likely to be an instructional leader…and perhaps, most of all, assumes responsibility for the evaluation of the achievement of basic outcomes" (p. 18). While some scholars remained skeptical about the longevity of instructional leadership within a principal's purview in the 1980s and 1990s (Hallinger and Wang, 2015), the effective schools movement re-gained significant momentum with the United States' 2002 *No Child Left Behind Act* with global impact. As Hallinger, Gumus, and Bellibas (2020) explained, "A global education accountability movement, launched around the turn of the millennium, rewrote the goals of education systems and established student achievement as the key criterion for assessing educational effectiveness and progress" (p. 1630).

Hallinger (2005) is credited with some of the earliest attempts to conceptualize instructional leadership in the mid-1980s. Since then, the focus on principals as instructional leaders has pervaded research and policy in educational administration (Hallinger, 2005; Hallinger, Dongyu, & Wang, 2016; Leithwood & Louis, 2012; Tian & Huber, 2020). As pointed out in my introductory chapter, there is a strong body of evidence that suggests that principals can have significant impact on the effectiveness of instruction in their schools (Bush & Glover, 2014; Day, Gu, & Sammons, 2016; Leithwood, Harris & Hopkins, 2008). Described as "high-performing principals" (Barber, Whelan, & Clark, 2011, p. 7), the impact of their instructional leadership is implied, but often with indirect connections to student learning (Leithwood, Harris, & Hopkins, 2008; Rigby, 2014). A desire for definitive proof of leaders' instructional

impacts continues to be evident in research and policy in the United States, Canada, and worldwide, often relying on mechanistic and scientific management theory inspired measures (Lumby & English, 2010; Taylor, 1916). Even within empirically designed tools for research on leadership efficacy, definitions of leadership traits can be ambiguous.

This ambiguity of conceptualization is especially prevalent in the literature and research on instructional leadership. In their summary of Ginsberg's (1988) early construct of instructional leadership, Wanzare and da Costa (2001) warned inadequacies in existing definitions of instructional leadership might cause a stumbling block to "implementing effective instructional plans" explaining "existing definitions are vague and broad, consequently they allow school principals to base their behaviors on these definitions without considering whether or not they are actually instructional leaders" (p. 271).

While researchers and policy makers have developed a growing body of tools to measure and describe instructional leadership, it is evident that we have not yet reached consensus on what instructional leadership means. Terosky (2014) cautions, "questions remain around the definition, implementation, and usefulness of the concept [instructional leadership]" (p. 7). One approach is to define all desired traits in a principal as instructional leadership. In a Willower Family Lecture address, Leithwood (2006) challenged:

> Consider, for example, the term "instructional leadership": it typically serves as a synonym for whatever the speaker means by "good leadership" –with almost no reference to models of instructional leadership that have some conceptual

coherence and a body of evidence testing their effects on organizations and students. (p. 177)

Attempts to explain more specific definitions of instructional leadership have tended to describe instructional leadership in diverse, occasionally contradictory, ways. These include dualisms of range from transformational to transactional, and from broadly encompassing, as Leithwood (2006) pointed out, to conceptually narrow (Ng, Nguyen, Wong, & Choy, 2015).

Definitions of Instructional Leadership

Conceptualizations of instructional leadership often juxtapose or overlap, but the concept itself remains fluid, depending on the lens of the researcher or organization. The definitions begin with broad dichotomies of leadership traits: transactional versus transformational, managerial versus instructional, action versus ethos (Leithwood & Louis, 2012). As the definitions narrow, the distinctions between concepts become blurry.

Instructional as Transformational Leadership. School effectiveness has been frequently correlated with a principal's ability to act as a transformational leader. Bush and Glover (2014) described transformational leadership as a normative approach to school leadership **"**which focuses primarily on the process by which leaders seek to influence school outcomes rather than on the nature or direction of those outcomes" (p. 558) primarily through creating a shared vision (Bush and Glover, 2014; Mombourquette, 2017). Transformational leadership is typified by this visioning aspect (Day, Gu, & Sammons, 2016; Dowell, Bickmore, & Hoewing, 2012; English, 2008; Fitzgerald & Schutte, 2009). To that end, instructional leadership is sometimes subsumed as a

practical component, or means of carrying out, a transformational leader's vision (Bedard & Mombourquette, 2015; Rigby, 2010; Terosky, 2014; Xu, Wubbena, & Stewart, 2016). Other researchers, while recognizing how they may work in concert, distinguish between the two (Day, Gu, & Sammons, 2016). In their description of eight different conceptions of leadership, Bush and Glover (2014) differentiate transformational leadership as an attitudinal process while referring to instructional leadership as that which focuses more on measurable products of student achievement. Walhstrom (2012) described what principals do to create a schoolwide vision for learning as contributing to instructional ethos.

Instructional as Transactional Leadership. Transactional leadership has been associated with managerialism and bureaucratic hierarchies where managers "provide incentives for teachers" to comply with leadership initiatives (Leithwood, 2006, p. 191). Many researchers make a clear distinction between instructional leadership and transactional leadership (Rigby, 2013; Newton, Tunison, & Viczko, 2006). However, Terosky (2014) pointed out as much as educational researchers and school leaders try to distinguish instructional leadership from the managerial tasks of running a school, the focus on learning often distorts into transactional achievement inspection due to extrinsic accountability demands. In contrast to the transformational nature of creating an instructional ethos, Wahlstrom (2012) noted principals also took direct instructional actions to ensure progress toward that ethos was maintained. When administrative conduct under the guise of instructional leadership has resulted in legal proceedings, it has often been the result of poor management decisions linked to transactional leadership actions (Durance, 2017b). Louis et al (2010) pointed out the challenge of separating out

'harder' behavioral leadership skills from transformational leadership's 'softer' emotional skills. They contended that the impact of instructional leadership is only measurable when transactional interactions are based in transformational relationships.

Broad Definitions of Instructional Leadership. To resolve the question of whether instructional leadership is a sole subsidiary of either transformational or transactional leadership, some researchers consider instructional leadership an umbrella term for groups of other constructs (Kalman and Arslan, 2016; Louis, Dretzke, & Wahlstrom, 2010). Hallinger, Dongyu, and Wang (2016) treated the concept of instructional leadership as a broad understanding of "how principal leadership makes a difference in student learning" (p. 569). Their quantitative study featured the use of Hallinger's *Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale*, or *PIMRS*, which expanded the definition of instructional leadership to include everything the principal did in the school not focused solely on the physical plant. Wanzare and da Costa (2001), earlier cited as warning about confusion caused by ambiguity in definition, themselves listed 38 roles of principals under the heading of instructional leadership, many of which mirror the broad dimensions of the *PIMRS*. A description by Ng et al (2015) stated, "the broad view of instruction leadership includes all leadership activities that indirectly affect student learning." This indirect mediated impact of principal influence on student learning is a common, though not uncontested, conclusion (Hallinger, 2011; Leithwood, Harris, & Hopkins, 2008; Louis, Dretzke, & Wahlstrom, 2010; Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005; Robinson, Lloyd, & Rowe, 2008).

Narrow Definitions of Instructional Leadership. Other researchers see a narrow definition of instructional leadership as necessary to pinpointing the actions principals

take that have a direct positive impact on student learning (Day, Gu, & Sammons, 2016; Lih & Bin Ismail, 2019; Newton, Tunison, & Viczko, 2010; Ng, Nguyen, Wong, & Choy, 2015; Wahlstrom, 2012). Bedard and Mombourquette (2015) used the parallel construct of leadership for learning as the definition of instructional leadership, using the two terms interchangeably in situations where principals "were expected to have close knowledge of instruction in their schools' classrooms and consider influence on its direction" (p. 247). In a meta-analysis that included both quantitative and qualitative studies on the impact of instructional leadership versus other transformational leadership on student learning, Robinson, Lloyd, & Rowe (2008) found, "the closer educational leaders get to the core business of teaching and learning, the more likely they are to have a positive impact on student outcomes" (p. 664). Hattie (2009), whose attempt to implement a universal measure of effect size have been challenged by statisticians (Bergeron & Rivard, 2016), nevertheless pointed to specific dimensions of instructional leadership such as "promoting and participating in teacher learning and development" and "planning, coordinating, and evaluating teaching and the curriculum" (p. 83) as specific elements of instructional leadership having potential for impact on student learning.

Instructional Leadership as a Gendered Role. Leithwood and Jantzi (2008) contended that their research on leader efficacy related to student achievement presented results that "clearly do not support common claims about the discrimination experienced especially by women and/or minority principals" (p. 523). However, the fact that they included principal gender in their study reflects ongoing questions in the field about the view of instructional leadership as a feminine trait. In her assertion that gender-neutrality

in organizations is impossible within a gendered society, Acker (1992/2016) challenged theorists and activists to consider the gendered substructure of organizations' gender divisions in roles, ubiquitous masculine metaphors of leadership, accepted gendered norms in power relationships between males and females, and the internal beliefs of males and females about their roles in work. Gender divisions in principalships and superintendencies persist in education, especially at the secondary level (Jull, 2002; R. Newton, 2006). The influence of perceptions of women as nurturing teachers and men as efficient managers has led to studies that confirm the extension of this perception to relational aspects of instructional leadership (Blackmore, 2006; Hallinger, Dongyu, & Wang, 2016; Nogay & Beebe, 2008; Xu, Wubbena, & Stewart, 2016). In her study of gendered reactions to job ads for superintendent positions, R. Newton (2006) found both men and women favored instructional leadership focused ads over more managerial ones, but she cautioned perceptions and ongoing research into female genderization of instructional leadership may actually increase the divide, making managerial traits increasingly masculine.

Operationalization of Instructional Leadership

The drive to conceptualize instructional leadership is due, in significant part, to efforts by educational organizations and governing bodies to operationalize instructional leadership into a measurable construct. The main purpose of this measurement is to find attributable factors that influence measurable results of student learning (English, 2008; Leithwood, Harris, & Hopkins, 2008; Mombourquette, 2013; Newton, Tunison, & Viczko, 2010). Focusing in on instructional leadership is enticing when evidence seems to mount that "in schools that sustained and/or improved their performance as judged by

student academic outcomes and external inspection results, principals had exercised leadership that was both transformational and instructional" (Day, Gu, & Sammons, 2016, p. 225). In their report titled, *Capturing the leadership premium: How the world's top school systems are building leadership capacity for the future*, Barber, Whelan and Clark (2011) stated unequivocally:

> High-performing principals focus more on instructional leadership and developing teachers. They see their biggest challenges as improving teaching and curriculum, and they believe that their ability to coach others and support their development is the most important skill of a good leader. (p. 7)

This mutual influence correlation between school leaders and measures of student performance (Hallinger, 2005) has led not only to a rise in research around instructional leadership, but also a drive to develop measurable standards around it.

Evaluating Instructional Leadership. Evaluation of principals occurs in every jurisdiction, usually based on a combination of self-reflection and interactions with supervisors (Bedard & Mombourquette, 2015; Bush & Glover, 2014; English, 2008; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2008). Formal evaluation through national standards and credentialing of principals are becoming more common internationally (Lumby & English, 2010). In Alberta, the appointment and evaluation of principals is the purview of individual school boards and, up until September 2019, no formal certification was required. Regardless of official accountability systems, principals are indirectly evaluated for competence based on their students' results on large-scale assessments, such as Provincial Achievement Tests (Newton, Tunison, & Viczko, 2010). Newton et al. (2010) cautioned "the emphasis on assessment leadership might have the unintended

consequence of narrowing the conception of instructional leadership" (p. 21). English (2008) does not use the word 'may' when he cautioned against reducing leadership competence, and evaluating that competence, to a core set of skills. This creates a "hyperrationalization of schools" (p. 199). A drive toward continuous improvement is more about "statistical control over a process" (p. 201) and efficiency than it is about students' learning. Accountability pressure is a key factor in studies of principals' self-efficacy with potentially negative effects.

Self-efficacy and Instructional Leadership

As with leadership self-efficacy, the conceptualization of instructional leadership continues to evolve as a general gestalt with various intersecting components. Item-specific indicators of instructional leadership on self-efficacy measures commonly include actions that set and monitor high levels of student achievement, facilitate and monitor effective instructional pedagogy, and establish environmental conditions conducive to both. Self-efficacy's impact on instructional leadership is reported most frequently in relation to principal's confidence to take or lead action toward a goal.

One marker of self-efficacy in working toward a goal is adaptive confidence, when a principal is "humble enough to learn from their mistakes and failures and when they let others in the learning community learn as well" (Sackney & Walker, 2006, p. 354). This combination of flexibility with perseverance, what Dweck (2006) would call a growth mindset, and the ability to encourage perseverance in others, is shown to be more dependent on leaders' self-efficacy than on their training or background experience (McCollum et al., 2006; McCullers and Bozeman, 2010; Smith et al., 2006; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2004). Several authors, however, point to the need for school

leadership training and mentoring as a means of increasing leaders' self-efficacy, especially as instructional leaders (Federici & Skaalvik, 2012; Sackney & Walker, 2006).

The research literature is divided on the relationship between experience and self-efficacy. In their studies of school leaders involved in formal leadership programs, Airola et al. (2014) and Versland (2016), both found involvement in training and mentoring specifically focused on building capacity for leadership increased participants' levels of self-efficacy. Fisher (2014) found after an initial high-level in their first year, possibly due to unrealistic understandings of the role, principals' levels of self-efficacy dropped and did not rebound to that level until they had attained around ten years of experience. Sackney and Walker (2006) noticed a similar issue with beginning principals' unwillingness to seek out mentorship early on but point out the positive impact of consciously building toward self-efficacy, a claim also supported by Federici and Skaalvik (2012). The impact of social modeling and social persuasion is a contributing factor to self-efficacy (Bandura, 2012). Self-efficacy as correlated to experience has a strong support base (Smith et al., 2006).

However, there are contradictory findings as well. Factors of length and type of experience have also been shown to have little to no statistically significant positive effect on self-efficacy (Combs, Edmonson, & Jackson, 2009; Daly et al., 2011). Contrary to what they expected to find with both leadership self- and collective efficacy, Leithwood and Jantzi (2008), concluded not only were "relationships between self-efficacy and behavior…weaker than anticipated" (p. 522), but none of the personal variables, including experience, had a moderating impact. These findings were similarly surprising to McCullers and Bozeman (2010) as they went against predictions based on

social cognitive theories of self-efficacy. Where the impact of self-efficacy is consistent in research, is in the potential negative impact when principals' report low self-efficacy, often studied through the lens of burnout.

Self-efficacy and Leader Burnout

Burnout is defined by Maslach, Jackson, and Leiter (1996) as "a psychological syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment that can occur among individuals who work together with people in some capacity" (p. 192). Burnout has been associated with low morale and feeling that a job "exceeds one's capacity and available resources" (Combs et al., 2009, p. 12). The correlation between low self-efficacy and burnout was statistically significant in Federici and Skaalvik's (2012) study, and they drew the conclusion:

> Principals with low levels of self-efficacy may experience more uncertainty and doubt that they will be able to conduct important tasks to a greater extent than principals with higher levels of self-efficacy. The combination of high responsibility and a repeated feeling of uncertainty and doubt is a stressful and worrying situation that may lead to emotional exhaustion and, in the long run, to burnout. (p. 311)

They also noted an inverse correlation of job-satisfaction and self-efficacy on principals' motivation to quit (Federici & Skaalvik, 2012). In response to the sharp fall and gradual rise of principals' self-efficacy levels between years one and ten, Fisher (2014) posited an initial illusion of control gave way to stressful reality, with the result of either attrition from the job or eventual rebound of self-efficacy after sufficient mastery experiences.

Burnout does not always lead to job-attrition, but low self-efficacy and burnout can also contribute to a state of threat rigidity. As Daly et al. (2011) explained, "[t]hreat rigidity, in its most basic form, is the individual or organizational constriction of information, collapse of control, inflexibility of response, and retreat to well-established processes" (p. 175). When an individual or organization perceives external threats to survival, a low sense of self-efficacy can lead to a state of rigid response (Airola et al., 2014; Daly et al., 2011; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2004). One of the reasons Sackney and Walker (2006) championed the need for collaborative learning communities amongst principals was their recognition that the loneliness and stress of the job could lead to threat rigid responses producing psychological effects in line with burnout. It is not a significant leap to consider the impact of threat rigidity and burnout, especially amongst principals who stay in the profession, on the teachers and students in their schools, and on their overall efficacy as instructional leaders.

Literacy

What is literacy? It is a term that has become synonymous with competence, often unrelated to language skills. A search of peer-reviewed articles in the last ten years brings up results such as internet literacy, computer literacy, information literacy, health literacy, financial literacy, risk literacy, scientific literacy, and even "numeracy literacy" (Nahdi, Jatisunda, Cahyaningsih, & Suciawati, 2020). Even within a school context, similar applications of the term literacy occur with problematic consequences (Fagan, 2001). For this study, my definition of literacy starts internationally and then moves locally.

At a UNESCO presentation to the Global Alliance to Monitor Learning, Montoya (2018) provided this definition of literacy: “Literacy is the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate and compute, using printed and written materials associated with varying contexts” (n.p.). Her report went on to identify various ways that literacy is defined and measured by other organizations around the world. The primacy of communication and comprehension of text in a variety of media in the definition of literacy is echoed in definitions closer to home.

The current Alberta English Language Arts program of studies (2000) incorporates six strands of language: listening, speaking, reading, writing, viewing, and representing. It includes general outcomes that span across grades as well as specific outcomes that students are expected to meet by the end of each grade level. The preamble for the program of studies states the purpose for studying ELA in school is “to enable each student to understand and appreciate language, and to use it confidently and competently in a variety of situations for communication, personal satisfaction and learning” (p. 2). A more recent Alberta Education document defines literacy as “the ability, confidence and willingness to engage with language to acquire, construct and communicate meaning in all aspects of daily living” with the footnote “Language is a socially and culturally constructed system of communication” (Alberta Government, 2015). To establish the focus of my research, I phrased my questions to participants around literacy instruction and literacy programming, recognizing that most would reflect in terms of language arts courses in schools, but also leaving room for reflection on current work being done on content-area literacy skills in other courses in schools.

Self-efficacy in Literacy Leadership

I pointed out in the introductory chapter the paucity of research on principals' self-efficacy as instructional leaders in literacy. In research that does exist, principal leadership of literacy has been examined from perspectives of building baseline content knowledge and from collaborative work with others who do possess literacy content knowledge.

Baseline Knowledge of Literacy Learning. Professional resources have been created to support principals in overseeing the literacy work of their schools both within local school authorities and in professional publications (Booth & Rowsell, 2007; Ontario Principals' Council, 2009). Notable resources include Guilford Press' regularly revised Best Practices anthologies (Bean & Dagan, 2020; Morrow & Gambrell, 2018; Graham, MacArthur, & Hebert, 2018), and Hattie's (2016) Visible Learning series. As Murphy (2004) pointed out, "Leadership provides one of the most powerful strategies we have in our arsenal to make these conditions of quality reading programs come to life in classrooms and schools so that all youngsters achieve high levels of literacy skills" (p. 93). In Australia, Dempster et al. (2017) led a federally funded pilot project called Principals as Literacy Leaders (*PALL*) that resulted from concern about a growing gap in literacy achievement for students with lower SES as measured on PISA scores. The PALL program focused on developing school principals' understandings of leading for learning specific to the instruction of reading through participation in five, one-day modules and completion of on-site follow-up tasks specific to applying their professional learning in their own school contexts. Findings from research conducted alongside the pilot pointed to a positive impact on students' achievement in reading as well as principal

reported increases in their confidence to engage more directly with literacy instruction in their schools (Dempster, 2012; Townsend, Bayetto, Dempster, Johnson, & Stevens, 2018). An important conclusion from the PALL studies was the importance for principals to have a baseline knowledge of how students learn to read and of best practices of reading instruction (Dempster, Townsend, Johnson, Bayetto, Lovett, & Stevens, 2017). This call for baseline knowledge is echoed in the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium standards in the United States (Brumley, 2010) as well as the International Literacy Association (2017) standards for principals. Due to the impact of students' reading and writing capabilities on their achievement across subject areas, there is evidence principal knowledge of literacy learning and effective instructional techniques supported teacher's instructional capacity and growth (Francois, 2014; Kindall, Crowe, & Elsass, 2017; McGhee & Lew, 2007; Plaatjies, 2019; Sanzo, Clayton, & Sherman, 2011; Taylor, Wills, & Hoadley, 2019; Tremont & Templeton, 2019) Wilson, Katz, & Greenleaf (2020) summarized, "school leaders cannot simply outsource professional learning for teachers to external partners; instead, as school leaders, they must develop deep knowledge of the rationale and principles for advocated approaches so they can support and lead teachers" (p. 708) They go on to point out, however, that one of the most effective ways principals' can deepen their own learning is through shared inquiry with their teachers.

Collaborative Inquiry. In their Standards for the Preparation of Literacy Professionals, the International Literacy Association (2017) included a section of standards for school principals. While they called for principals to have a foundational understanding of literacy learning, effective pedagogy, and assessment, they also

recognized that a principal cannot lead this work alone: “Principals’ role in a school and school district is powerful and complicated, requiring “a hand in everything” while empowering knowledgeable professionals to share in leading and facilitating the work of instructional improvement” (p. 96). In addition to ensuring their teachers have access to current research on literacy best practices and supervising teachers’ application of those practices, the ILA recognized that the most impactful way principals act as instructional leaders of literacy is through their intentional creation of collaborative inquiry systems:

> Although principals may not have the same level of preparation or experience in literacy as the teaching professionals in their schools and districts, they do have a responsibility for working collaboratively to look to research for answers, use data-based continuous improvement practices, pilot promising practices, and engage in facilitated, reflective conversations with colleagues. (p. 99)

Providing access to effective professional development models is one means for principals to establish shared vision around literacy instruction, especially if the principal learns alongside teachers as co-participant (Wilson, Katz, & Greenleaf, 2020). Leveraging the expertise of literacy specialists is one means of increasing teacher and principal knowledge (Sanzo, Clayton, & Sherman, 2011) and is especially effective in a shared leadership model (Bean et al., 2015; Bean, Dagan, Ippolito, & Kern, 2018). However, in their meta-analysis indicating the positive impact of coaching models on teaching practice and student achievement, Kraft, Blazer and Hogan (2018) warned, “No matter the expertise or enthusiasm of a coach, coaching is unlikely to impact instructional practice if the teachers themselves are not invested in the coaching process” (p. 573). A key component to effective collaborative inquiry models of instructional leadership is

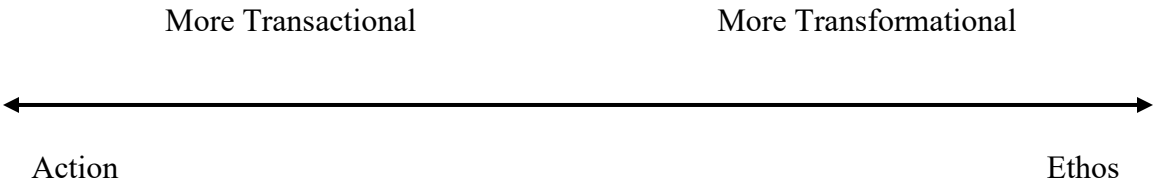
relational trust, both between colleagues, and between administration and their teacher colleagues (Butler, Schnellert, & MacNeil, 2015; Ezzani, 2020; James, Derksen, & Alcorn, 2014; Louis & Wahlstrom, 2011; McAndrews, 2005; Uiterwijk-Luijk, Kruger, Zijlstra, & Volman, 2017; Wahlstrom & Louis, 2008)

Operational Definition: Instructional Leadership of Literacy as a Spectrum

The dichotomous definitions of instructional leadership described earlier mirror perceived distinctions between behaviorist and constructivist, mechanistic and organic, scientific and humanistic education (English, 2008; Lumby & English, 2010). While these distinctions seem clear-cut, descriptions of principals' actions as transactional or transformational, managerial or instructional, are less so, depending on underlying attitudes and beliefs. The distinctions between the definitions of instructional leadership might be better understood as a spectrum (Kalman & Arslan, 2016). Viewing instructional leadership as a spectrum of overlapping skills, knowledge, and beliefs leaves space for a range of experiences with instructional leadership in the voices of research participants and provides a way of looking for connections among instructional leadership actions and ethos, background knowledge, and context. The indicators of competency for Providing Instructional Leadership in the LQS fall along various points of an instructional leadership spectrum depending on the level of direct action taken to implement in different situations. Therefore, rather than choose one point along the spectrum for the definition of instructional leadership for this study, I have chosen instead to use a transactional to transformational instructional leadership spectrum that intersects action and ethos to explore principals' self-efficacy as instructional leaders of literacy (see Figure 3).

Figure 3

Instructional Leadership Spectrum



Summary

To study principals' experiences with instructional leadership of literacy, I needed to establish a definitional framework. The review of literature in this chapter provided a framework for both the theoretical and conceptual parameters of my inquiry. I explained the role that constructivism, social cognitive theory, and symbolic interactionism take in my approach to studying the individual experiences and perceptions of school principals around the concept of instructional leadership of literacy. I described the concept of human agency that grew out of social cognitive theory, and how the modes of self-efficacy, collective efficacy, and proxy efficacy served as a lens for understanding principals' experiences. Finally, I unpacked the concepts of instructional leadership and literacy, and identified potential intersections between them and the concept of self-efficacy which led to the working definition of instructional leadership of literacy for this study. In the next chapter, I will explain the methodological framework I used to build a qualitative research method that could explore the concepts of self-efficacy, instructional

leadership, and literacy in a means consistent with the theories of constructivism, social cognition, and symbolic interactionism.

Chapter Three—Research Method

An inquiry into human agency around a specific construct that is both individually and socially interpreted, requires a research method balancing both knowns (requirements to act as instructional leaders) and unknowns (what does it mean to be an instructional leader of literacy) in a specific context (principal certification in Alberta). Therefore, this study draws primarily on techniques from a constructivist grounded theory approach.

Drawing from Constructivist Grounded Theory

The roots of constructivist grounded theory grow out of Vygotskian social constructivism and Blumer's symbolic interactionism with a framework allowing for critical inquiry (Charmaz, 2014; Charmaz, 2017). Its investigation of experiences provides an ideal framework for exploring Bandura's social cognitive theory in situational human agency. Constructivist grounded theory has its roots in sociologists Glaser's and Strauss' early attempts to collect and analyze qualitative data on the experiences of death and dying, later developed into their 1967 book *The Discovery of Grounded Theory*. It has undergone several re-interpretations, including Corbin's collaborations with Strauss in the 1990s. In proposing a constructivist approach to grounded theory, Charmaz challenged the positivist nature of traditional grounded theory. Drawing significantly on symbolic interactionism, Charmaz (2014) recognized the reality of subjectivity in research carried out by humans and that "research participants' implicit meanings, experiential views — and researchers' finished grounded theories — are constructions of reality" (p. 17). Theories developed through constructivist grounded theory are viewed as a temporal process of theorizing reflecting participants' realities within a specific social, cultural, and structural context. It also recognizes the co-

construction of these interpretations through the acknowledged involvement of the researcher (Aldiabat & Le Navenec, 2011; Mills, Bonner, & Francis, 2006).

Acknowledged Presuppositions

In traditional applications of grounded theory, researchers typically avoid reviews of literature to maintain the stance of a neutral observer who can allow a theory to emerge without the contamination of researcher bias. Constructivist grounded theory disputes the notion of researcher objectivity, seeing the presence of the researcher in the product as an important part of theoretical construction. Ramalho, Adams, Huggard, and Hoere (2015) stated while gathering data should be the primary grounding of developed theorizations, the "researcher's voice in the resulting theory should not be excluded, avoided or hidden. On the contrary, it should be explicitly acknowledged as it is the voice that shows and talks about the researched area" (para. 15). Acknowledging researcher bias and beliefs also contributes to the confirmability of my findings (Guba, 1981). To that end, before designing my interview questions and beginning to collect data, I acknowledged my pre-suppositions as follows:

- Principals who describe direct experience with, or training in, literacy pedagogy will express high levels of self-efficacy in their instructional leadership of literacy in their school.
- Principals who describe reliance on teacher leaders in their buildings with expertise in literacy pedagogy will express high levels of proxy efficacy.
- Principals who describe the support of professional learning networks that include individuals with expertise in literacy pedagogy will express high levels of collective efficacy.

- Principals who do not have personal, staff, or network expertise in literacy pedagogy will express low levels of self-efficacy, proxy efficacy, or collective efficacy.

These ideas formed as I noticed gaps in the research literature while developing my research question. They were refined through the themes that emerged during my fall 2018 pilot study. Surfacing these hunches around possible findings allowed me to actively challenge my own inferences during coding and theorizing processes as I asked: In a context of standardized performance expectations and varying professional backgrounds, how do school principals experience self-efficacy as instructional leaders of literacy?

Sensitizing Concepts

To contextualize my grounded theorizing, I designed my study to include an initial broad deductive analysis around sensitizing concepts that emerged from my experiences and my literature review. Sensitizing concepts recognize this influence and serve as a jumping off point for establishing a dialogue with the data (Charmaz, 2014; Ramalho et al., 2015) described by Mills, Bonner, and Francis (2006) as theoretical sensitivity. Charmaz (2014) pointed out that beginning with a deductive phase of study around sensitizing concepts can prevent decontextualized analysis which can "ironically force their data into their early generalizations because they lack sufficient contexts with which to ground new data" (p. 243). This aligns with tenets of symbolic interactionism and social constructivism; I brought to my research experience and interpretations of literature that shape the way I perceive new information. Therefore, I purposefully included deductive categories in my initial data analysis around five sensitizing concepts:

self-efficacy, collective efficacy, proxy efficacy, instructional actions, and instructional ethos. The following describes the details of my method including gaining participants, collecting data, data validation, and data analysis.

Participant Sample

Based on feedback from leaders in my own school district, together with research indicating a stabilization point of principal self-efficacy (Fisher, 2014; Parylo, Zepeda, & Bengston, 2013; Rhodes, 2013), the targeted participant group was current principals with five or more years of experience. Recall Fisher (2014) who found after a first year high, principals experienced a significant dip in their sense of self-efficacy that did not rebound to initial levels until they moved toward their tenth year of experience. This stabilization period was echoed by the supervisor of leadership development in Edmonton Public Schools who stated principals in their first five years often feel pulled in too many directions to feel able or qualified to participate in research studies (J. Bergos, personal communication, January 18, 2018). Within this targeted group, I sought out, as much as possible, diversity in gender, age, and experiential background with literacy and K-12 age-groups with the intent to reveal a broad scope of perspectives on instructional leadership in literacy due to participants varying knowledge and experience with literacy content and pedagogy.

Gaining Participants

Most social sciences now conclude that insider-outsider states are an ever-shifting continuum rather than a dichotomy (Mercer, 2007). Historically, research was considered optimal when conducted by a neutral, outside observer who could gain an unbiased perspective. Now, insider research is recognized as potentially enhancing emic

understanding of concepts within a group (Kirpitchenko & Voloder, 2014). However, both insider and outsider stances have potentially positive and negative aspects to consider. An insider may have more credibility and ability for rapport but must guard against political conflicts that could extend beyond the study. An outsider may not know how to negotiate the nuances of the system, or how to identify participants that will represent diverse perspectives, but they pose limited risk to themselves and others in terms of future political implications. Job-embedded research can be a "double-edged sword" (Mercer, 2007, p. 5). It has both potential and pitfalls. In her editorial showcasing the contributions of insider research to the study of medical education, Locke (2019) described many of these potential pitfalls but asserted that they can be avoided if the researcher is "sufficiently critical of your own work and challenging any findings that simply confirm what is already known" (p. 176).

There were specific reasons why I chose to pursue research within my own organization. First, I would have more direct access to use what I learn through my research to contribute to the leadership development of a district in which I have and will continue to invest my career. Second, I had access to participants through personal contact and snowball sampling and the ability to access them during their work hours while I continued to work part-time. Finally, researching within my current work community held me accountable to conduct my investigations as an insider with and for, rather than with an outsider propensity toward research done at or to a community. I evaluated the ethical and political considerations of insider research seriously in designing my study and set out strategies to mediate potential pitfalls. The primary strategy was a deliberate focus on perceived self-efficacy instead of efficacy as perceived

by others. I refined my questions based on feedback from principal colleagues and those in my pilot study toward non-evaluative, strength-based wording. For example, rather than asking participants what they found challenging about being instructional leaders of literacy, which infers that they have experienced it as a challenge, I worded my question: "In the research, some findings suggest that principals find literacy leadership challenging. Why do you think that is?" I also set out to establish the position of my interviewee as a mentor with questions such as this one in reference to reading the *LQS* indicator for Providing Instructional Leadership, "How do you think principals approaching certification for the first time might feel/respond?" My goal was that principals who participated in my research would feel that I had acted as a conduit for them to share their experiences and wisdom around becoming instructional leaders of literacy, especially how they developed their sense of confidence, with the new leaders who will join them in the future. Conducting research outside my current district would have eased fears of risk and political conflict for both my participants and me but may have altered the potential scope and intent of my study.

Upon gaining ethics and cooperative activity program approval, I began by inviting participation from a group of known principal colleagues who I knew represented a range of experiences. I included a list of forty-one principals from my division that I had identified based on representative sampling in my cooperative activity program research application. My intent was to begin with participants from this list, acknowledging that any number of them would decline, and from there move into snowball sampling whereby participants could suggest other principals they know who might be interested in participating themselves. At the end of each interview, I gave the

participant a research invitation postcard with my contact information and invited them to share it with other district principals that they thought might be interested in participating. My goal was to include at least 8 participants that represent targeted samples (see Table 2) but to include up to 24, to cover a range of experiences with literacy instruction and leadership.

Table 2

Targeted Diverse Sample Group

	Elementary Teaching Experience	Secondary Teaching Experience	Elementary Principalship	Secondary Principalship
Male 1	X		X	
Male 2	X			X
Male 3		X	X	
Male 4		X		X
Female 1	X		X	
Female 2	X			X
Female 3		X	X	
Female 4		X		X

This deliberate sample selection aimed to build the dependability of the data through participant diversity. This form of qualitative research does not create predictive reliability, however. Guba (1981) describes dependability in naturalistic research as "not invariance (except by chance) but trackable variance—variance that can be ascribed to sources: so much for error, so much for reality shifts, so much for increased instrumental proficiency (better insights), and so on" (p. 81). While seeking to ensure that all the areas of my sample group were represented, I intended to continue to involve as many participants as needed until a level of saturation, or no new emerging themes, was evident in my ongoing data analysis. The first eight participants who agreed to participate did indeed fulfill my criteria for a diverse sample group (see Table 3).

Participant educational gender, credential and occupational backgrounds are found in Table 3:

Table 3

Participant Demographics

	Female	Male	B.Ed. Elementary	B.Ed. Secondary	K-3 Teaching	4-6 Teaching	7-9 Teaching	10-12 Teaching	Adult Teaching	K-6 Principal	7-9 Principal	10-12 Principal
Michael		X		X			X	X		X	X	
Yvonne	X		X				X	X	X	X		
Dean		X		X			X	X			X	X
Nicole	X		X		X					X	X	X
Tony		X	X		X	X				X	X	
Theresa	X		X		X	X				X		
Patricia	X			X				X		X	X	
Bonnie	X		X			X			X	X		

Note. All names are pseudonyms.

I was confident that I was beginning to see a level of saturation, but in order to confirm that saturation, I had already contacted another group of four principals when classes were cancelled on March 15, 2020 due to the COVID 19 pandemic. What I thought would be a temporary pause in my data collection eventually became a full stop as the scope of school closures and demands on district principals became evident for the foreseeable future. I felt it was both untenable and ethically questionable to continue to pursue research participants during this time of unprecedented upheaval in the school system. With the input of my doctoral supervisor, I made the decision in May 2020 to truncate my data collection and complete my research based on the eight interviews conducted already.

To ensure informed consent, my invitation to potential participants included both verbal and written information (see Appendix A). I ensured I obtained written consent

(see Appendix B) as well as verbal consent during the interview which was recorded in the transcript. A key point of this consent was that participants were given the guarantee of removing themselves and their data from the study at any time up until two weeks after I shared a copy of the transcript and notes on my initial coding after which I began to aggregate their data.

Credibility and Confirmability

Qualitative research is neither intended to, nor is it capable of, proving a theory or capturing objective truth (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). However, confidence in the credibility of the data and its interpretation is essential. Credibility is a term used in qualitive research to represent the truth value, or internal validity, or research findings (Guba, 1981). Confirmability, as opposed to rationalistic objectivity, shifts the "burden of neutrality from the investigator to the data" (Guba, 1981, p. 81) by recognizing multiple realities and value systems including the researcher's won predispositions. I pursued credibility and confirmability in two ways. First, I utilized principles of triangulation in interpreting participants' responses. While my data set consisted primarily of recorded transcripts of the interviews, I also made memos during the interviews and when conducting my initial coding that I used in combination with participants responses to guide my analysis. I purposely chose participants who provided multiple perspectives. As mentioned earlier, I analyzed the data in multiple ways: deductively, based on sensitizing concepts in research; and inductively, identifying new themes emerging from the participants themselves. The second credibility step I took was member-checking. This occurred over time in three phases. During interviews, I frequently paraphrased and asked clarifying questions. Each interview concluded with an

invitation to revisit, redact, or add to any points of our discussion. After interviews, I sent participants a copy of their interview transcripts as well as a brief outline of quotes from their interviews that I had initially coded into each of the five sensitizing concepts (self-efficacy, collective efficacy, proxy efficacy, instructional actions and instructional ethos) and a section of quotes with my memos that I would include in my inductive phases of analysis. I invited their feedback on my interpretations and gave them the opportunity to redact, revise, or add to the transcripts. I kept records of the dates I sent the transcripts and initial coding documents to them and copies of the dates on content of responses. None of the eight participants asked to be removed from the study. Three participants responded to express appreciation for the experience of the interviews. One participant requested some word changes and provided additional clarification and I revised his transcript and initial coding document accordingly.

Data Collection

Since my research question sought out explanations of experience and personal interpretations, the most useful data collection technique for this study was to digitally record one-on-one semi-structured interviews with participants. A demographic survey could have gathered some of the surface detail I needed, such as educational background and principalship journey, but I was successful in gathering that information during the interviews. To deeply explore my participants' thoughts and feelings I created my interview schedule to facilitate a "conversation with purpose" (p. 108, Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). I began each interview with a reminder of the purpose of my study, confirmation of informed consent, and questions to ascertain demographic information. The rest of my interview schedule (see Appendix C) was planned around the conceptual

understandings of instructional leadership and literacy, and the sensitizing concepts of instructional action and ethos, self-efficacy, collective efficacy, and proxy efficacy coming from a review of the literature. Using Merriam and Tisdell's (2016) guidelines for questions that stimulate thinking and those to avoid, I created a first draft and did a trial run with a colleague prior to my pilot study. Based on his responses, and the feedback he gave me after the interview, I adapted the interview schedule to the form I used in my pilot study. During the pilot study interviews, I followed the intent of the questions, but found I did not need to ask all of them each time, nor did I always follow the order as I sought to follow the lead of the participant with limited jumps in train of thought. One question I added to three of the four pilot study interviews was "What would surprise me?" This allowed me to open even more room for the inductive phase of analysis. My experience with the trial run of my interview schedule as well as the pilot study has allowed me to refine my interview schedule.

During each interview, I recorded memos on my copy of the interview schedule. These include phrase markers to help me find their answers in the transcript. These margin notes included words participants used to capture an idea, connections they made to other parts of my interview schedule, and follow-up questions I wanted to ask. Taking these margin notes allowed me to guide the conversation efficiently; while a few participants included some tangential conversation during the interviews, most of the interview data I collected was relevant to my research question. Reviewing my margin notes after each interview, and adding to them as needed, shaped what I listened for more closely and asked as follow-up questions in subsequent interviews. This was consistent with the iterative cycle of analysis in my methodology. In constructivist grounded

theory, Charmaz (2014) called this an interactive analytic space that, when begun early in the research process, "expedites inquiry" (p. 115). This iterative data analysis during the interviews was especially powerful as the eight interviews spanned over the course of three months, providing me with time to think and read additional literature in between.

Data Analysis

As mentioned in my research methodology, I utilized both deductive and inductive analysis throughout my data collection and final analysis phases. I drew from Charmaz's (2014) constructivist grounded theory as well as descriptions of qualitative data analysis from both Merriam and Tisdale's (2016) qualitative research guide and Creswell's (2015) educational research framework to carry out six phases of data analysis.

Phase One: Iterative Analysis During Interviews

As described in the interview process, data analysis began with a deductive approach as I listened for references to sensitizing concepts in participants' responses during the interviews in relation to Wahlstrom's (2012) concepts of instructional action and instructional ethos and Bandura's (1997, 1999, 2000, 2001) theoretical framework. I made a point of naming those concepts and explaining their definitions during the interviews which often elicited additional reflection.

Phase Two: Deductive Initial Coding Around Sensitizing Concepts

After transcribing the interviews, with the help of my memos, I began an initial coding process by combing through transcripts for instances where participants described specific actions or references to ethos and aspects of self-efficacy, collective efficacy, or proxy efficacy in their responses. I pulled out every section of participants' responses

clearly related to one of the sensitizing concepts and grouped them together into general deductive concepts in an initial coding organizer.

Phase Three: Identifying Data for Abductive and Inductive Analysis

While I was pulling out sections of responses from the transcripts that fit the general deductive concepts, I also applied abductive reasoning to look at the parts of the interview that did not appear to directly link to the sensitizing concepts at the outset. I pulled these sections out and placed them into the initial coding organizer under a general inductive heading and added additional memos to guide my next phase of analysis. These completed initial coding organizers are what was shared with participants along with copies of their transcripts as a component of my member checking.

Phase Four: Inductive Initial Coding

In this phase, I began to aggregate data from all eight participants. I read through and manually sorted all the sections of participants transcripts that I had identified for inductive analysis during phase three. During this process, I continued to record memos both on emerging themes and questions for deeper analysis as well as the analysis process itself. At points I stopped to investigate emerging themes and questions in research literature before continuing. After two rounds of sorting for commonalities, I had identified 14 categories for further inductive and abductive appraisal.

Phase Five: Combining Initial Deductive Concepts and Inductive Categories

I returned to the sets of interview data I had initially coded under the five sensitizing concepts. While I kept notations on each quote that indicated their initial coding (self-efficacy, collective efficacy, proxy efficacy, instructional action, or instructional ethos), I looked for where they connected to the 14 tentative inductive

categories. Again, I continued to record memos pointing toward emerging themes and returned to research literature related to those emerging themes. During this phase, I was able to see connections between the 14 tentative categories and collapsed them down into eight final categories. At this stage, with all my data initially coded and grouped into categories, I moved into a phase of axial coding.

Phase Six: Axial Coding

The basis of my axial coding was to analyze the eight categories for their relation to the instructional leadership spectrum. I chose to use this spectrum as a framework for axial coding with two purposes. First, I wanted to conduct a self-audit of the direction of my findings in the coding process thus far. My research question asked, "In a context of standardized performance expectations and varying professional backgrounds, how do school principals experience self-efficacy as instructional leaders of literacy." I had defined instructional leadership as a spectrum between more transactional instructional actions and more transformational instructional ethos. If the eight categories I had identified through my analysis so far were relevant to addressing my research question, they would need to make sense in relation to the instructional leadership spectrum. Another aspect of the audit was to revisit my pre-suppositions about the impact of background knowledge and experience on self-efficacy, collective efficacy, and proxy efficacy, using an abductive reasoning. While some of the categories provided evidence that back up my pre-suppositions, others surprised me. I will explore these surprises in the discussion chapter. My second purpose for using the instructional leadership spectrum as an axial coding framework was to analyze how my initial deductive categories related

to and intersected with each other to help me see the broader themes of how principals experience self- efficacy as instructional leaders of literacy.

I conducted the axial coding by placing each quote, with its notation of category and concept, along the instructional leadership spectrum which quickly coalesced into five points between the ends of action and ethos: most transactional, more transactional, equal transactional/transformation, more transformational, most transformation. I used a color-coding and letter system to record the placements along the spectrum and then used a number of different charting techniques to allow me to look at relationships between the eight categories and the concepts included in them from a broader lens. As with each previous phase, an essential part of this phase of analysis was writing memos and digging into more literature. At the end of this phase, I was able to identify three emerging theories describing how the eight categories, and their included concepts delineated into 22 sub-categories, related to each other in answering the question of how principals experience self-efficacy as instructional leaders of literacy. In the next chapter, I will lay out these findings in detail.

Summary

My research method was chosen, adapted, and carried out with continual reference to answering my research question:

> In a context of standardized performance expectations and varying professional backgrounds, how do school principals experience self-efficacy as instructional leaders of literacy?

Embedded within this research question were supporting questions:

- How do principals perceive the impact of background on their sense of self-efficacy?
- What experiences do principals ascribe to the evolution of their self-efficacy?
- How does a principal's sense of self-efficacy intersect with experiences of collective efficacy and proxy efficacy?

I utilized Charmaz's (2014) work on constructivist grounded theory in combination with Merriam and Tisdale's (2016) and Creswell's (2015) qualitative research guides to design a research method for my data collection and analysis. The approach I have taken created an effective tension between deductive and inductive reasoning, causing me to engage in an iterative cycle of analysis both during and after semi-structured interviews with deliberately sampled participants. Through six phases of post-interview analysis, I identified three emerging theories of how school principals in my context experience instructional leadership of literacy. These theories meet my criteria for reaching a sufficient saturation point based on Merriam and Tisdell's (2016) descriptions of being exhaustive, mutually exclusive, sensitizing, and conceptually congruent.

In the following Findings and Discussions chapters, I will describe these three emerging theories in detail and will put discuss the implications for current practice and indications for future research in the field of self-efficacy and instructional leadership.

Chapter Four—Findings and Discussion:

How do principals perceive the impact of background on their sense of self-efficacy?

In response to the first sub-question of my research, I found principals experienced the impact of their educational, instructional, and leadership background as a process of grappling with credibility. Taking on their first principalships caused participants to confront their accountability for student achievement by first realizing the primacy of literacy in student success, taking responsibility for student learning, seeing the role data served to urge and confirm their decisions, and the pitfalls of settling for easy data targets as accountability measures. Participants grappled with their personal abilities to fulfill those accountabilities, and each went through phases of questioning their own credibility. Each participant shared experiences of imposter syndrome, doubting their abilities or feeling like a fraud, often caused by a lack of background knowledge and experience in literacy instruction at the grade levels they were asked to lead. All participants pointed to the positive contributions having at least some background knowledge of literacy had on their sense of self-efficacy for instructional leadership of literacy. However, many of them also found relying too much on previous successes and expertise in literacy could create roadblocks to developing the proxy and collective efficacies of their staffs. Feeling unprepared at the start of a new principalship or new assignment was a common impact of background leading participants to grapple with their own and others' perceptions of their credibility to lead in literacy instruction.

I begin this chapter by describing findings in the theme Grappling with Credibility. I conclude this chapter with a discussion of how and where these findings support, extend, contradict, or uniquely contribute to existing research.

Grappling with Credibility

Believing they could do the job as instructional leaders, the root of self-efficacy, was something each participant grappled with, especially at the start of their principal careers. It began with the sober realization of their accountability for student achievement and their perceptions of their own personal competence. In this section, the findings for grappling with credibility are presented in two categories: (a) accountability and (b) personal competence.

Accountability

A realization of their accountability for the measurable success of their students was a source of motivation for all the principals in my study. In relation to principal accountability, the following four sub-categories emerged from the data: (a) primacy of literacy, (b) responsibility for student learning, (c) role of data, and (d) risk of easy targets.

Primacy of Literacy

Seven of the participants made pointed comments about the primacy of literacy in their instructional leadership. They recognized without strong literacy instruction in their schools, their students would not be successful in their educational careers in any subject. With this recognition came a prioritization of literacy as a core component of their instructional leadership. Nicole asserted, "if reading is a human right, if being literate is a human right, there's a moral imperative there." Yvonne's advice to new principals was to ask themselves, "is literacy getting the time it deserves as the most important foundation for students in elementary?" Michael called literacy "the kingpin of all education" warning not making it an instructional priority was "robbing kids from their ability to be

successful." All participants reflected on the credibility they felt from evidence of strong literacy systems they had helped put in place in their schools including a sense of proxy efficacy through their use of literacy coaches, lead teachers, and bringing teachers with emergent literacy expertise into high schools. Understanding the primacy of literacy fed their sense of responsibility for student learning.

Responsibility for Student Learning

Reflections on the primacy of literacy also prompted participants to reflect on their overall responsibility for student learning as instructional leaders. Responsibility was felt as accountability pressures from both inside and outside the school. Principals felt the weight of responsibility to their students and staff as well as the scrutiny of their district supervisors and the government. Michael felt this keenly: "It's my job to make sure that kids learn," as did Bonnie who noticed gaps in student learning and asserted, "we've got to get crackin' here with these kinders." Yvonne worried about how people outside the school came to judgements about her literacy leadership: "Your supervisors make a lot of judgements about you that are really based on such a small fraction of seeing you in action or talking to your staff." As they grappled for credibility in the eyes of these stakeholders, participants sought out ways to move accountability toward a collective responsibility. Theresa talked about ways she kept herself accountable. As with most of the other participants, she reflected on how her sense of efficacy increased when she began to work with a leadership team in her school: "We've got a leadership team that keeps me accountable and keeps me asking what the right next step is for staff." This form of proxy and collective efficacy for and with teams served to increase participants' senses of capacity to lead the work of their schools. That sense of collective

efficacy for accountability extended to their teachers. As Nicole put it, "As a staff, we all have a vested interest in getting our kids across the finish line." Theresa talked about team goal setting as "trying to reach the needs of all of those kiddos in a really collective way." Tony talked about the positive aspect of teachers holding each other accountable for their ongoing learning within his teams, "They have really strong grade group teams that they bounce things off so they aren't learning in isolation."

One way participants worked to establish credibility and move toward shared accountability for students' literacy success was through realizing the potentially powerful role of collecting and analyzing data on students' literacy progress.

Role of Data

The role of data in accountability for student learning was significant to many of my participants. It served to draw staff into collective, collaborative discussions and problem solving. It also acted as a catalyst for growth in professional knowledge and instructional pedagogy for principals and their teachers.

All participants, like Yvonne, found value in collecting "reading and writing data throughout the year." Nicole explained the link she saw between literacy leadership and accountability through data:

> As much as we foster and inspire and we create supports and opportunities for literacy, there's also an accountability piece for us as principals when that isn't happening in our schools. How do we know if its not happening? What evidence helps inform our understanding? And then how do we address that in our schools?

While Michael called it "a wicked taskmaster" and evidence of "where the rubber meets the road of actually getting kids up to the line," he also reflected data changed the way he

interpreted his role as an instructional leader. He moved from believing his job was to ensure excellent delivery of curriculum to a conviction for ensuring students were learning through tracking tangible evidence. This shift was experienced by many participants, some of whom, like Theresa, found it initially discomfiting but saw how the use of literacy data empowered her literacy leadership:

> I used to really feel uncomfortable with data around kids because in my heart, I'm a bleeding-heart grade one teacher who knows that Jonathan knows how to read it, just knows it. And that's not sufficient if we're going to really have some real conversations about how students are growing and how they're not and what they need next from us. So learning to be okay and comfortable with collecting specific data about kids and tracking it has been a real shift for me.

Like Theresa, participants angst about the role of data lessened when these principals talked about using data as a catalyst for growth in collaborative teams.

Each principal utilized collaborative teams within their schools for a variety of purposes, but collectively analyzing data of student learning was significant both as means for identifying ways to improve instruction but also as a means of internal accountability for teachers. Theresa, Bonnie, and Yvonne saw a sense of collective efficacy grow through team use of student learning measures. Theresa reflected on how important it was for both her and her teachers to not feel they are approaching this work alone, "We've created this collective responsibility and therefore a collective way of approaching the kids that challenge us most in literacy so that not every single teacher in the building has to have the same level of expertise." Bonnie, Patricia, and Yvonne also used data teams as, in Yvonne's words, "a way to pull people together to talk about what

we can all commit to." This use of student data as a catalyst for next steps was a common thread.

Patricia, Theresa, Michael, and Nicole used team meetings to analyze data. Theresa talked about how just by being present at the table as a guest to her collaborative teams, she saw their sense of ownership increase: "and I've not said a word, but just by being in the room probably heightens the accountability a little bit." Michael and Nicole also saw the growth potential for teachers and students through asking probing questions to increase collective efficacy. As Nicole described:

> My question at that point was, so what? You've identified a child's learning needs. You've put them at a certain letter or you've said they're below or above. For me, that's nice to know, but what's important to know is how does that impact learning and how our practices change to support that.

Dean called this ability to use data to effectively move student learning forward as being "instructionally wise," something he attributed to building his sense of self-efficacy as an instructional leader, especially in literacy at the secondary level. Increased self- and collective efficacy as a result of wisdom gained through use of student achievement data was something participants noted. Theresa's opinion on the use of data changed when she saw "the power that measuring something together and celebrating growth together has over sustaining instructional improvement." Nicole and Bonnie had similar experiences.

While all participants cited a positive impact the use of data had on developing their self-efficacy and credibility with others, they also cited caveats around collecting

data for data's sake or interpreting and acting on data without an understanding of context.

Risk of Easy Targets

Being measurable did not immediately translate to worth measuring for most participants. Many noted the inadequacies of attempts to reduce literacy performance to tests of small components or measures which promised quick data. While Nicole clearly valued the use of data to measure success and drive instruction, she recognized the danger of reducing literacy learning to what was easiest to measure:

> It is very easy to get mired down in the technical aspects of language learning. But that is not where we get the outcomes that we need for our students to achieve and be literate and for our teachers to be their best selves as professionals. And it is very easy as a new principal because those are the low hanging fruits that we can get at quickly.

Recognizing literacy is highly contextual creates challenges for measuring student growth with simple measures. Theresa, who had the most literacy expertise of the group, felt worried over programs or tests based on a one-size-fits all approach in instructional leadership of literacy, recognizing, "I don't think you can go in with a map. I would hate for someone to give me a literacy framework: first, you implement this thing," and not leaving room to be reflexive and responsive.

The challenge of looking for solutions to literacy issues revealed in data without grabbing for the low hanging fruit of a one-size-fits-all program centered on the phrase "best practice". Her statement above reflects her reluctance to be told exactly how to teach literacy, but Theresa did express a desire for some recognition of absolutes. Like

Tony and Patricia, she experienced uncertainty despite her background training, positing it was likely many principals would know even less how to identify best practices. Yvonne and Nicole noted the challenge of coming to collective understandings of best practices. Bonnie revealed a degree of tension at the district level around this question, pointing out:

> We've had arguments as a group of principals. Its hard to know which direction to go. I've sat on numerous committees and, you know, is it this local university professor's work? Is it the Five Pillars? Is it Lucy Calkin's work? This staff does Empowering Writers. How do you know, especially if you're within an environment where there is no 'thou shalt'?

The downside of relying on proxy expertise in this area came through most saliently for Theresa and Nicole, both of whom had significant graduate level training in literacy. They felt their sense of self-efficacy decrease the less decisional control they had over the literacy instruction at their schools.

Accountability for measurable student achievement in literacy was one aspect of participants' sense of self-efficacy as credible instructional leaders. The ability to demonstrate through data their leadership efforts were successful allowed these participants to feel they and their staffs had gained credibility with the district and their communities. Another key factor in their self-efficacy as instructional leaders of literacy revolved around personal competence.

Personal Competence

Each participant in this study related at least part of their sense of self-efficacy to their sense of personal competence. In relation to personal competence, the following

sub-categories emerged from the data: (a) imposter syndrome, (b) background experience, (c) baseline knowledge, (d) pros and cons of expertise, and (d) feeling unprepared.

Imposter Syndrome

After the initial sense of achievement coming with being appointed to a principalship, most participants at some point struggled with a sense of imposter syndrome. Michael, a principal for over a decade and a self-declared 'math/science guy', was candid about his limitations as an instructional leader, particularly of literacy: "I think that every principal out there deals with imposter syndrome. I think we all feel like, why am I in this position? I am so not qualified to teach literacy." Nicole recalled:

> When I first went out to a school, I thought as principal I had to be the expert. And so for awhile I felt almost like I took up a persona of being an expert, but I knew I wasn't. So deep down I kept thinking, what if someone sees the cracks? What if someone realizes I don't know what I'm supposed to know as the principal?

During our interview, Theresa felt a bit "rattled" thinking she should be able to sound like she was doing more around literacy leadership due to her credentials as a literacy specialist. Her sense of self-efficacy was momentarily impacted because I knew her credentials and she worried she was not living up to my expectations. Tony talked about the fear principals may experience around literacy leadership if they have never taught reading or writing: "It's the fear of our own not knowing that, maybe, we avoid it." Bonnie recognized her own fear of not being able to lead literacy work and took some courses which increased her sense of self-efficacy because, "I wanted to be credible to

my teachers." Like Tony and Bonnie, the rest of the participants found their backgrounds had both positive and negative impacts on their self-efficacy as literacy leaders over the course of their careers.

Background Experience

There was no shortage of credentials or experience in my participant group. Nicole had a doctorate degree and Patricia was just starting hers. Michael, Yvonne, and Theresa held master's degrees. Dean and Bonnie had over 35 years of experience each. Of the eight participants, five had initial training in elementary education, which requires at least one course in teaching language arts. Michael, Dean, and Patricia had secondary education degrees; while Patricia taught as an English teacher, she reflected on the difference between teaching high school English and teaching elementary students how to read and write. Like Michael and Dean, she noted, "For sure there will be principals in this role who do not have literacy expertise. I have a little bit, of course; I was an English teacher, but not to the degree that I need to have." Dean credited a big part of his literacy knowledge to having a daughter with a reading disability and learning all he could to support her through school. Tony, the only male in the group with a elementary training, pointed to his teacher practicums as his primary source for learning about literacy pedagogy. Nicole credited her minor in language arts as one reason why she began to take on literacy leadership work in her schools as a "teacher leader." Yvonne reflected she did not find leading "literacy in particular more challenging" than other areas of principalship but did reflect on the positive impact of her background as an English as a Second Language teacher in her understandings of how children learn to read.

At some point early in their principal careers, most participants experienced a moment when their sense of self-efficacy as instructional leaders of literacy felt limited. Michael found his first principalship eye-opening. He reflected on feeling a strong sense of self-efficacy going into his first principalship because of the success he had experienced as a classroom teacher in high school. A turning point for him was "going into a division one setting" and "listening to teachers who were talking about what is clearly essential for kids to learn and the fact that less than mastery [in literacy] was not enough." He reflected, "I wish I had known more about literacy instruction" going into the principalship.

Even those with elementary education background and literacy training felt their self-efficacy waver. Bonnie recollected, "I really didn't understand Kindergarten until I became a principal, and it wasn't until a few years into it that I kind of got it." All the participants cited their need to understand more about literacy instruction as motivations for ongoing professional learning. While still classroom teachers, Tony and Theresa talked about realizing their university training had not prepared them to be strong elementary literacy teachers. A common thread was how limited university training was in preparing them for the reality of teaching language arts. Like Tony, Theresa started with elementary education training. She chose a specialty in language arts thinking it "was a good strategy to be equipped to teach reading and writing," but, to her dismay, "Sure enough, it wasn't."

Discussing their background training and teaching experiences, participants grappled with their self-efficacy in relation to feeling capable of leading literacy work in

their schools. It led to reflections on what principals really need to know going into the role.

Baseline Knowledge

Participants all expressed the importance of intentionally building their understanding of instructional leadership in literacy, but they had different takes on where a baseline of knowledge falls. A common observation was many principals were appointed without adequate understandings of literacy learning. Tony asserted: "Lots of principals that say, I can't know everything. And yeah, you're right, you can't. But you need the baseline of math, literacy, and classroom management to support your teachers." Bonnie captured the essence of what baseline knowledge of literacy means: "knowing enough to know enough." Theresa noted a need for a baseline for colleagues who are ill-equipped "I'm present in some leadership conversations around reading and people are asking some questions that I think are not complicated reading questions." Bonnie, Michael, Theresa, and Dean all shared experiences of working collaboratively with other principals to build capacity for literacy leadership. Bonnie was emphatic in her concern about "the lack of knowledge and understanding amongst principals" on supporting effective literacy programming. She participated in focus groups within the district to advocate for more principals training in literacy. Noticing her colleagues seemed to struggle with how to support their teachers in literacy instruction, she wondered, "How do we influence practice if we're unsure ourselves about what's considered best practice out there?"

Participants reflected on how they built their own capacity thereby experiencing instructional leadership self-efficacy. The hallmark of their experience was a

commitment to life-long learning. Dean put it simply: "So, number one, if you want to be an expert in your craft? Learn." Nicole talked about it being "incumbent" on her to bring her knowledge up to a level in which she could support the diverse literacy programs at one of her schools and how principals need to continue to "engage in the work of literacy" through reading and writing and professional development. The importance of continuing to learn was echoed by others. "Staying current in my own professional development" was an important factor in Theresa's sense of self-efficacy. Yvonne, Nicole, and Dean talked about courses and conferences they had taken. Bonnie and Tony both took district led training in literacy instruction, historically designed for teachers, and engaged in working directly with groups of students alongside their teachers. Both found their sense of self-efficacy increased along with the credibility they felt with their teachers.

Being ready to take risks in leading literacy work in their schools and with colleagues was a signal for Nicole and Theresa of the positive impact of their efforts to build their knowledge and skills. Nicole summarized:

> When I see evidence that our teachers are growing in their capacity to be reflective and reflexive as professionals, that fuels me and builds my confidence. It shows me that the decisions I'm making as a leader around pedagogy or the kinds of resources I'll approve to buy or whatever are good decisions.

Like Nicole and Theresa, Bonnie and Dean shared experiences of coming to a point of being able to directly lead professional development sessions in literacy in their schools. Building expertise in literacy was one way principals expressed an increase in their sense of self-efficacy, but it was not without some challenges.

Pros and Cons of Expertise

Participants all noted ways having or developing expertise positively impacted their schools and developed their senses of self-efficacy as instructional leaders of literacy. Being able to lead professional development with staff and directly work with students was a positive described above. Other pros included increased confidence and knowing what to monitor. Dean, in his concise manner, asserted "My experience gives me credibility." Bonnie talked about being at a point where "people recognize that you have a strength in that area." She talked about the self- and collective efficacy resulting from when her advocacy group's work with the superintendent shaped a new direction in the district's literacy work. While recognizing the challenges of being viewed as the expert, Theresa reflected on the boost to her self-efficacy derived from her expertise:

> I wonder, in my beginning years of principalship, if having that foundational knowledge of literacy has been more helpful than I have realized. Because I would have to say to you that what I've had to learn is the instructional leadership piece, but I've known all along that running along the shoulder of the road beside me was that knowledge I already had.

Similarly, Nicole talked about the impact of "having the expertise to understand those different pieces" and being able to then develop a skill set of leading teachers into a shared understanding.

A strength of baseline knowledge was how it allowed participants to know what to look for in classroom instruction. Theresa talked about having "the skill set to be really clear in my classroom observations" and "knowing what questions to ask." Tony and Bonnie also saw the impact of baseline knowledge on their ability to guide

professional conversations with staff. Patricia, Michael, Dean, Nicole, and Theresa also pointed out the benefit of their experience and expertise in helping them know where to look for support outside of their schools.

However, prior expertise and successes had occasionally negative impacts in the short term. Patricia, Theresa, Tony, and Yvonne shared experiences where their perceptions of expertise caused some challenges. For Patricia, it started with being honest with herself: "I think principals need to get out of their own way, sometimes, in terms of that, you know, I'm the expert, because you're not." In her mind, she had to accept a lack of expertise in an area did not need to limit her self-efficacy: "You don't need to have expertise in a field to be able to comment on it or have insights about it. In fact, sometimes without the burden of knowledge, you might actually have some more insights than somebody else." Her reference to "the burden of knowledge" was something Yvonne and Theresa touched on, too. Yvonne talked about her lack of direct elementary literacy experience in her first principalship as "a gift." She explained she "was less tempted to be top down" and she might have been "a little more feisty in my convictions if it was a junior high or senior high." Theresa's staff already knew her for her literacy expertise before she became their principal. When she found they looked to her for every literacy solution, "I felt very much like I was a speed bump." She reflected on how much more effective it became once she created a literacy leadership team.

A con Tony experienced came out of a success. The positive impact of his professional development alongside his team in one school made him eager to apply the same strategy to his next school. It did not work as he expected:

> I think that actually got in the way, me knowing it, because I knew it or learned it in that first school and then tried to implement it in the next school. So instead of my learning alongside like I did in the first school, it was more top down.

He went on to reflect, "I still find myself asking the questions to lead them to where I want them to go, which I have got to step back from because they're not…its not learning." This is similar to Theresa's realization: "I needed to not be the only literacy leader in the building." Finding the right balance between expertise and learning alongside was an ongoing part of participants leadership journeys. Experiencing imposter syndrome, grappling with background and baseline knowledge while balancing the right mix of expertise and openness was often exacerbated by simply feeling unprepared.

Feeling Unprepared

There were times for all participants when feeling like they did not know enough took a toll on their sense of self-efficacy and, subsequently, building their own competence boosted their sense of self-efficacy. A shift in their source of self-efficacy occurred when they discussed how they dealt with feeling unprepared in areas outside their expertise and experience. This included deliberate choices to accept and pursue proxy and collective efficacy. In this area, participants shared experiences of increasing their sense of self-efficacy through proxy efficacy: trusting others' competence and knowledge in their stead.

For Patricia, it started with "recognizing that you can't be the expert in everything." Michael cautioned, "part of being in leadership is recognizing your own limitations." Recognizing her limitations made Yvonne "open to just asking lots of

questions and relying on the expertise of the staff." After talking about how important he found personal expertise in literacy to be for a principal, Tony added if you do not have the expertise "you can find the people who can." Michael concurred, "Advice to a new principal? Recognize the incredible talents and power of the teachers that are in your system. Find those ones who have leadership potential and let them lead." Patricia shared how relying on proxy efficacy did not decrease her self-efficacy: "When I come into any role without a significant background, I have to rely on people who do have a background in it. I don't know that it's necessarily a barrier." Likewise, after recognizing the "speed bump" challenges of her expertise and the changes she made in response, Theresa concluded, "Trusting the knowledge and capacity of the other people in the building has actually served us much better than me being top down." Nicole talked about "leveraging the strengths" of her staff to spur instructional growth and described her experience with proxy efficacy this way: "I think that has changed my role, but it has also provided teachers with more access to people that do have the expertise than I would ever be able to have as principal alone."

Participants shared details of individuals and groups within their schools whom they felt provided strong proxy efficacy. These included lead teachers with literacy knowledge and leadership potential. Bonnie spoke highly of her assistant principal and the leadership she provided to schools around the district. Theresa, Michael, Tony, Yvonne, and Dean talked about relying on networks of principals and teachers in other schools, and experts from the district and local universities. Nicole experienced proxy efficacy by listening to her high school students.

Participants indicated strong impacts of proxy efficacy on their own self-efficacy as instructional leaders often including a strong collective efficacy component. Nicole, Michael, Theresa, and Tony pointed to the positive impact on teacher practice when teams of teachers took on more ownership for their instructional growth. Patricia described what this looked like for her when participating in team meetings where they share their ideas for next steps and "we can brainstorm together. I see that I'm supporting the work of the experts in this building who are doing it."

Participants did suggest a few caveats to reliance on proxies. Nicole cautioned about reliance on experts who work only with small groups of students in lieu of building capacity to benefit all students. Theresa brought her insights full circle to the risk of relying on proxies at the expense of personal competence asking, if an expectation for principals' building literacy knowledge themselves "is not built into our framework, how are we staying current? Who do we rely on for that information? Are we relying on universities? Are we relying on publishers? Are we relying on researchers, relying on colleagues?" She acknowledged the value of collective and proxy efficacy through collaboration with others but felt a caution about principals not establishing a level of personal competence and expertise for themselves.

Discussion: Research Sub-question One

In this section, I refer to my review of existing literature and describe ways my findings in the theme Grappling with Credibility, support, extend, contradict, or uniquely contribute to existing research in two areas: (a) baseline knowledge of literacy supported self-efficacy more than expertise, and (b) extending understandings of self-efficacy in instructional leadership.

Baseline Knowledge of Literacy Supported Self-Efficacy More Than Expertise

Principals in my study agreed a baseline knowledge of literacy pedagogy and the processes of learning to read, write, and comprehend language could contribute to their sense of self-efficacy as an instructional leader of literacy. This echoed the call for principal knowledge of literacy by Dempster et al (2017), Brumley (2010), Wilson, Katz, and Greenleaf (2020) and the International Literacy Association (2017). Participants had differing ideas of what the baseline should entail but all included knowing enough to know how to ask growth-oriented questions of their staff. This mirrors Bandura's (1997, 2012) assertion mastery experience is a source of self-efficacy with one caveat, the term mastery. One of my pre-suppositions led me to anticipate the more mastery a principal had in literacy knowledge and pedagogy, the stronger they would feel their sense of self-efficacy to act as instructional leaders of literacy. I was surprised to find this was not always true for my participants, which would appear to contradict some professional literature (Booth & Rowsell, 2007; Ontario Princpals' Council, 2009).

Several of my participants found extensive expertise in specific areas of literacy initially boosted their self-efficacy but caused it to suffer when their expertise blinded them to other factors impacting teacher's capacity. Being seen as the expert prevented some of their teachers from taking risks to develop their own literacy expertise. Trying to replicate previous successful experiences without contextual awareness backfired. Revisiting the term mastery, these participants would now count the downside of their expertise as contributing to their overall mastery of instructional leadership and self-efficacy thereof in lieu of self-efficacy as derived from mastery knowledge. However, my participants' emphasis on having baseline knowledge of literacy instruction is supported

by research citing an increase in principals' self-efficacy in response to increased literacy knowledge (Brumley, 2010; Dempster et al., 2017; Wilson, Katz, & Greenleaf, 2020).

Extending Understandings of Self-Efficacy in Instructional Leadership

As stated in my literature review, there is limited research on principals' development of self-efficacy for instructional leadership from a qualitative research lens. My research extends existing understandings by including the voices of principal participants and their descriptions for how their self-efficacy as instructional leaders has developed over the course of their careers. This perspective fills in gaps quantitative analysis of surveys are unable to address.

My research extends existing understandings of principals' instructional leadership to the field of literacy. It also provides an important extension to the limited literature by continuing the discussion of the impact of baseline literacy knowledge of principals' self-efficacy and the role of ego in principals' self-efficacy growth. Most significantly, my exploration of principals' development of self-efficacy in the instructional leadership of literacy is a unique contribution to the field of educational leadership. To date, I have been unable to find peer-reviewed studies specifically addressing principals' self-efficacy development in leading literacy work in their schools. One doctoral dissertation to note paralleled some of my recommendations for focusing efforts on supporting principals' self-efficacy development in literacy leadership. In it, Lockard (2013) studied the correlation between principals' ratings of self-efficacy and the reading achievement of grade five students in their schools. While he found no statistical correlation in the quantitative part of his study, his qualitative interviews with principals led him to recommend principals' self-efficacy development become a more

important focus in principal preparation and mentorship, a recommendation similar to one I make in the final chapter of this study.

Summary

Within the theme Grappling with Credibility, I addressed the question, "How do principals perceive the impact of background on their sense of self-efficacy?" I described the findings suggesting my eight principals grappled with personal credibility and competence in the face of accountability for their students' literacy growth. I examined how their sense of self-efficacy developed through those experiences. Finally, I pointed out where my research findings support, extend, contradict, or uniquely contribute to the field.

In the next chapter, I will explain the theme of negotiating locus of control. When principals' experiences moved from personal to interpersonal, their sense of self-efficacy was not only shaped by their sense of credibility and competence, but also by how their internal beliefs translated into their interactions with their school communities.

Chapter Five—Findings and Discussion:

What experiences do school principals ascribe to the evolution of their self-efficacy?

In answer to the second sub-question of my research, I found principals ascribed the evolution of their self-efficacy to the process of negotiating their locus of control in leading the literacy work of their schools. Participants described initially having to negotiate their locus of control when the reality of the job became apparent. They had to choose responses to external demands and find ways to mitigate their sense of isolation to cope with the pressure. An important component of negotiating where and how participants established their locus of control as literacy leaders was confronting the role of ego in their leadership mind-set. As principals, they recognized a sense of being always on as models for their staffs but attributed the evolution of their self-efficacy to learning to let go of ego, accept not knowing everything, and embrace growing into the role. This evolution shifted the locus of control for my participants toward leading people and managing things. During this process, they described the ways they defined instructional leadership of literacy for themselves, how they distinguished between instructional leadership and management, and ultimately how they found ways to utilize systems to create conditions for growth in literacy instruction which in turn created a culture of strong literacy practices.

I begin this chapter by describing findings in the theme Negotiating Locus of Control. I conclude this chapter with a discussion of how and where these findings support, extend, contradict, or uniquely contribute to existing research.

Negotiating Locus of Control

The principals in my study reflected on the challenges of negotiating locus of control as instructional leaders in relation to the day-to-day realities of the job, confronting the role of ego in their work, and navigating the distinctions between leading people and managing things. In this section, the findings for negotiating locus of control are presented in three categories (a) reality of the job, (b) role of ego, and (c) leading people, managing things.

Reality of the Job

No matter how prepared they felt going into their first principalships, the reality of the job presented participants with unpredicted or unprecedented challenges. Being the last stop between school staff and external demands, feeling isolated, and finding ways to cope with the pressure were common experiences impacting their senses of self-efficacy. In relation to the reality of the job, the following sub-categories emerged from the data: (a) external demands, (b) sense of isolation, and (c) coping with pressure.

External Demands

Bonnie, a veteran of the group, talked about the impact of changes in social demographics on her ability to support learners in a specific community: “this job has evolved, and society has changed.” Dean also cited an increase in external demands of the job and the increasing expectation for principals to meet needs of students and families beyond curricular instruction, “Its not as simple when you address the societal and political issues as it might seem,” later reflecting “that is so far different, I believe, than when my dad was a principal.” Feeling a buck-stops-here pressure led many participants to experience an unanticipated sense of isolation.

Sense of Isolation

Yvonne explained the connection between pressure and isolation: "Its sometimes lonely and you do feel vulnerable as a principal. It is not your fault, but all of it—its your problem." Tony and Dean also expressed a sense of isolation as new principals. Bonnie reflected: "oftentimes when you're a starting principal and you go to a school, it's a little school. You're kind of it. Pretty lonely." One way principals found to cope with the isolation was to rely on each other. Tony would not have made it through his first years without a support network: "I had another rookie principal in a nearby school. I think we talked to each other every day just so that we weren't on our own, because we didn't have assistant principals."

Coping with the Pressure

Supportive networks played a huge role in helping participants cope with pressure and served to increase their senses of self-efficacy, using collective efficacy to prop up their self-efficacy. Theresa shared, "I think you need a cohort. I think doing this work alone is too hard if you're the only person doing your job in your building. So, you need that frame of reference from other buildings and other successes." Michael and Patricia made frequent references to the role of collaboration as a means of meeting the demands of the role, especially within their schools. An example of the intersection of collective efficacy with proxy efficacy in dealing with job demands came through in a principals' meeting Bonnie recounted, "We were just talking about that in our last meeting, about the job becoming more and more complex." As a result, she and her colleagues made a plan to each focus on one area and bring back their learning to the group rather than trying to master everything individually. Dean talked about being a "district principal" and "part of

a collective" which meant a lot of support, but also a need to let go of opinion from time to time as one of the "limitations we took on when we said yes" to the role.

Role of Ego

Patricia introduced the term ego into these findings, and it served an essential role in understanding what principals experience as they try to negotiate what they should or should not include in determining their locus of control. The difference between ego and self-efficacy became a clear distinction when principals talked about being instructional leaders of literacy in their schools. In relation to the role of ego, the following sub-categories emerged from the data: (a) always on, (b) letting go, (c) acceptance of not knowing, and (d) growing into the role.

Always On

Participants attributed the rise of ego to a sense of always being on as the principal and feeling compelled to model expertise. Nicole shared the responsibility she felt to model her philosophy of literacy and strong pedagogy for her teachers: "A principal is a powerful modeler. Absolutely. I may not think I'm formally modeling, but I'm informally modeling all the time…Your staff watch you all day, every day." Yvonne recognized her role as a principal as being a teacher of teachers:

> In so many ways, especially the instructional leadership part, so much of that part is the same as teaching. You're being the lead learner, but all of those things you hope the teachers does in the classroom is the same things that you can bring forward in your instructional leadership.

Tony echoed the lead learner part in his advice to "participate in training with your staff. Be in classrooms to model it." Most participants recognized being on as the model

required hard work. As Patricia described it, "I work at being a learner and staying in this place of curiosity." After going through a challenging situation with a staff member, she reflected, "as hard as the days can be sometimes, and that wasn't an easy thing to navigate through, I still came out having learned." A pre-requisite to learning cited by participants was the step of letting go of ego.

Letting Go

As much as participants acknowledged the need to have some baseline of understanding about literacy, they also acknowledged the pitfalls of egotism. Michael warned, "we can get sidetracked by feeling like we have to have all of the answers." Theresa was blunt: "I think a principal would be foolish to think that they could be the only change agent in a building." Reflecting on his unsuccessful attempt to rush through change in his second school, Tony talked about his ego over previous success causing short-cuts, "I didn't take the right time. Everything I'd done right in my first school, a lot of it I skipped because I wanted to get it going and because I knew it, why don't you?"

Letting go of positional ego could be a challenge for principals if, as Bonnie pointed out, "in my principal group we were taught to act 'as if'" which she interpreted at meaning she was supposed to "go in front of people and pretend" she had all the answers. She pointed out how this had a negative impact on her sense of self-efficacy because she lacked a true sense of credibility with her staff. Yvonne talked about letting go of being right: "its okay to have some ideas and convictions and share those with people, but I don't want it to be my way and the only voice that comes to figuring out what the plan is." Michael summarized succinctly, "as an instructional leader, you have to be willing to be wrong."

Hubris at attaining a principalship troubled Patricia, who worked in a role of mentoring new principals, citing the limitations of perceiving the position as the end goal: "I do not want anybody that I work with to think when you're a principal you've arrived, and you have it all figured out. I don't want anybody to think that because its not true." Part of the challenge of ego is principals attained their positions due to previous successes. Patricia went on to explain:

> Not for everybody who moves into principalship, but for many they were awesome teachers. Then they started taking on these leadership positions. They got lots of recognition about how they were doing. They stood out. That kind of stuff is all about stroking the ego, really.

Michael cautioned, "You have to approach leadership with understanding that it is servant leadership and supporting the people who really can make expert decisions where you're not an expert." Letting go of ego can be a process one has to work through but can serve to increase self-efficacy through proxy efficacy. Nicole noted the impact on her confidence when she was not able to provide the answers her teachers. She reflected on an experience with a struggling student:

> At some point I realized I needed to step down and just bring together the best people … around the table to support him. I could never have gotten him there … but what I could do is get the people who could do that. I've learned to let that go.

Patricia noted letting go of ego can initially be painful, but ultimately opens the door for learning. When you first admit you do not have the answers, she warns, "it's going to hurt a little bit. The ego is going to be bruised" but it allows you then to ask, "how do I grow in my capacity? How do I help other people grow in the capacity?" This led to an

interesting phase for many of the participants in their development of self-efficacy as instructional leaders, the place of not knowing. As Yvonne explained:

> No one feels that they have every piece to the exemplary level in the very first years, let alone maybe a few years down. Sometimes I find I thought I would have more certainty about certain things being my fourth year as a principal. But sometimes, the more you know, the more you realize you don't know.

Letting go of ego began for many participants with coming to terms with not knowing.

Acceptance of Not Knowing

Earlier, Michael talked about the importance of "recognizing my own limitations." Even experts have places of not knowing. In Theresa's experience: "As someone who's supposed to be a member of a reading specialist council, I can't in this current role get to it. I'm not sure where I'm accessing current literacy research right now, and it matters to me." Patricia saw a need for leaders to remember their stance as learners from when they were successful teachers, recalling "there is a place of 'I'm comfortable with not knowing because I know that I can move into knowing.'" Dean pointed out how success in principalships can be dependent on willingness to learn, referring specifically to high school assistant principals who take on first principalships in elementary schools where some have done well but "others have gone and really struggled because there is so much new to learn."

A thirst for learning eventually turned a place of not knowing into a positive experience for many participants. For Yvonne, "the excitement is that you have some wisdom from some experiences, but then you also still have cool things to uncover."

Working with new principals, Patricia tells them, “You’re never going to have it all figured out, actually; it’s dynamic which is so engaging about what we do.”

Vulnerability, in lieu of ego, was key to learning for participants. Michael posited, “leaders have to be willing to do things badly so that they can gain the experience to do things well.” Bonnie reflected on the growth she experienced in her first school through “stumbling and stuttering and hitting speed bumps and trying to learn what it means to be an administrator.” Theresa called it “bathrobe leadership” and found it ultimately increased her self-efficacy through increased collective efficacy: “My intention was to share the vulnerability of leading for the first time. I’m just learning, so will you learn along with me? People were very keen to say, you sure are taking risks, I’ll take a risk, too.” Extending comfort in not knowing to staff through a learner mindset was something Patricia valued: “Not only is that good in a leader, its good for everybody that you work with.”

A significant positive outcome of vulnerability for many participants was how it led to an increase in collective efficacy. Nicole, Tony, Dean, Theresa, and Bonnie all talked about an increased sense of self efficacy as a result of “learning alongside” their teachers and experiencing a growth in collective efficacy. Realizing she could not be an expert in everything led Bonnie to increase her coaching skills. Citing Berger’s (2014) book, “A More Beautiful Question,” Patricia talked about coaching a new principal to see not knowing as an awesome place to be:

> In this place of not knowing, if you can be okay with it, you’re going to just ask the beautiful question and its going to start sparking the ideas. Then you can

move into whatever that is in terms of literacy, in terms of anything you are working on.

Moving from the pressure of always being on through letting go of ego and developing a learner mindset was a catalyst for participants to grow into the role of the principal as instructional leaders.

Growing into the Role

One of the questions I asked participants was what they wished they had known before that they knew now or how they had changed since they started in the role. Yvonne, Tony, Theresa, and Patricia all reflected on being less worried about being the experts. Michael and Nicole both reflected on gaining a broader understanding of literacy. Since, as Dean pointed out, there was no "factory for the principalship," this growth occurred on the job once participants had taken on a learner mindset. Ongoing professional learning, reflection, and collaboration were credited with supporting their growth as instructional leaders of literacy and their subsequent growth in self-efficacy.

Dean exhorted new principals to "read all the time to learn the craft," something Nicole and Patricia also emphasized. Michael defined a professional as, "somebody who challenges their work all the time and stays on the cutting edge so that they can get better." Theresa had pointed out her desire to keep abreast of current literacy research. All of the principals talked about the many courses and seminars they had taken over the years to hone their craft and build their capacity as literacy leaders.

When I asked participants about how they approached the Leadership Quality Standard (LQS) document, particularly competency six, "Providing Instructional Leadership," many of them described its usefulness as a reflective tool. Patricia shared

how she and her assistant principal created a joint professional growth plan based on their reflections of which parts of the LQS they wanted to target in their leadership learning. She had her teachers work through a similar collaborative process in their own professional growth plans around the Teaching Quality Standard (TQS).

Collaborative networks with colleagues were credited by all the principals as supporting their growth. Dean asserted, "the network that a new principal has is critical." Theresa shared how honest discourse in one of her principal networks has helped her see "what tool might be missing from my toolbox." Michael and Tony shared the positive impact of accessing and drawing from professional expertise through district collaborations to help them guide the literacy work at their schools. For Bonnie, a collaborative group with other principals became pivotal in her professional growth as a literacy leader:

> We wanted to hold each other accountable because we were in groups that we felt were kind of spinning and we knew we had important work to do…That group filled me with drive, with purpose, and was really the best thing that I've done as a leader for my own personal and professional growth.

It was evident in many of the stories of collaboration participants shared their senses of self-efficacy increased through having the resource of the collective expertise of their groups.

Leading People, Managing Things

In my introductory chapters, I laid out the challenges of defining instructional leadership. One of my purposes for viewing instructional leadership as a spectrum was the overlap of leadership and management between the more transformational ethos and

more transactional actions ends. An important part of negotiating locus of control for my participants was navigating where to act along the spectrum of instructional leadership. In relation to leading people, managing things, the following sub-categories emerged from the data: (a) definitions of instructional leadership, (b) instructional leadership versus management, (c) utilizing systems to create conditions, and (d) creating a culture.

Definitions of Instructional Leadership

Along with the research community at large, principals in my study held nuanced definitions of instructional leadership. When asked to reflect on the LQS competencies, participants agreed "Providing Instructional Leadership" was primary to their roles. Most interpreted instructional leadership as a broad umbrella for the work they did to ensure quality learning. As Dean stated, "Instructional leadership is broader than just helping people with instruction." Nicole saw "instructional leadership as having to be highly nimble and flexible in our changing environment," and Bonnie found "when I get bogged down in the parts of the job that take you down pretty deep, this is the piece that lifts me up."

Unlike the others, Michael struggled with the way instructional leadership was presented in the LQS. He felt it lacked an accurate distinction between leading pedagogy and leading subject specific content and watered down what was most essential:

> I don't really know the definitions of instructional versus educational leader, but when I think about it, instructional leader to me becomes the person who guides what's happening in the classrooms in terms of instruction. Educational leader means the person who looks at the data and says this is an area that we need to get better at.

Michael felt asking principals to act as instructional leaders rather than educational leaders "places an unrealistic and I would even say impossible onus on principals." Nicole pointed out where nuances between "teaching and learning" and "pedagogy versus instruction" have an impact on your definition of instructional leadership:

> You come from a K-9 place where you teach children and then you come to high school, and you teach English. That was incredibly, it still is incredibly, hard for me, although we have really shifted in our building. It's, again, do you teach children, or do you teach certain works of literature?

The dichotomy of teaching versus learning was paralleled in participants' consideration of how direct they needed to be in their instructional leadership.

Generally, participants favoured setting direction through instructional ethos over direct instructional actions. Theresa summarized, "We haven't told people how to do it, but we have told people that this is what we do here." Direct instructional leadership actions seemed to be most necessary when working with teachers who struggled. Tony explained, "you have to direct in certain cases." For example, "if you're a teacher under evaluation because you're shitty, I'm not going to keep asking you questions. At some point, I just have to tell you how it's got to be done." Nicole specifically referenced direct actions in literacy leadership:

> I think there's a piece that lies in the shadows and that piece is the performance management piece. I do believe there's a really important aspect of this work, which is coming to understand when there are challenges around implementation of the TQS and the impact that has on learners and the capacity of teachers to meet the language learning and literacy needs of students. With that comes a

> responsibility to do different kinds of work as a principal; much more targeted work, much more strategic work around helping teachers grow in their capacity to be strong literacy teachers.

Bonnie also saw an imperative for principals to take direct instructional actions toward poor teaching practice:

> There are some principals who believe that we're not in the position to direct our teachers, they're professionals. I know of a school where guided reading is still up for grabs. Some people do it. Some people don't. And the principal's not saying you must because that principal believes that you don't direct a professional on how to teach reading.

Other participants did not believe as strongly in taking direct instructional actions. Based on his concern over lack of expertise in literacy, Michael expressed low self-efficacy to take on instructional actions in subjects outside his expertise: "I can't be the instructional leader, but I can be the educational leader in that particular area." Patricia saw direct instructional actions as inefficient in the long run: "Of course, things must be done, but being heavy handed about that? At the end of the day, we're just people. I hate being told what to do." Rather than be heavy handed, Patricia felt non-negotiables were best decided as a team.

Instructional Leadership Versus Management

One way participants negotiated their locus of control between direct instructional actions and less direct instructional ethos was in separating out instructional leadership and management, where management was the most direct action. Dean stated, "you lead people, and you manage things." Dean felt the purpose of the LQS was in the service of

instructional leadership but struggled with how it was laid out: "It's tricky when you look at the LQS, because I'll be quite honest with you, this whole thing's about management. I'm sorry, its not about leadership." Part of his concern sounded like others' concerns of how management should be a small part of their role but often took up the most time.

Pointing out LQS competency eight "Managing School Operations and Resources," Patricia observed: "This one, that's black and white. I see this as, okay, I've got to do that for sure, but that's management. Everything else is leadership and I see those two things as very different from each other." She felt strong self-efficacy for management decisions because it was easy to grasp. Similarly, Bonnie noted you can easily teach people budgeting and facility maintenance, but the meat of the work was in instructional leadership. However, she mused, "managing school operations and resources, it's a good reminder. It's a small amount; how much of my day is spent doing those sorts of things?" Patricia and Bonnie felt they had to work harder to develop their instructional leadership than their managerial leadership. Yvonne, who earlier stated instructional leadership was not stressful to her, "felt more unsure about some of those managerial leadership things like facilities and budget." In contrast, Nicole had a difficult time separating management and instructional leadership as they are described in the LQS:

> Although it is a separate line item, in some respects I find this highly interconnected. To tease apart instructional leadership is in some ways a challenge for me because I can't see instructional leadership without visionary leadership, nor can I see that separate from managing resources or developing leadership capacity.

While she did see the management competency as "black and white," Patricia observed when working on a growth plan, "you have to say, I'm going to be doing this, you take two of the standards, whatever, but they are so interrelated that it's a bit of a false dichotomy."

Where most participants had similar experiences of struggle with self-efficacy was the disconnect between the time required for management and its limited value compared to instructional leadership which got less of their time than they desired. Regardless of how connected they felt the competencies were, management decisions easily overtook participants' schedules. Yvonne felt its impact on her ability to reflect because "there's so much to always do." Talking about his work with other high school principals, Dean commented: "What we love to do is be instructional leaders …We would love to be helping teachers be better teachers in the classroom. We should be there 50 percent of the time. But who looks after the other stuff?" He concluded, "Sometimes the management overwhelms the capacity to lead." Like Yvonne, Theresa found:

> If you're not mindful and you don't have some of those processes and systems in place, then [instructional leadership] can get lost really easily. A whole five months can go by and still nothing has happened about that important literacy decision that needed to be made.

Michael talked about getting "totally confused by what my primary purpose was versus the political realities" when he was working to manage disparate programs during his first principalship lamenting, "that absorbed all of my time and attention instead of the importance of high levels of learning." Yvonne found the only way she could make time

for what she really valued was "to actually work very hard, far ahead of yourself, in those operational, organizational things so that you can always build in time for instructional leadership."

Utilizing Systems to Create Conditions

Every participant in my study had come to rely on systems to help them negotiate locus of control to free them up as much as possible to focus on instructional leadership. In the previous section, Yvonne and Theresa alluded to utilizing systems to create conditions to prevent instructional leadership from "getting lost." With obvious humour, Tony described using systems to create conditions: "My first definition of leadership that I heard from one of our superintendents is getting other people to do what you want them to do, so that's what I've been focused on. It's a sneaky game of survivor." Sneaky or not, systems of organization, collaboration, professional learning, and accountability were ways principals built their sense of self-efficacy to carry out their instructional leadership goals.

Dean's approach was to "model, mentor, monitor, in that order." Nicole described the supporting function of organizational systems to instructional growth: "We had to talk first and foremost about organizational routines and structures, everything from how we schedule in our school to the kinds of resources we purchased, the kinds of technologies teachers would have in their hands." Michael, Yvonne, and Tony talked about creating a framework to promote the literacy practices they wanted to see in their school, as Tony described, "I'm not leading guided reading. I'm not teaching them how to do it, but I'm going to give them the framework to learn within that."

A common system participant used to perpetuate instructional growth was distributed leadership, often through collaborative teams of teachers, which also acted as a form of accountability. Nicole called herself an "architect of literacy learning in our building" and the teachers she trusted with the leadership as "the people with the expertise." Patricia, who emphasized the need to let go of ego, encouraged principals to "find the people who also can bring in the expertise around literacy" and explained her school's system of leadership and grade level teams who set and measured joint goals for instructional growth. Michael talked about "a team approach with very specific responsibilities from multiple teams within the school" where guiding the work "is my responsibility." Theresa felt a "moral imperative" to "push to that cycle of first keeping people accountable" for tracking student achievement data and acting on it, noting "its started to sustain itself" now teachers see the impact of their actions. Theresa, like the others, expressed a significant increase in her own sense of self-efficacy as she watched the collective efficacy of her teacher teams grow in response to success they saw from their efforts.

Systems for building teacher capacity extended outside their buildings as well. All of Tony's teachers belonged to teams who pursued professional learning in specific areas and then led the work with their colleagues. He described his role in building their capacity: "I'm not letting it happen, I'm making sure it happens. There are structures that I have built in. But then you allow it to happen and give time, support, resources, training." Yvonne also saw her roll as ensuring "high impact practices" occurred. Michael asserted "the biggest gift that we can give to our teachers, the single biggest gift, is the support so that they become better instructors." Bonnie was proud of the ways she

had built capacity in her schools: “In both schools that I’ve been at, I have worked with talented people, but I also model and systems train people.” Michael talked about a targeted use of early Thursday dismissal times for teacher professional development to meet the hours of learning he believed were required for changing practice. Of her system, based on a similar model to Michael’s, Theresa concluded:

> Having a framework like a professional learning community has checked a lot of these boxes for me, that if I keep the framework in place, I know we’re going to be talking about assessment. I know that we’re going to be talking about best practices. I know that we’re going to be talking about data. I don’t know how you do it if you don’t have some kind of framework in place.

A clear connection for these participants was a growing sense of proxy efficacy resulting from distributed leadership and increased their own senses of self-efficacy to lead instructionally in literacy, regardless of their personal levels of expertise.

Patricia talked about how proud she was of her literacy lead teacher. Dean celebrated the collaborative work of literacy intervention leads in his high schools. Michael explained, “I’ve certainly found people that have led the two main focuses of our school, literacy and numeracy, and they lead it. I support them.” Theresa pointed out how implementing a system of distributed leadership around literacy created a combination of proxy efficacy and collective efficacy:

> I needed to have other people: a) who are out there accessing more current stuff than even I had; bringing that back to the staff from a voice other than my own, because if we waited for me to do it at a staff meeting, we would run out of staff meetings; and then also b) for them to sort of gather a plan, hatch a plan and come

> up with some of the logistics instead of waiting on me to build the schedule. They are pushing me to move things along and make sure that: a) that change happens when change needs to happen; and b) that the accountability piece happens when it needs to. And they are sort of spurring on those conversations.

In a statement on proxy efficacy for his team, Tony reflected, "what's nice" about his current system, "is that I have the people doing it and its not me. I can just oversee it. I can ask some questions, but I'm not going to micromanage it. I'm still learning alongside but its them leading the work."

Creating a Culture

The long-term impact of utilizing systems for instructional leadership for many participants was the creation of a culture of shared practices and values fostered by those systems. For all participants, seeing cultures grow out of their leadership positively impacted their senses of self-efficacy as instructional leaders. Nicole noted, "that's where that collective efficacy piece comes in" when "we first of all get some common understanding and common language and a shared vision about what we want in the way of literacy in our building." Yvonne's school had "an outline set of literacy collective commitments of certain instructional practices that are happening in every classroom," which "we need to hold each other capable of living." Patricia stated, "It really is recognizing the strengths of your team and figuring out how do you create conditions to make sure those strengths are coming forward and working together on that." Creating conditions was a form of change management for Theresa. She celebrated the growth she saw as "kind of magical" once the culture was established and teachers took ownership of their part in the system. Michael also cited a culture of collective efficacy: "That's part

of being a good educational leader. It's helping teachers to create the culture in their school that allows them to be able to improve their practice all the time." When I asked Tony how he would know his instructional leadership had impacted the literacy practices at his school, he replied, "leaving a school and it continues."

Discussion: Research Sub-question Two

In this section, I refer to my review of existing literature and describe ways my findings in the theme Negotiating Locus of Control, support, extend, contradict, or uniquely contribute to existing research in two areas: (a) systems of actions and (b) self-efficacy and ego.

Systems of Actions

As mentioned in Chapter 4, I anticipated from existing literature principals with expertise in literacy pedagogy would experience strong self-efficacy due to their ability to engage in direct action with their teachers in the literacy programming at their schools. This was evident in findings when principals were engaged in professional development with their teachers. A connection stronger than I had anticipated was the impact on principals' self-efficacy resulting from their recalled successes in creating and utilizing systems of literacy accountability through distributed leadership and collaborative teams. The ability to rely on systems to perpetuate targeted instructional actions in literacy without direct actions themselves seemed to compensate as a source of self-efficacy for principals when their lack of expertise would have otherwise implied a negating effect on self-efficacy; what Fullan (2014) called professional capital. This is consistent with literature on the positive impacts of professional learning communities on improvements in instructional practice (Ezzani, 2020; Leithwood & Louis, 2012; Sackney & Walker,

2006; Tremont & Templeton, 2019; Zahed-Babelan et al., 2019) especially in literacy leadership (Bean & Dagan, 2020; Fisher, Frey, & Hattie, 2016).

Self-Efficacy and Ego

Just as it differed in existing research (McCollum et al, 2006; Smith et al, 2006; Combs, Edmonson, & Jackson, 2009; Daly et al., 2001), there was no consistent evidence of length or nature of experience leading to self-efficacy growth for my participants. However, a lesson learned by both those with and without literacy background was letting go of ego served as a starting point for self-efficacy growth. Accepting their limitations appeared to place principals in a position to learn, what Dweck (2010) called growth mindset. One of my pre-suppositions was principals who relied on staff and colleagues with literacy expertise would experience proxy efficacy and collective efficacy; in the next section, I will address how my finding demonstrated the intersection of these back to principals' self-efficacy. What I had not anticipated was the strong effect of the role of ego on principals' self-efficacy: their self-efficacy increased when their ego lessened. In the following paragraphs, I introduce research not addressed in my literature to examine this finding in relation to existing research.

Ego in Existing Literature

Saggurthi and Thakur (2016) made the case for embracing a negative capability approach in leadership as a means of subverting the ego for the purpose of being an equal learner and participant with staff. Like my participants' descriptions, they asserted negative capability allowed a person "the ability to be in a place of not knowing" (p. 182) to "delight in doubt and revel in uncertainty without feeling compelled to rationalize half-

knowledge" (p. 185) ultimately enabling a leader to let go of ego to become a more transformational leader.

James, James, and Potter (2017) utilized a measure of Adult Ego Development (AED) stages in a study with 16 senior educational leaders in England. What my participants described as ego would fall in the early stages of AED depicted by self-interest with limited receptibility to feedback; James, James and Potter found educational leaders in these stages were rated poorly by others. My findings around letting go of ego as having a positive impact on principals' self-efficacy was consistent with James, James, and Potter's finding leaders in the later stages of ego development, characterized as "fiercely resolute and humble", were positively rated by colleagues.

My findings on the role of ego and the potential positive impact on self-efficacy of letting go are also mirrored in the literature around servant leadership. In her survey of Greenleaf's style of servant leadership in comparison to contemporary leadership theorists Covey, Shein, and Bass who purport similar frameworks, McBath (2018) concluded servant leadership where "the measurement of a true leader began by subduing the ego, converting subordinates into leaders" (p.43) was still a herald of effective leadership. The evidence from my research would appear to back those assertions.

Ego, Self-Efficacy, and Burnout

Considering the literature above in conjunction with my findings, I posit the ego described by my participants, concurrent with the early AED stages described by James, James, and Potter (2017), parallels the construct of threat rigidity in its impact on self-efficacy. In my literature review, I noted low self-efficacy associated with burnout can lead to threat rigidity (Airola et al., 2014; Frederici & Skaalvik (2012); Sackney &

Walker, 2006; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2004). Threat rigidity described by Daly et al. (2011) included a collapse of shared control, reduced information flow, and inflexibility in leaders; similar to the opportunist, diplomat, and expert stages early in ego development. It would seem principals who reach a state of comfort with letting go of ego via sharing control, not being the expert, and learning alongside their staffs experience stronger self-efficacy; those who are stuck in ego development, not comfortable with being inexpert or sharing leadership control are in danger of lower self-efficacy and threat rigidity.

Summary

Within the theme Negotiating Locus of Control, I addressed the question, "What experiences to principals ascribe to the evolution of their self-efficacy?" I described the findings suggesting my eight principals negotiated their locus of control through facing the reality of the job, confronting their own egos, and learning how to traverse the line between leadership and management as they sought to improve the literacy capacity of their teachers. I noted experiences principals credited with influencing their evolution of self-efficacy. I concluded with a discussion of where and how my findings on this sub-question support, extend, contradict, or uniquely contribute to the field.

In the next chapter, I will explain the theme of Recognizing the Impact of Climate. Reflecting on how their senses of self-efficacy intersected with experiences of collective efficacy and proxy efficacy, participants saw the impact of their instructional leadership strongly connected to the climate they created in their schools.

Chapter Six—Findings and Discussion:

How does a principal's sense of self-efficacy intersect with experiences of collective efficacy and proxy efficacy?

In reaction to the third sub-question of my research, I found principals' sense of self-efficacy both impacted and was impacted by their experiences with collective efficacy and proxy efficacy as they acted as instructional leaders of literacy. A significant intersection was the reciprocal positive feedback to their self-efficacy when principals perceived their leadership had a positive impact on the climate and ethos with their school staffs. Principals described how their sense of self-efficacy increased when they were able to communicate their vision for literacy growth in collaboration with their teachers. They saw connections between their senses of self-efficacy and their ability to build healthy relationships with their staff and students. Positive intersections of their self-efficacy with collective and proxy efficacy were attributed in part to fostering psychological safety, for themselves as instructional leaders and for their staffs. I begin this chapter by describing findings in the theme Recognizing the Impact of Climate. I conclude this chapter with a discussion of how and where these findings support, extend, contradict, or uniquely contribute to existing research.

Recognizing the Impact of Climate

The final theme which emerged was the connection of participants' whys to their development of self-efficacy and how they experienced the impact of climate on the work in their schools and their sense of self-efficacy to act as instructional leaders of literacy in their schools. In this section, the findings for recognizing the impact of climate are

presented in three categories: (a) communicating vision, (b) building relationships, and (c) fostering psychological safety.

Communicating Vision

Clearly understanding and communicating a vision for the mission of their schools was present as a root cause for successful instructional leadership in each of my interviews. Dean, Bonnie, and Theresa emphasized starting with the why and having clarity around common goals. Yvonne explained her role in clarity was, "removing a lot of those distractors and lead those prioritization conversations and processes so that it is always our focus and stays at the top of our focus, especially reading and writing," Michael defined this as being clear on your mission, stating, "If you're clear on your mission, everything else will fall into place."

Most principals recognized an effective vision was a collective one. This was not always easy. Nicole welcomed an opportunity in a new school to "finally sort of put my stamp on what I believed around literacy into a new environment," when it followed her experience leading a school with programming she did not personally believe in:

> That was a place that really challenged me to understand what my beliefs were as a principal, but also forced me to negotiate the dissonance that one feels when your identity as a principal and your beliefs about something are one way but your assignment or your position requires you to lead perhaps a program that is a disconnect between what you believe.

Developing a collaborative vision around literacy instruction seemed to be the most challenging for principals like Nicole, Theresa, and Bonnie who had the most prior expertise in literacy; as Bonnie acknowledged of her literacy beliefs, "I'm pretty

unwavering." Theresa talked about the "patience" it took to "give it enough time and enough knowledge for the grown ups just to see it themselves, and then a critical mass of grown ups says, you know what we should really do is" what you had created conditions for them to see was needed. Tony felt a similar challenge. Tony, Theresa, and Patricia saw the fruits of their patience to lead rather than tell when their staffs took ownership of their school vision through teacher generated action plans and accountability measures. A key part of success was when their teachers felt a sense of trust in their capability from their principals.

Building Relationships

"The relationship is everything," stated Theresa, echoed by Bonnie and Yvonne. Dean pointed to a foundation of trust enabling the "meddling in the lives of other people in a really positive way." Michael and Tony shared how important it was to prioritize getting to know staff when entering a new principalship. A key space to build trusting relationships with their staffs for all participants was in their collaborative teams. Like other participants, Nicole described increased self-efficacy when she saw "a very different kind of world that I was able to create in that space with our team." Relationships linked with the notion of service for Dean and Bonnie. Dean's advice for new principals included "You serve. Staff, kids, parents; you are their servant because your call is their success." Bonnie admonished, "We're in the service of children."

Fostering Psychological Safety

Yvonne brought the term "psychological safety" into these findings, and it became a pivotal term for how participants described their experiences creating safe and caring climates where their instructional leadership would be welcomed. As they worked

to create a positive climate through relationships and service, principals recognized the need for psychological and emotional safety, both (a) for themselves and (b) for and with their staffs.

For Yourself

Earlier, I described Nicole's struggle with dissonance in leading a school with vastly different literacy programs. She felt she was able to navigate her instructional leadership to accommodate, but it took a toll, "I felt very split between two worlds." Patricia opened up about her emotional response to a difficult staff issue and how she was able to rely on her leadership team to help her work through it with her: "I had to let go of anything that I was attaching to that emotionally. I worked with my smaller team around that. I was like, I'm kind of ticked off about this, and we kind of worked through all of that emotion." Dean pointed out, "it is critical that principals feel a part of a team." Nicole attributed her early development of literacy leadership self-efficacy to working with a supportive mentor who introduced her to the International Literacy Association: "someone who would coach me, somebody who allowed me and helped me find networks of people interested in what I was interested in. For me, that was integral to building my confidence because I had a safe place." Participants saw how their own experiences of psychological safety spurred them to work toward the same climate with their staffs.

For and With Staff

Yvonne encapsulated this well: "Safety is the number one thing. It isn't really your background, your experience, your people, your training; it's the team's safety." She realized she was not always successful, sharing a recent experience where someone

interpreted what she had said in a way she had not meant: “It’s an elusive thing because sometimes I think I’ve got it. And then sometimes I’m like, what? People thought that?” Tony experienced a similar realization when he had tried to fast-track change in his second school based on his successes in his first: “In my mind, we were all going to do this together and its going to be great. But, instead, I just freaked everybody out because I didn’t take the time for us all to learn about it together.”

Patricia spoke at length about the importance of letting go of ego as a leader, shared in earlier sections. The outgrowth of her letting go was it “also created a lot of good conditions around not being the knower” impacting the climate with her staff to welcome opportunities to keep learning, encouraging them to take “that stance of curiosity.” Theresa shared her surprise at how looking at data promoted psychological safety with her staff, “that safety is huge. And that’s where I was surprised: that data served a purpose. It’s actually safer to talk about the numbers, it seems” than to talk about where teachers felt they were struggling. Tony shared he sent staff to professional development in groups partly to allow them to hold each other accountable rather than feeling accountable to him, but also with the realization when trying to learn and implement new strategies, “it’s a safer feeling to know you’re not doing it on your own.” Using the word culture, but consistent with the definition of climate, Nicole also talked about “creating a culture of trust, that you bring together the right people at the right time to interrogate that important question or challenge and that over time they’ll be able to come to some solution.”

Near the end of her interview, Yvonne asked herself, "How can you foster psychological safety as a staff? As a leader so that I am both challenging as a leader but also safe?" She then answered her own question:

> I think your staff, just like your students in your classroom, they're in their own places and they have their own growth curve. You really have to respect where people are and just look for that willingness to grow, the willingness to explore and try at least some things, just like the kids in the class, make it as safe as possible, too, so that they will try to grow.

For her and the other participants in this study, it was evident a climate built on trusting relationships with psychological safety to not know yet had a significant impact on allowing them to feel self-efficacy to carry out the work of instructional leadership of literacy.

Discussion: Research Sub-question Three

In this section, I refer back to my review of existing literature and describe ways my findings in the theme Recognizing the Impact of Climate support, extend, contradict, or uniquely contribute to existing research in two areas: (a) self-efficacy increased via collective efficacy and proxy efficacy and (b) climate and ethos.

Self-Efficacy Increased via Collective Efficacy and Proxy Efficacy

One of the strongest inferences I made from my findings was the way collective efficacy and proxy efficacy not only existed in concert with participants' self-efficacy but came across in their stories as essential contributors to their self-efficacy growth. My pre-suppositions of the relationships between networks and collective efficacy, and distributed leadership and proxy efficacy were supported in my findings, but I had not

anticipated the contributive nature of their relationships to self-efficacy. Existing literature has some instances where research considers the relationship self-efficacy can have on collective efficacy (Alavi & McCormick, 2018; Arslan, 2018; Cansoy & Parlar, 2017; Hallinger, et al., 2018; Paglis, 2010; Versland & Erickson, 2017). I revisited the literature for this portion of the discussion to look for others' findings of a directional impact of collective and proxy efficacy on self-efficacy. I found one study on efficacy beliefs of condominium owners to participate in group governance. In it, Yau (2018) concluded proxy efficacy and collective efficacy each had a statistically significant impact on individual's self-efficacy to engage in their condominium governance. A recommendation I make at the end of this study is for further research in this relationship, particularly in the education field. Two other areas where I see tentative support for this directional impact on self-efficacy are in Bandura's (1997) description of sources of self-efficacy and the body of existing research on collaborative inquiry.

Collective and Proxy Efficacies as Sources of Self-Efficacy

Earlier, I mentioned the association of mastery experience with development of self-efficacy. The other three sources Bandura (1997) sited for self-efficacy were vicarious experience, verbal persuasion, and physiological and affective states. I revisit the fourth source later on in my discussion of climate and ethos across an instructional leadership spectrum; the middle two are pertinent to this point. Bandura stated vicarious experience such as modeling effective coping strategies "can boost the self-efficacy of individuals" whose personal experiences have left them feeling un-efficacious. I saw evidence of this form of modeling via the stories of expert consultants and distributed leadership with lead teachers my participants described which fit with definitions of

proxy efficacy. Verbal persuasion, Bandura claims, "serves as a further means of strengthening people's beliefs that they possess the capabilities to achieve what they seek" (p. 101). My findings demonstrated instances where participants experienced increased self-efficacy through participation in collaborative inquiry with their teams and supportive networks with other leaders which fit with definitions of collective efficacy. Collaborative inquiry stood out as a strong source of self-efficacy for participants through the impact they perceived of collective efficacy on the growth of teachers and achievement of student in literacy.

Climate and Ethos

The impact of climate, while not unanticipated in my literature review, was more salient in principals' experiences than I expected, particularly pertaining to psychological safety and trust relationships as essential to instructional leadership. Whereas systems of action created sustainable forms of distributed leadership; climate created through instructional ethos appeared to be crucial to the success of those systems. Participants' self-efficacy for instructional leadership was underpinned by their sense of capacity to build relational trust (Butler, Schneller, & MacNeil, 2016; Ezzani, 2020; James, Derksen, & Alcorn, 2014; McAndrews, 2005) enabling what Kraft, Blazer, and Hogan (2018) stated as necessary to solicit teacher investment in literacy initiatives.

Earlier, I explained the connection between collective and proxy efficacies with Bandura's (1997) sources of self-efficacy. With climate and ethos, I make a connection to his fourth source: physiological and affective states. Creating a climate of trust through instructional ethos provided feedback to principals boosting their sense of self-efficacy as instructional leaders of literacy. In describing the role of affect or mood on

perceived self-efficacy, Bandura cited "affective priming and cognitive priming" in positive emotional states causes an individual's appraisal of their personal efficacy to be "enhanced by selective recall of past successes and diminished recall of failures" (p. 111). The impact of climates of trust on participant's self-efficacy fits what Bandura termed "an affirmative reciprocal process" (p. 113).

Summary

Within the theme Recognizing the Impact of Climate, I addressed the question, "How does a principal's sense of self- efficacy intersect with experiences of collective efficacy and proxy efficacy?" I described the findings suggesting my eight principals recognized the impact of climate on their sense of self-efficacy as instructional leaders as highly interconnected with experiences of collective efficacy and proxy efficacy. Their positive experiences with communicating vision, building relationships, and fostering psychological safety for themselves and their staffs revealed a positive reciprocal impact on their own self-efficacy. I ended this chapter with a description of where and how my findings within this theme supported, extended, contradicted, or uniquely contributed to the field.

In the next chapter, I draw conclusions from the discussion of these findings through the lens of my Instructional Leadership Spectrum. I explore the relationships of self-efficacy, collective efficacy, and proxy efficacy along the Instructional Leadership Spectrum. I then make recommendations based on these conclusions for further research, practice, and policy. Finally, I conclude this dissertation with reflections on the research process.

Chapter 7 -- Conclusions and Recommendations

This study was designed to address gaps in understandings of how school principals perceive themselves as instructional leaders of literacy from an agentic perspective (Bandura, 1999; Bandura, 2001) and how their perceptions have shaped their interpretation and implementation of instructional leadership actions related to the literacy work in their schools in a context of increased performance accountability. In the previous three chapters, I used my research sub-questions as a framework to describe findings of how principals experienced self-efficacy as instructional leaders of literacy and how it developed over time through three themes: grappling with credibility, negotiating locus of control, and recognizing the impact of climate. I also discussed the ways in which my findings supported, extended, contradicted, or uniquely contributed to existing research.

In this chapter, I begin by summarizing the previous three chapters through: (a) an overview of findings; (b) an overview of research findings in relation to my presuppositions; and (c) an overview of relationships of findings to existing research. Next, I revisit my main research question and draw conclusions from my findings around my Instructional Leadership Spectrum model. I then use these conclusions to put forward recommendations for policy, practice, and theory. At the end of this chapter, I reflect on my experience with this research.

Overview of Findings

The previous three chapters addressed findings though one each of my three research sub-questions in three themes: grappling with credibility, negotiating locus of control, and recognizing the impact of climate. Table 4 shows each of the three themes,

their sub-themes, and categories from the findings. I found participants' experiences varied, but their reflections on their development of self-efficacy to act as instructional leaders of literacy in their careers arced through each of the themes in the order they were presented and aligned with the order of my sub-questions. After sharing the findings within each theme, I made connections to the instructional leadership spectrum specific to those themes.

Table 4

Summary of Findings

Grappling with Credibility	Accountability	Primacy of Literacy
		Responsibility for Student Learning
		Role of Data
		Risk of Easy Targets
	Personal Competence	Imposter Syndrome
		Background Experience
		Baseline Knowledge
		Pros and Cons of Expertise
		Feeling Unprepared
Negotiating Locus of Control	Reality of the Job	External Demands
		Sense of Isolation
		Coping with Pressure
	Role of Ego	Always On
		Letting Go
		Acceptance of Not Knowing
		Growing into the Role

	Leading People, Managing Things	Definitions of Instructional Leadership Instructional Leadership Versus Management Utilizing Systems to Create Conditions Creating a Culture
Recognizing the Impact of Climate	Communicating Vision Building Relationships Fostering Psychological Safety	 For Yourself For and With Staff

Overview of Relationship of Research Findings to Presuppositions

I anticipated in my research design my findings would reveal various ways background knowledge and leadership experiences affected principals' self-efficacy and how they reflected on its development in relation to collective and proxy efficacies. I also anticipated confirmation or challenges to the pre-suppositions I surfaced in the methods chapter in keeping with a constructivist grounded theory approach to qualitative research. My presuppositions were:

- Principals who describe direct experience with, or training in, literacy pedagogy will express high levels of self-efficacy in their instructional leadership of literacy in their school.
- Principals who describe reliance on teacher leaders in their buildings with expertise in literacy pedagogy will express high levels of proxy efficacy.
- Principals who describe the support of professional learning networks that include individuals with expertise in literacy pedagogy will express high levels of collective efficacy.

- Principals who do not have personal, staff, or network expertise in literacy pedagogy will express low levels of self-efficacy, proxy efficacy, or collective efficacy.

In the previous chapters, I discussed ways my findings addressed supporting questions which included reflections on where findings supported, extended, contradicted or uniquely contributed to the presuppositions I held going into this research. As shown in Table 5, my findings supported and extended my presuppositions around proxy efficacy and collective efficacy, uniquely contributing to my own understanding of the relationship of ego to self-, collective, and proxy efficacy. However, my presupposition principals who described direct experience with, or training in, literacy pedagogy would express comparably high levels of self-efficacy as literacy leaders was challenged by contradictions in my findings there were pros and cons to entering the principalship with literacy expertise.

Table 5

Relation of Presuppositions to Research Findings

Presuppositions	Research Findings (Durance, 2021)			
	Supported	Extended	Contradicted	Contributed
Principals who describe direct experience with, or training in, literacy pedagogy will express high levels of self-efficacy in literacy leadership.			X (pros and cons)	
Principals who describe reliance on teacher leaders in their buildings with expertise in literacy pedagogy will express high levels of proxy efficacy.	X	X (fed into self-efficacy)		

Principals who describe the support of professional learning networks that include individuals with expertise in literacy pedagogy will express high levels of collective efficacy.	X	X (fed into self-efficacy)	
Principals who do not have personal, staff, or network expertise in literacy pedagogy will express low levels of self-efficacy, proxy efficacy, or collective efficacy.	X	X (moment in time; temporary state)	X (relation to ego)

Overview of Relationships of Findings to Existing Research

In the first chapter of this dissertation, I noted a significant impetus for my research coming from the paucity of existing literature around how principals developed their sense of self-efficacy to act as instructional leaders of literacy. Understanding how to support principals in developing their self-efficacy to lead literacy work in their schools has become more imperative in my current educational setting in which principals are held accountable for the literacy achievement of their students through newly instituted credentialing policies around the government legislated *Leadership Quality Standard*. In the second chapter of this dissertation, I provided an in-depth analysis of the existing theoretical and conceptual understandings in research. My methodology was shaped by Vygotsky's Social Constructivism and Blumer's Symbolic Interactionism. Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory of Human Agency became the backbone of my research question and my data analysis. In the previous three findings and discussion chapters, I described the connections and extensions of my research to

Bandura's concepts of self-efficacy, collective efficacy, and proxy efficacy and the intersections of these findings with the concepts of instructional leadership and literacy. Table 6 presents an overview of where my findings support, extend, challenge, or uniquely contribute to field.

Table 6

Relation of Findings to Existing Research

Findings (Durance, 2021)		Existing Research			
		Supported	Extended	Challenged	Contributed
Grappling with Credibility	Accountability	primacy of literacy	role of data	risk of easy targets	
	Personal Competence	baseline knowledge	imposter syndrome	background experience / pros and cons	literacy specific lens for how proxy and collective efficacy build self-efficacy
Negotiating Locus of Control	Reality of the Job	connections to threat rigidity, burnout	to literacy leadership lens		ways of developing self-efficacy
	Role of Ego		risks of ego with literacy expertise modeling as always on connection of growth mindset to self-efficacy in instructional leadership		

	Leading People, Managing Things	Creating Conditions / Climate	Tension b/w Instructional Leadership and Management	literacy leadership specific lens to organizational theory Instructional Leadership Spectrum
Recognizing the Impact of Climate	Communicat-ing Vision	within literacy leadership lens	relationship to self-efficacy	
	Building Relationships	within literacy leadership lens	relationship to self-efficacy	
	Fostering Psychological Safety		within literacy leadership lens	safety of leader linked to self-efficacy
Instructional Leadership Spectrum				unique conceptualization as reflective tool

This section provided a summary of findings, discussion, and evaluation of connections to presuppositions and existing research. In the next section, I revisit my main research question and conclusions drawn from my findings in relation to my instructional leadership spectrum model to provide recommendations for policy, practice, and theory based on those conclusions.

Addressing the Research Question

My research set out to address this question: In a context of standardized performance expectations and varying professional backgrounds, how do school

principals experience self-efficacy as instructional leaders of literacy? In the previous three chapters, I described and discussed the findings from this study for each of these supporting questions:

- How do principals perceive the impact of background on their sense of self-efficacy?
- What experiences do principals ascribe to the evolution of their self-efficacy?
- How does a principal's sense of self-efficacy intersect with experiences of collective efficacy and proxy efficacy?

Drawing from those findings, I answer my main research question with the following: Findings from this study indicate in a context of standardized performance expectations, principals with varied backgrounds experience accountability pressures for the literacy performance of their students as they grapple for credibility, negotiate locus of control through instructional actions, and develop their sense of self-efficacy through successful creation of instructional climates to promote students' measurable literacy growth. The conclusions I drew from my findings are as follows (a) instructional leadership of literacy occurred across a spectrum and (b) self-efficacy, proxy efficacy, and collective efficacy can be developed and intersect with literacy leadership in various ways along the instructional leadership spectrum. In the following sections I expand these conclusions. After, I include a section using these conclusions as a basis for recommendations for policy, practice and theory.

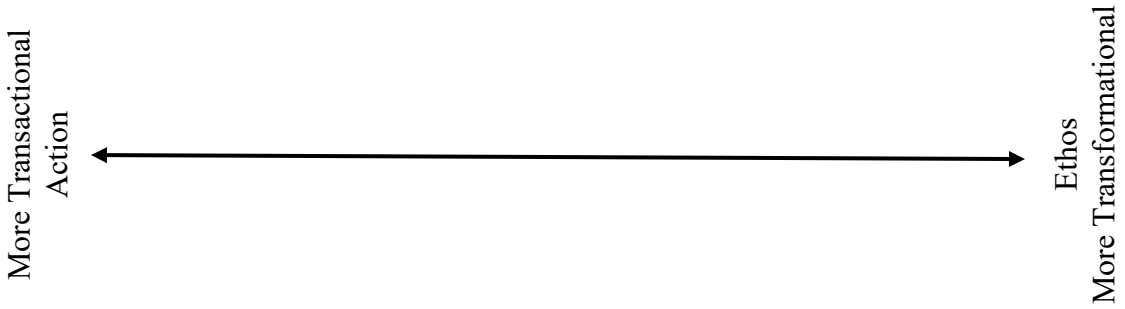
Conclusion One: Instructional Leadership of Literacy Occurred Across a Spectrum

At the end of each of the findings chapters, I discussed inferences around expertise, ego, and sources of self-efficacy. These inferences were enabled by my use of

an instructional leadership spectrum as a tool for analyzing findings and exploring connections of self-, collective, and proxy efficacy with participants' instructional leadership of literacy. My first conclusion, drawn from literature and substantiated by my findings, is confirmation instructional leadership of literacy occurs definitionally and practically across a spectrum from actions to ethos in a continuum from more transactional to more transformational. The model I introduced at the end of the literature review chapter (see figure 3) facilitated the analysis of my findings which demonstrated its potential for future utility in research and practice. For the purpose of application, I simplified my original model with this version (see Figure 4) which will be referenced in my recommendations toward the end of this chapter.

Figure 4

Instructional Leadership Spectrum (Revised)



In the next section, I describe the origins and originality of my model. I then describe the connections of my findings to the conclusion instructional leadership occurs across a spectrum.

Unique Conceptualization of an Instructional Leadership Spectrum Model

The term instructional leadership spectrum appeared in two sources in existing literature. Kalman and Arslan (2016) used the term once to point out the variety of aspects of instructional leadership but did not articulate a further conceptualization of the

term, nor did they mention it again in their research. Schmoker (2001) used the term once in a discussion of "regardless of where a principal may be on the instructional leadership spectrum" (p. 117) but, like the other authors, provided no further explanation of what the instructional leadership spectrum entailed. To the best of my knowledge, the instructional leadership spectrum model I created to use as a definitional and analytic tool is a unique contribution and I suggest it has implications for wider use in the field.

My instructional leadership spectrum model puts forward a definitionally inclusive conceptualization of instructional leadership. Where existing literature defines instructional leadership in varied, diverse ways, my model recognizes the diverse applications of instructional leadership across a spectrum from transactional actions to transformational ethos. It also serves as a reflective tool; the process for this use will be described in the recommendations section. I have used it in workshops with leaders to elicit the types of instructional leadership actions they engage in. In this study, I used it as a tool for analysing the connections between self-efficacy, collective efficacy, and proxy efficacy as they occurred in various juxtapositions along the spectrum.

Grappling with Credibility on the Instructional Leadership Spectrum

In Chapter 4, I described participants' experiences with instructional leadership of literacy through the theme of grappling with credibility in relation to accountability and personal competence. I described connections to individual's senses of self-efficacy and how self-efficacy has been connected to a sense of collective or proxy efficacy.

Consistent with the notion of a spectrum, there is no specific point at which principals' experiences of grappling with credibility start and stop between transactional actions and transformational ethos; in my analysis there was evidence of references to

actions and ethos throughout. However, this theme included the most reference to direct actions of the three main themes in my findings. This was particularly evident in relation to principals' descriptions of direct actions they took to build their own personal competence as instructional leaders of literacy and the steps they took to build the competence of their teams.

Negotiating Locus of Control on the Instructional Leadership Spectrum

In Chapter 5, I described findings of how participants experienced self-efficacy as instructional leaders of literacy by negotiating their locus of control. These negotiations involved confronting the reality of the job and its pressures, learning to let go of ego, and balancing the leadership of people with the management of things. More than the other two themes, this was where participants experienced the most connections between their own self-efficacy and their sense of collective and proxy efficacy through the systems they created with their staffs.

Negotiating locus of control was most evident in the middle of the instructional leadership spectrum, with a tendency toward action over ethos. A significant portion of participants' experiences with locus of control was letting go of direct action and relying instead on their own abilities to create frameworks and systems allowing teams of teachers to carry out instructional growth in literacy with less of the participants' direct intervention. Principals' self-efficacy increased when they found a balance between the transactional and transformational ends of the instructional leadership spectrum.

Recognizing the Impact of Climate on the Instructional Leadership Spectrum

In Chapter 6, I shared findings on principals' self-efficacy as instructional leaders of literacy as it was shaped by their recognition of the impact of climate on the success of

literacy instruction, and pedagogical growth, in their schools. Whereas cultural systems were reflected in negotiations of locus of control, climate was reflected in principals' sense of self-efficacy to communicate vision, build relationships, and foster psychological safety. The impact of climate was reflected most in participants' transformational efforts toward the ethos end of the instructional leadership spectrum.

These findings led me to my conclusion instructional leadership of literacy occurs across a spectrum from transactional actions to transformational ethos. In the following section, I describe the second conclusion I drew from my findings: self-efficacy, proxy efficacy, and collective efficacies intersect in various ways along the instructional leadership spectrum.

Conclusion Two: Self-Efficacy, Collective Efficacy, and Proxy Efficacy Intersect along the Instructional Leadership Spectrum

My second conclusion, drawn from literature and substantiated by my findings is self-efficacy, collective efficacy and proxy efficacy can be developed and intersect in various ways along the instructional leadership spectrum. In the previous three findings and discussion chapters, I noted individuals' reflections on their own senses of self-efficacy and ways they have expressed connections between collective efficacy and proxy efficacy on their self-efficacy as instructional leaders of literacy through experiences of grappling with credibility, negotiating locus of control, and recognizing the impact of climate, In this section, I expand on this conclusion in two parts (a) self-efficacy and collective efficacy on the Instructional Leadership Spectrum (ILS) and (b) proxy efficacy on the ILS.

Self-Efficacy and Collective Efficacy on the ILS

Self-efficacy had the strongest presence in participants comments about direct actions they took as instructional leaders of literacy: these ranged from examples like Theresa, Yvonne, and Nicole drawing from their graduate studies as a source of self-efficacy to Tony, Bonnie, and Dean engaging in professional learning to deepen their own skill sets in literacy instruction while on the job. Collective efficacy closely followed. Every participant reflected on the impact collaborative grade level and leadership teams had on their sense of collective efficacy as a school. Michael and Patricia were especially clear about the links they made between their ability to facilitate collaborative teams and the impact of collective efficacy on their own personal self-efficacy as instructional leaders. Stories reflecting self-efficacy and collective efficacy were overall most related to transactional, direct actions and the middle of the spectrum where there was a combination between direct actions and efforts to create systems to promote ethos.

A strong example of the middle of the spectrum would be the systems participants created to distribute ownership of collaborative processes to teams. Tony's explanation of his professional development teams and their role in the direction of overall school instructional growth is one example. He gave staff freedom to select their professional development teams but set up a structure he and his administrative team carried out to ensure the learning of teams transferred to their grade level teams. Recall Tony's words about finding ways to enact a "sneaky game of survivor" to motivate teachers to invest in their own instructional improvement. Michael, Theresa, Bonnie, and Patricia also shared similar structures in place and reflected on how a great deal of their personal self-efficacy

to lead the literacy work in their schools came from the strength of the collective efficacy they felt. Proxy efficacy played a part in these middle ground systems, as well, but overall, proxy efficacy had a different presence on the spectrum.

Proxy Efficacy on the ILS

I found little evidence of proxy efficacy related to direct principal action. This would seem logical as the nature of proxy means the interaction is indirect. Where proxy efficacy did interact with the transactional end of the instructional leadership spectrum was within the systems mentioned above. Another more action-based evidence of proxy efficacy was in the strategic involvement of outside expertise to support staff development in literacy instruction. Michael was noticeably clear he would never understand literacy instruction as well as his teachers and he relied heavily on teachers with literacy expertise as well as a local university professor to ensure quality literacy programming was occurring. He was transactional in setting a clear direction for his staff and securing the input of an outside expert to train them but was not himself the director of staff learning. His statement reflects a connection between proxy efficacy and his self-efficacy in facilitating a system for it to work.

Proxy efficacy was most evident in the middle ground of the instructional leadership spectrum and toward the ethos end. Along with Michael, Dean and Nicole also relied on proxy expertise to strengthen literacy instruction in their schools. Given their positions in the largest schools of the group, their direct actions with staff were lessened due to logistics. Both shared their roles of modeling literacy best practices in staff meetings and through professional reading. They both also based a good deal of their own self-efficacy in their instructional leadership of literacy on the strength of their

proxy efficacy for those experts they brought in. Dean spoke confidently of the work he achieved in one of his high schools through collaboration with a literacy intervention specialist he had on his staff. Nicole shared her sense of success in her ability to hire division one trained literacy specialists to work with high school English Language Learners and to act as in-house mentors for other high school staff.

The goal of these systems and use of proxies for all participants often connected to the ability to create a self-perpetuating culture of strong literacy practices often connected to the climate of relationships and collective efficacy of the group. The ethos end of the instructional leadership spectrum was the least tangible element of principals' experiences but was something each of them expressed a hope of creating: a sense the culture of achievement and quality instruction they established would create and be fostered by a climate of self-efficacy. Remember Dean calling this "meddling in the lives of other people in a really positive way" and Tony talking about measuring the success of the ethos he created by "leaving a school and it continues."

In this section, I have described the conclusions drawn from my findings around a model of instruction leadership which occurs across a spectrum and how self-efficacy, collective efficacy, and proxy efficacy develop and intersect along that spectrum. Next, I use these conclusions to provide recommendations for policy, practice and theory.

Recommendations

Conclusions drawn from my findings have been introduced in the preceding discussion. In this section, I make recommendations in the areas of (a) policy, (b) practice, and (c) theory with an emphasis on the possible applications of my Instructional Leadership Spectrum model specific to my local context and the field at large. I begin

with an overview of recommendations in each area and then describe a tool for utilizing the instructional leadership spectrum as one means of carrying out recommendations. After this section, I conclude with a reflection on my research experience.

For Policy

At the time the Leadership Quality Standard and requirements for principal certification became active in September 2019, current principals and assistant principals were able to apply for certification after taking a two-day course on the LQS. In the intervening years, teachers who have since been hired for principal or assistant principal roles must take at least two specified university courses to qualify for certification. Additionally, school divisions across the province are using the LQS in various ways for leadership development and evaluation. Findings from my research would suggest the importance of including the modes of human agency and the instructional leadership spectrum as elements of certification coursework as well as school division-based leadership development programs. I would also recommend evaluations of principal performance relative to the LQS take into account the instructional leadership spectrum and school-division leadership development programs acknowledge the implication self-efficacy can be intentionally developed.

For Practice

The implication self-efficacy can be intentionally developed applies directly to principals' practice as well. I recommend principals utilize the instructional leadership spectrum as a tool for reflection of how they currently implement instructional leadership in their school and where they would like to shift their practice along the spectrum. I encourage principals to view shifts in practice as progress toward self-efficacy

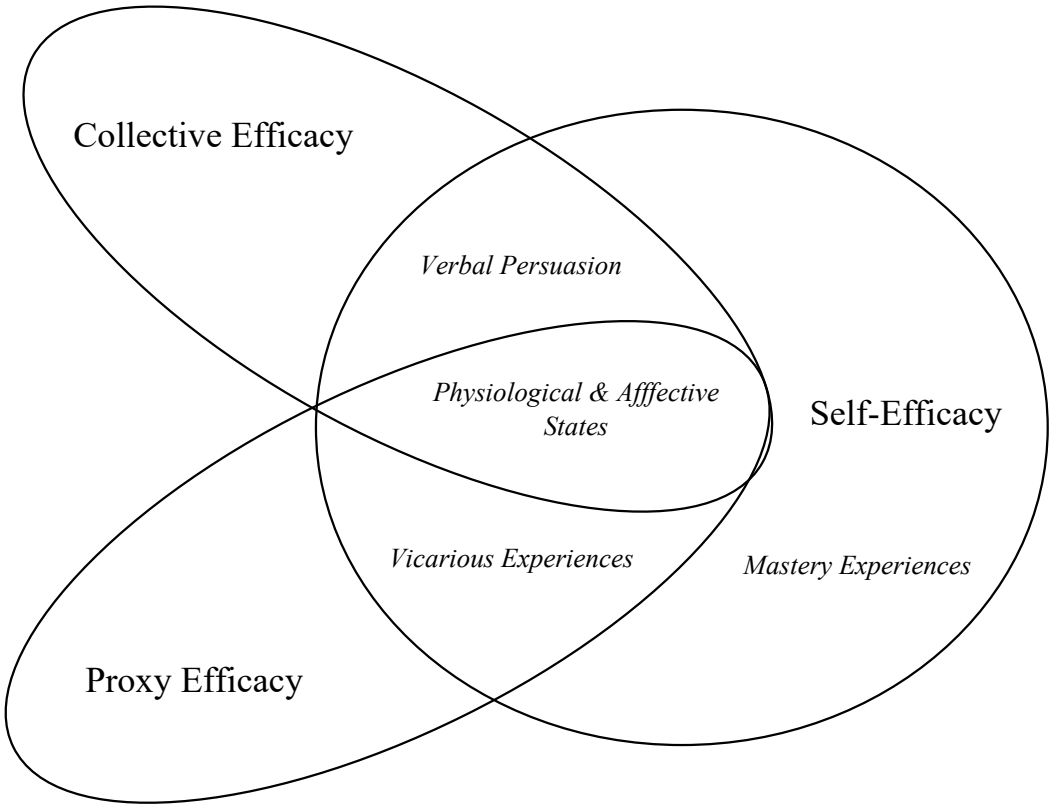
development. Likewise, I would recommend principals consider how ego impacts the way they implement instructional leadership and how changes in their perceptions of collective efficacy or proxy efficacy could support their ongoing self-efficacy growth.

For Theory

In the preceding sections, I indicated areas where my findings and the inferences I drew from them and my conclusions have implications for additional research in theories of human agency, namely the intersections and directional impact of self-, collective, and proxy efficacies with and toward each other. In Figure 5, I submit a model demonstrating the intersections of collective efficacy, proxy efficacy and self-efficacy in relation to sources of self-efficacy.

Figure 5

Intersections and Sources of Self-Efficacy



This model demonstrates my conclusion collective efficacy and proxy efficacy can contribute to self-efficacy in these ways: (a) mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and affective and physiological states are all sources of self-efficacy; (b) collective efficacy contributes to self-efficacy and shares verbal persuasion as a source; (c) proxy efficacy contributes to self-efficacy, sharing vicarious experience as a source; and (d) collective efficacy and proxy efficacy intersect in contribution to self-efficacy through the shared source of physiological and affective states.

I invite research to test this model. In addition, I recommend future research to challenge or extend my findings in the following areas:

- Evaluation of my instructional leadership spectrum as a theoretical model and reflective tool from theoretical, practical, and policy perspectives.
- Expanding research of principals' self-efficacy as instructional leaders within the field of literacy and to other school academic subjects including mathematics, sciences, humanities, arts, and wellness.
- Investigating methods of intentionally developing principals' self-efficacy in instructional leadership, especially in the context of the LQS in Alberta.

Utilizing the Instructional Leadership Spectrum

The recommendations listed above can be addressed using the instructional leadership spectrum as a reflective tool for personal practice, policy analysis, and analyzing theory-based resources on pedagogy and leadership practice. In Figure 6, I describe a process for utilizing the instructional leadership spectrum in this sequence: query, source, place, tag, reflect, and act. I utilized elements of this process during my data analysis, analysis of competency six "Providing Instructional Leadership" in the

LQS, and as part of professional learning sessions with other school leaders around their instructional leadership practices. I have included examples and suggestions that are not comprehensive but are designed to provoke possible applications for the reader.

Figure 6

Process for Utilizing the Instructional Leadership Spectrum as a Reflective Tool

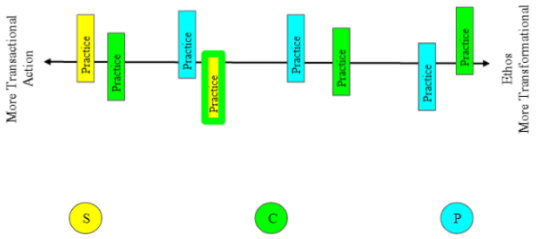
Query	
What do I want to better understand about instructional leadership?	Examples: • Personal practice: What kinds of instructional leadership do I regularly engage in? Does it vary depending on the subject area or age group? • Professional literature: What elements of instructional leadership are suggested in this theory or approach? Is it more transactional or transformational, more action or ethos oriented? • Policy: Where do elements of this policy fall along the instructional leadership spectrum? Is it biased toward

	one end of the Instructional Leadership Spectrum? Could it vary?

Source	
What information do I want to consider?	Examples: • Personal log notes of instructional leadership engaged in during a specified period of time. • Critical peer observations of instructional leadership practices evidenced over time. • Staff feedback on perceptions of your instructional leadership in a specific context. • Professional literature on instructional leadership. • Notes from professional learning sessions on instructional leadership.

	• Policy documents on instructional leadership (i.e., the Leadership Quality Standard).

Place	
Where does each piece of information fall along the Instructional Leadership Spectrum? 	Steps: • Record individual pieces of information on separate pieces of paper (or digital objects). • Consider the relative strength of transactional / action oriented versus transformational / ethos oriented for each piece and place it along the spectrum. • Allow flexibility to shift relative placements as you consider each new piece of information. • Continue until all pieces are placed.

Tag	
Where do I draw my sense of confidence to carry out a specific instructional leadership practice as laid out in my own records, this resource, or this policy?  	Steps • Use a color or symbol to tag each individual piece of information for the primary source of confidence: ○ Self-efficacy: internally driven ○ Collective efficacy: part of a group practice ○ Proxy efficacy: reliance on trusted others • Consider whether some pieces of information would include more than one tag

Reflect	
What does the spread of information along the Instructional Leadership Spectrum tell me?	Observation examples: • Is there a bias toward one end or the other?

	• How frequently did items fall in different areas of the spectrum? • What was the frequency of self-efficacy tags across the spectrum? • What characteristics distinguished where items were placed? Inference examples: • What does this spread of information show me about my current practice or the application of this resource or policy? • How does this spread of information fulfill the current objectives of my role or the purposes of this resource or policy? • What does the spread of distinguishing characteristics of the information tell me?

	• What does the frequency and spread of self-efficacy tags tell me? • What questions about my practice, this resource, or this policy does this raise? What "why" questions can I ask? • How might this spread of information shift in different contexts such as different age levels, different subject areas, etc.?

Act	
What does this information lead me toward in my practice or application of this resource or policy?	Possible personal practice steps: • Pursue additional mastery experiences where self-efficacy related to skills or knowledge is limited. • Intentionally develop skills in collaborative leadership and

	verbal persuasion where collective efficacy is limited. • Increase successful vicarious experiences by intentionally developing skills in distributed leadership where proxy efficacy is limited. • Evaluate the physical and affective states of school climate and plan steps to build relational trust. Possible policy/resource application steps: • Respond to incongruencies between intended and applicable instructional leadership practices in the policy or resource by: (a) supplementing with additional policies or resources and (b) advocating for revisions. • In performance evaluation, consider (a) the appropriate

	variability of applications along the instructional leadership spectrum contingent on context and (b) the impact on variable applications of policy or resource on individual's sense of self-efficacy, collective efficacy, and proxy efficacy. • In training related to policy or resource application, include methods that contribute to self-efficacy (mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, positive physiological/affective states) in addition to knowledge outcomes.

Summary

I welcome the use of any of my findings, inferences, implications, and recommendations in further research or application to further our understanding of how principals experience self-efficacy as instructional leaders. The purpose of this study was to address gaps in understanding of how principals develop their senses of self-efficacy as instructional leaders of literacy with the goal of coming to a better understanding of how to support principals in their growth. The Leadership Quality Standard (Alberta Government, 2018) competencies and indicators are based on this statement: "Quality leadership occurs when the leader's ongoing analysis of the context, and decisions about what leadership knowledge and abilities to apply, result in quality teaching and optimum learning for all school students" (p. 3). I am confident my study met its purpose and has provided steps toward my goal in service of supporting our profession's ongoing work to support quality teaching and optimum learning conditions. On the following page, I conclude with a reflection on my experience in this research project.

Reflection

I was fortunate to find myself beginning my doctoral studies just as the province was finalizing its Leadership Quality Standard and requirements for certification. Over the three years of course work, I witnessed the evolution of the drafts of the LQS. In April 2019, the United Conservative Party came to power in Alberta, bringing with it a platform of increased accountability in education. My research question was formed under these conditions with uncertainty of how accountability would take shape in the near future for principals. In September 2019, I sat for my oral candidacy exam the week the new certification requirements based on the LQS came into effect. Provincial politics on education accountability were overshadowed, for a time, by the COVID 19 pandemic that hit Canada late winter 2020 and is ongoing at this writing in early summer 2021. However, recently released draft curriculum documents have brought the UCP government's educational platform back to the forefront and the completion of this research is timely. The need to consider the voices of school principals in the context of sound research around instructional leadership is imperative.

Of those principal voices, I must share an unforeseen implication from my research which did not directly address my research question but bears inclusion in this report of my study. As an assistant principal studying instructional leadership in my own district, I experienced a profound impact on my own instructional beliefs and practices from engaging in deeply intentional conversations with the eight principal participants. Being a conduit for sharing their wisdom through my findings also allowed me to be a recipient; their time, candor, and vulnerability was a gift I hope I have met with integrity and gratefulness in this dissertation.

Finally, I recognize the truth of the axiom: the more you learn, the less you know. I believe this study addressed my research question and provided practical applications. However, I am humbly aware of the how much more there is to explore in principals' development of self-efficacy and their instructional leadership. The breadth of what I do not yet understand exceeds what I have been able to infer from my findings in this study; I am unpretentious yet compelled to share my work for others continue.

References

Airola, D., Bengtson, E., Davis, D., & Peer, D. (2014). Principals' sense of efficacy: The influence of the Arkansas leadership academy. *Educational Administration, 52*(6), 754-774. https://doi.org/101.1108/JEA-08-2013-0089

Alavi, S. & McCormick, J. (2016). Implications of proxy efficacy for studies of team leadership in organizational settings. *European Psychologist, 21*(3), 218-228. https://doi.org/10.1027/1016-9040/a000270

Alavi, S., & McCormick, J. (2018). Why do I think my team is capable? A study of some antecedents of team members' personal collective efficacy beliefs. *Educational Psychology, 38*(9), 1147-1162. https://ro.uow.edu.au/sspapers/4153

Alberta Education (2000). *Program of Studies Amendment: English Language Arts.* Education, AB. https://education.alberta.ca/media/160360/ela-pos-k-9.pdf

Alberta Education (2015). Literacy: Definition, components, and elements of the progressions. https://education.alberta.ca/media/3069627/definition-components-and-elements-literacy.pdf

Alberta Education (2017a). *Education Business Plan 2017-2020.* http://www.finance.alberta.ca/publications/budget/budget2017/education.pdf

Alberta Education (2017b). *Guide to education: ECS to grade 12.* https://education.alberta.ca/media/3653320/guide-to-education-2017-2018.pdf

Alberta Education (2018a). *Leadership quality standards.* https://education.alberta.ca/media/3739621/standardsdoc-lqs-_fa-web-2018-01-17.pdf

Alberta Education (2018b). *FAQ on Professional Practice Standards for the Teaching Profession in Alberta.* https://education.alberta.ca/professional-practice-standards/new-professional-standards/everyone/general-faqs

Aldiabat, K., & Le Navenec, C. (2011). Philosophical roots of classical grounded theory: Its foundations in symbolic interactionism. *The Qualitative Report, 16*(4), 1063-1080. http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR16-4/aldiabat.pdf

Aloe, A., Amo, L, & Shanahan, M. (2014). Classroom management self-efficacy and burnout: A multivariate meta-analysis. *Educational Psychology Review*, *26*(1), 101-126. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-013-9244-0

Apramian, T., Cristancho, S., Watling, C., & Lingard, L. (2017). (Re)Grounding grounded theory: A close reading of theory in four schools. *Qualitative Research, 17*(4), 359-376. https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794116672914

Arslan, E. (2017). Self-efficacy as predictor of collective self-efficacy among pre-school teachers in Turkey. *Educational Research and Reviews, 12*(8), 513-517. https://doi.org/10.5897/ERR2017.3222

Bain, B. (1996). *Pathways to the peak of Mount Piaget and Vygotsky: Speaking and cognizing monolingually and bilingually*. Bulzoni Editore.

Bandura, A. (1977). Self-efficacy: Toward a unifying theory of behavioral change. *Psychological Review, 84*(2), 191-215. https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-295X.84.2.191

Bandura, A. (1997). Self-Efficacy. *Harvard Mental Health Letter, 13*, 4-6. http://www.scirp.org/(S(351jmbntvnsjt1aadkposzje))/reference/ReferencesPapers.aspx?ReferenceID=1302852

Bandura, A. (1999). Social cognitive theory: An agentic perspective. *Asian Journal of Social Psychology, 2*, 21-41. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-839X.00024

Bandura, A. (2000). Exercise of human agency through collective efficacy. *Current Directions in Psychological Science, 9*(3), 75-78. https://doi.org/10.1111%2F1467-8721.00064

Bandura, A. (2012). On the functional properties of perceived self-efficacy revisited. *Journal of Management, 38*(1), 9-44. https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206311410606

Barber, M., Whelan, F., & Clark, M. (2011). *Capturing the leadership premium: How the world's top school systems are building leadership capacity for the future.* Prepared for McKinsey and Company. https://www.mckinsey.com/~/media/mckinsey/industries/public%20and%20social%20sector/our%20insights/capturing%20the%20leadership%20premium/capturing%20the%20leadership%20premium.pdf

Bean, R. M., & Dagan, A. (2020) Best Practices of Literacy Leaders: Keys to School Improvement (2nd Ed.). Guilford Press.

Bean, R. M., Dagan, A., Ippolito, J., & Kern, D. (2018). Principals' perspectives on the roles of specialized literacy specialists. *The Elementary School Journal, 119*(2), 328-350. https://doi.org/10.1086/700280

Bean, R. M., Kern, D., Goatley, V., Ortlieb, E., Shettel, J., Calo, K., Marinak, B., Sturtevant, E., Elish-Piper, L., L'Allier, S., Cox, M. A., Frost, S., Mason, P., Quatroche, D., & Cassidy, J. (2015). Specialized Literacy Professionals as Literacy Leaders: Results of a National Survey. Literacy Research and Instruction, 54(2), 83–114. http://doi.org/10.1080/19388071.2014.998355

Bedard, G., & Mombourquette, C. (2015). Conceptualizing Alberta district leadership practices: A cross-case analysis. *Leadership and Policy in Schools, 14*(2), 233-255. https://doi.org/10.1080/15700763.2014.997936

Beers, C., Beers, J., & Smith, J. (2010). *A Principal's Guide to Literacy Instruction.* Guilford Press.

Bellibas, M. S., & Liu, Y. (2017). Multilevel analysis of the relationship between principals' perceived practices of instructional leadership and teachers' self-efficacy perceptions. *Journal of Educational Administration, 55*(1), 49-69. https://doi.org/10.1108/JEA-12-2015-0116

Bergeron, P., & Rivard, L. (2016). How to engage in pseudoscience with real data: A criticism of John Hattie's arguments in *Visible Learning* from the perspective of a statistician. *McGill Journal of Education, 52*(1), 237-246. https://doi.org/10.7202/1040816ar

Berebitsky, D., Goddard, R., & Carlisle, J. (2014). An examination of teachers' perceptions of principal support for change and teachers' collaboration and communication around literacy instruction in Reading First schools. *Teachers College Record, 116*, 1-27. https://doi.org/10.1177/016146811411600401

Bill 28: School Amendment Act. (2017). 3rd Reading Nov. 30, 2017, 29th Legislature, 3rd session. Alberta Legislative Assembly. http://www.assembly.ab.ca/ISYS/LADDAR_files/docs/bills/bill/legislature_29/session_3/20170302_bill-028.pdf

Blumer, H. (1977). Comment on Lewis' "The Classic American Pragmatists as Forerunners to Symbolic Interactionism". *The Sociological Quarterly, 18*(2), 285-289. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/4105989

Blumer, H. (1980). Mead and Blumer: The convergent methodological perspectives of social behaviorism and symbolic interactionism. *American Sociological Review, 45*(3), 409-419. https://doi.org/10.2307/2095174

Blunden, A. (2011). Vygotsky's idea of gestalt and its origins. *Theory and Psychology, 21*(4), 457-471. https://doi.org/10.1177/0959354310386403

Booth, D., & Roswell, J. (2007). *The literacy principal: Leading, supporting, and assessing reading and writing initiatives (2nd ed.).* Pembroke Publishers.

Bryant, A. (2003). A constructive/ist response to Glaser. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research, 4*(1). http://www.qualitative-research.net/fqs-texte/1-03/1-03bryant-e.htm

Bush, T., & Glover, D. (2014). School leadership models: What do we know? *School Leadership and Management: Formerly School Organization, 34*(5), 553-571. https://doi.org/10.1080/13632434.2014.928680

Butler, D. L., Schnellert, L., & MacNeil, K. (2015). Collaborative Inquiry and Distributed Agency in Educational Change: A Case Study of a Multi-Level Community of Inquiry. *Journal of Educational Change*, *16*(1), 1–26. http://doi.org/10.1007/s10833-014-9227-z

Carraway, J., & Young, T. (2015). Implementation of a districtwide policy to improve principals' instructional leadership: Principals' sensemaking of the Skillful

Observation and Coaching Laboratory. *Educational Policy, 29*(1), 230-256. https://doi.org/10.1177/0895904814564216

Charmaz, K. (2014). *Constructing grounded theory* (2nd Ed). Sage Publications Inc.

Charmaz, K. (2017). The power of constructivist grounded theory for critical inquiry. *Qualitative Inquiry, 23*(1), 34-45. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800416657105

Chew, E., Snee, H., & Price, T. (2016). Enhancing international postgraduates' learning experience with online peer assessment and feedback innovation. *Innovations in Education and Teaching International; London, 53*(3), 247-259. https://doi.org/10.1080/14703297.2014.937729

Clara, M. (2017). How instruction influences conceptual development: Vygotsky's theory revisited. *Educational Psychologist, 52*(1), 50-62. https://doi.org/10.1080/00461520.2016.1221765

Clark, D., Marorell, P., & Rockoff, J. (Dec. 2009). *School principals and school performance*. https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/33256/1001427-School-Principals-and-School-Performance.PDF

Combs, J., Edmonson, S., & Jackson, S. (2009). Burnout among elementary school principals. *ASAA Journal of Scholarship and Practice, 5*(4), 10-15. http://www.aasa.org/uploadedFiles/Publications/Journals/AASA_Journal_of_Scholarship_and_Practice/Winter09FINAL.pdf

Connell, R. (1979). The concept of role and what to do with it. *The Journal of Sociology, 15*(3), 7-17. https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/144078337901500302

Cunningham, N., & Carmichael, T. (Jun. 2017). Sampling, interviewing and coding: Lessons from a constructivist grounded theory study. *European Conference on*

Research Methodology for Business and Management Studies, 78-85. Academic Conferences International Limited. https://www.proquest.com/conference-papers-proceedings/sampling-interviewing-coding-lessons/docview/1967313961/se-2?accountid=14474

Daly, A. J., Der-Martirosian, C., Ong-Dean, C., Park, V., & Wishard-Guerra, A. (2011). Leading under sanction: Principals' perceptions of threat rigidity, efficacy, and leadership in underperforming schools. *Leadership and Policy in Schools, 10*(2), 171-206. https://doi.org/10.1080/15700763.2011.557517

Dantley, M. (1990). The ineffectiveness of effective schools leadership: An analysis of the effective schools movement from a critical perspective. *The Journal of Negro Education, 59*(4), 585-598. http://www.jstor.org/stable/2295315

Day, C., Gu, Q., & Sammons, P. (2016). The impact of leadership on student outcomes: How successful school leaders use transformational and instructional strategies to make a difference. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 52*(2), 221-258. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X15616863

Dempster, N. (2012). Principals leading learning: Developing and applying a leadership framework. *Education 3-13: International Journal of Primary, Elementary, and Early Years Education, 40*(1), 49-62. https://doi.org/10.1080/03004279.2012.635056

Dempster N., Townsend T., Johnson G., Bayetto A., Lovett S., Stevens E. (2017). https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-54298-0_10

Dimmock, C. and Hattie, J. (1996), School principals' self-efficacy and its measurement in the context of restructuring. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, *7*(1), 62-75. https://doi.org/10.1080/0924345960070103

Dowell, S., Bickmore, D., & Hoewing, B. (2012). A framework for defining literacy leadership. *Journal of Reading Education, 37*(2), 7-15. https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ehh&AN=74099109&site=eds-live&scope=site

Dufour, R., & Marzano, R. (2011). *Leaders of learning: How district, school, and classroom leaders improve student achievement.* Solution Tree Press.

Durance, K. (2017a). *Principal self-efficacy and instructional leadership: What do we know and why does it matter?* Unpublished manuscript, Department of Educational Policy Studies, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada

Durance, K. (2017b). *Applying the principles of fundamental justice in school administration: A necessary symbiosis of managerial and instructional leadership*. Unpublished manuscript, Department of Educational Policy Studies, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada

Durance, K. (2018). *Principals' agency as instructional leaders of literacy: Pilot study*. Unpublished manuscript, Department of Educational Policy Studies, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada.

Dweck, C. (2006). *Mindset: The new psychology of success.* Ballantine Books

Dzewaltowski, D., Geller, K., Rosenkranz, R., & Karteroliotis, K. (2010). Children's self-efficacy and proxy efficacy for after-school physical activity. *Psychology of Sport & Exercise*, 11(2), 100-106. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychsport.2009.08.001

Education Act, R.S.A 2020, c E-0.3

English, F. (2008). *The art of educational leadership: Balancing performance and accountability.* Sage Publications, Inc.

Ezzani, M. D. (2019). Principal and teacher instructional leadership: a cultural shift. *International Journal of Educational Management*, *34*(3), 576–585. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJEM-02-2019-0071

Fagan, W. (2001). The literacy maze: Practice without policy [Defining the term "literacy"]. *The Morning Watch: Educational and Social Analysis, 29*(1/2). https://www.mun.ca/educ/faculty/mwatch/fall01/fagan.htm

Fani, T., & Ghaemi, F. (2011). Implications of Vygotsky's zone of proximal development (ZPD) in teacher education: ZPTD and self-scaffolding. *Procedia: Social and Behavioral Sciences, 29,* 1549-1554. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2011.11.396

Federici, R. A., & Skaalvik, E. M. (2012). Principal self-efficacy: Relations with burnout, job satisfaction and motivation to quit. *Social Psychology of Education: An International Journal, 15*(3), 295-320. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11218-012-9183-5

Fernandez, R., Bustamante, R. M., Combs, J. P., & Martinez-Garcia, C. (2015). Career Experiences of Latino/a Secondary Principals in Suburban School Districts. *International Journal of Educational Leadership Preparation*, *10*(1), 60-76. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1060974

Fernandez-Ballesteros, R., Dies-Nicolas, J., Caprara, G. V., Barbaranelli, C., & Bandura, A. (2002). Determinants and structural relation of personal efficacy to collective efficacy. *Applied Psychology: An International Review, 51*(1), 107-125. https://www.uky.edu/~eushe2/Bandura/Bandura2002APb.pdf

Fisher, D., Frey, N., & Hattie, J. (2016). *Visible Learning for Literacy: Implementing the Practices that Work Best to Accelerate Student Learning.* Corwin.

Fisher, Y. (2014). The timeline of self-efficacy: Changes during the professional life cycle of school principals. *Journal of Educational Administration, 52*(1), 58-83. https://doi.org/10.1108/JEA-09-2012-0103

Fitch, A., Fein, D., & Eigsti, I. (2015). Detail and gestalt focus in individuals with optimal outcomes from Autism Spectrum Disorders. *Journal of Autism & Developmental Disorders*, *45*(6), 1887-1896. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10803-014-2347-8

Fitzgerald, S., & Shutte, N. (2010). Increasing transformational leadership through enhancing self-efficacy. *Journal of Management Development, 29*(5), 496-505. https://doi.org/10.1108/02621711011039240

Fleury, S., & Garrison, J. (2014). Toward a new philosophical anthropology of education: Fuller considerations of social constructivism. *Interchange, 45*, 19-41. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10780-014-9216-4

Francois, C. (2014). Getting at the Core of Literacy Improvement: A Case Study of an Urban Secondary School. *Education and Urban Society*, *46*(5), 580–605. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0013124512458116

Fullan, M. (2014). *The principal: Three keys to maximizing impact.* Jossey-Bass.

Fuller, E., Hollingworth, L., & Liu, J. (2015). Evaluating state principal evaluation plans across the United States. *Journal of Research on Leadership Education, 10*(3), 164-192. https://doi.org/10.1177/1942775115614291

Gambrell, L., & Morrow, L. M. (Eds.) (2018), *Best Practices in Literacy Instruction* (6th ed.). Guilford Press

Gan, Y., & Zhu, Z. (2007). A Learning Framework for Knowledge Building and Collective Wisdom Advancement in Virtual Learning Communities. *Educational Technology & Society*, *10*(1), 206-226. https://www.jstor.org/stable/jeductechsoci.10.1.206

Geller, K., & Dzewaltowski, D. (2010). Youth proxy efficacy for fruit and vegetable availability varies by gender and socio-economic status. *Public Health Nutrition, 13*(6), 843-851. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1368980009993223

Glaser, B. (2002). Constructivist grounded theory? *Forum: Qualitative Social Research, 3*(3). https://doi.org/10.17169/fqs-3.3.825

Goff, P., Goldring, E., & Bickman, L. (2013). Predicting the gap: Perceptual congruence between American principals and their teachers' ratings of leadership effectiveness. *Educational Assessment, Evaluation and Accountability, 26*(4), 333-359. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11092-014-9202-5

Goldring, E., Cravens, X., Porter, A., Murphy, J., & Elliot, S. (2015). The convergent and divergent validity of the Vanderbilt Assessment of Leadership in Education (VAL-ED): Instructional leadership and emotional intelligence. *Journal of Educational Administration, 53*(2), 177-196. https://doi.org/10.1108/JEA-06-2013-0067

Goolamally, N., & Ahmad, J. (2014). Attributes of school leaders towards achieving sustainable leadership: A factor analysis. *Journal of Education and Learning*, *3*(1), 122-133. https://doi.org/10.5539/jel.v3n1p122

Graham, S., MacArthur, C., & Hebert, M. (Eds.). (2018). Best Practices in Writing Instruction (3rd ed.). Guilford Press.

Griffiths, D., & Portelli, J. (2015). *Key Questions for Educational Leaders.* Word & Deed Publishing, Inc.

Hadad, B., & Ziv, Y. (2015). Strong bias towards analytic perception in ASD does not necessarily come at the price of impaired integration skills. *Journal of Autism & Developmental Disorders*, *45*(6), 1499-1512. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10803-014-2293-5

Hallinger, P. (2005). Instructional leadership and the school principal: A passing fancy that refuses to fade away. *Leadership and Policy in Schools, 4*, 1-20. https://doi.org/10.1080/15700760500244793

Hallinger, P. (2011). Leadership for learning: Lessons from 40 years of empirical research. *Journal of Educational Administration, 49*(2), 125-142. https://doi.org/10.1108/09578231111116699

Hallinger, P., Dongyu, L., & Wang, W. (2016). Gender differences in instructional leadership. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 52*(4), 567-601. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X16638430

Hattie, J. (2009). *Visible Learning: A Synthesis of over 800 Meta-Analyses Relating to Achievement.* Routledge.

Higgins, C. (2010). Education, crisis, and the human condition: Arendt after 50 years. *Teachers College Record, 112*(2), 375-385. http://www.tcrecord.org/library/content.asp?contentid=15750

Hillman, S. (1986). *Measuring self-efficacy: Preliminary steps in the development of a multi-dimensional instrument*. Paper presented at annual convention of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco, CA. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED271505.pdf

Honig, M. (2012). District central office leadership as teaching: How central office administrators support principals' development as instructional leaders. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 48*(4), 733-774. https://doi.org/10.1177/001316X12443258

Houck, B., & Novak, S. (2017). Leading the Way in Literacy. *Learning Professional*, *38*(5), 30–34. https://learningforward.org/publications/jsd/jsd-blog/jsd/2017/11/13/the-learning-professional-october-2017

Hudson, J. (2012, July 2). An urban myth that should be true. *The Atlantic Daily.* https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2012/07/an-urban-myth-that-should-be-true/259329

Imants, J., & De Brabander, C. (1996). Teachers' and principals' sense of efficacy in elementary schools. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 12*(2), 179-195. https://doi.org/10.1016/0742-051X(95)00053-M

International Literacy Association. (2018). Standards for the preparation of literacy professionals 2017. Author.

Jackson, B., & Dimmock, J. A. (2012). When working hard and working out go hand in hand: Generality between undergraduates' academic- and exercise-related self-regulatory efficacy beliefs. *Psychology of Sport & Exercise*, *13*(4),18-426. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychsport.2012.01.004

James, W., Derksen, D., & Alcorn, K. (2014). Partners "in" Achievement: Synergy Fuels Growth in Literacy and Student Engagement. *Journal of Staff Development*, *35*(5), 36–39. http://learningforward.org/publications/jsd/jsd-blog/jsd/2014/10/08/jsd-october-2014-today's-central-office#.VEpm6fldW_s

James, C., James, J., & Potter, I. (2017). An exploration of the validity and potential of adult ego development for enhancing understandings of school leadership. *School Leadership and Management, 37*(4), 372-390. https://doi.org/10.1080/13632434.2017.1332584

Johnson, L. (2014). Adapting and combining constructivist grounded theory and discourse analysis: A practical guide for research. *International Journal of Multiple Research Approaches, 8*(1), 100-116. https://doi.org/10.5172/mra.2014.8.1.100

Kalman, M. & Arslan, M. (2016). School principals' evaluation of their instructional leadership behaviors: Realities vs. ideals. *School Leadership and Management, 36*(5), 508-530. https://doi.org/10.1080/13632434.2016.1247049

Kaplan, L., Owings, W., & Nunnery, J. (2005). Principal quality: A Virginia Study connecting interstate school leaders' licensure consortium standards with student achievement. *NASSP Bulletin, 89*(643), 28-44. https://doi.org/10.1177%2F019263650508964304

Kenny, M., & Fourie, R. (2015). Contrasting classic, Straussian, and contructivist grounded theory: Methodological and philosophical conflicts. *The Qualitative Report, 20*(8), 1270-1289. http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR20/8/kenny.pdf

Kindall, H. D., Crowe, T., & Elsass, A. (2018). The Principal's Influence on the Novice Teacher's Professional Development in Literacy Instruction. *Professional*

Development in Education, *44*(2), 307–310. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/19415257.2017.1299031

Kraft, M., Blazar, D., & Hogan, D. (2018). The effect of teacher coaching on instruction and achievement: A meta-analysis of the causal evidence. *Review of Educational Research, 88*(4), 547-588. https://doi.org/10.3102%2F0034654318759268

Kruger, M., Witziers, B., & Sleegers, P. (2007). The impact of school leadership on school level factors: Validation of a causal model. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement, 18*(1), 1-20. https://doi.org/10.1080/09243450600797638

Kurt, T., Duyar, I., & Calik, T. (2012). Are we legitimate yet? A closer look at the casual relationship mechanisms among principal leadership, teacher self-efficacy and collective efficacy. *Journal of Management Development, 32*(1), 71-86. https://doi.org/10.1108/02621711211191014

Lambersky, J. (2016). Understanding the human side of school leadership: Principals' impact on teachers' morale, self-efficacy, stress, and commitment. *Leadership and Policy in Schools*, *15*(4), 379-405. https://doi.org/10.1080/15700763.2016.1181188

Leithwood, K. (2006). The 2005 Willower Family Lecture: Leadership according to the evidence. *Leadership and Policy in Schools, 5*(3), 177-202. https://doi.org/10.1080/15700760600646053

Leithwood, K., & Jantzi, D. (2008). Linking leadership to student learning: The contributions of leader efficacy. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 44*(4), 496-528. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X08321501

Leithwood, K., & Louis, K. (2012). *Linking Leadership to Student Learning.* Jossey-Bass.

Leithwood, K., Harris, A., & Hopkins, D. (2008). Seven strong claims about successful school leadership. *School Leadership and Management, 28*(1), 27-42. https://doi.org/10.1080/13632430701800060

Liu, S., & Hallinger, P. (2018). Principal instructional leadership, teacher self-efficacy, and teacher professional learning in China: Testing a mediated-effects model. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *54*(4), 501–528. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0013161X18769048

Lochmiller, C. R., & Acker-Hocevar, M. (2016). Making sense of principal leadership in content areas: The case of secondary math and science instruction. *Leadership and Policy in Schools*, *15*(3), 273–296. http://doi.org/10.1080/15700763.2015.1073329

Lockard, S. A. (2013). An Analysis of the Relationship between Elementary Principal Self-Efficacy and 5th Grade Reading Achievement (Publication No. 3590723) [Doctoral dissertation, University of Maryland], ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global.

Louis, K. S. (2015). Linking leadership to learning: State, district, and local effects. *Nordic Journal of Studies in Educational Policy, 3*, 7-17. https://doi.org/10.3402/nstep.v1.30321

Louis, K. S., Dretzke, B., & Wahlstrom, K. (2010). How does leadership affect student achievement? Results from a national US survey. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, *21*(3), 315–336. https://doi.org/10.1080/09243453.2010.486586

Louis, K. S., & Robinson, V. (2012). External mandates and instructional leadership: School leaders as mediating agents. *Journal of Educational Administration, 50*(5), 629-665. https://doi.org/10.1108/09578231211249853

Louis, K. S., & Wahlstrom, K. (2011). Principals as cultural leaders. *The Phi Delta Kappan*, *92*(5), 52. https://www.jstor.org/stable/27922511

Lumby, J., & English, F. (2010). *Leadership as Lunacy: And Other Metaphors for Educational Leadership.* Corwin.

Machida, M., & Schaubroeck, J. (2011). The role of self-efficacy beliefs in leader development. *Journal of Leadership and Organizational Studies, 18*(4), 459-468. https://doi.org/10.1177/1548051811404419

Maddy, L., & Rosenbaum, L. (2018). Determining leadership levels with the Dreyfus model. *Journal of Workplace Learning*, *30*(8), 626–639. https://doi.org/10.1108/JWL-11-2017-0100

Magalhaes, M. C. C. (2016). Intervention research in a public elementary school: A critical-collaborative teacher education project on reading and writing. *Outlines—Critical Practical Studies, 17*(1), 39-61. http://ojs.statsbiblioteket.dk/index.php/outlines/article/view/24205/21219

Marzano, R., Waters, T., & McNulty, B. (2005). *School leadership that works: From research to results.* ASCD.

Matusov, E. (2011). Irreconcilable differences in Vygotsky's and Bakhtin's approaches to the social and the individual: An educational perspective. *Culture and Psychology, 17*(1), 99-119. https://doi.org/10.1177/1354067X10388840

McBath, G. (2018). Greenleaf's style of servant-leadership compared to the styles of contemporary educational theorists (Covey, Shein, & Bass). *Journal on Educational Psychology, 12*(1), 43-50. http://dx.doi.org/10.26634/jpsy.12.1.14004

McCollum, D., Kajs, L., & Minter, N. (2006). A confirmatory factor analysis of the School Administrator Efficacy Scale (SAES). *Academy of Educational Leadership Journal, 10*(3), 105-119. http://www.alliedacademies.org/academy-of-educational-leadership-journal

McCullers, J., & Bozeman, W. (2010). Principal self-efficacy: The effects of No Child Left Behind and Florida school grades. *NASSP Bulletin, 94*(1), 53-74. https://doi.org/10.1177/0192636510371976

McDaniel, E., & DiBella-McCarthy, H. (2012). Reflective leaders become causal agents of change. *Journal of Management Development, 31*(7), 663-671. https://doi.org/10.1108/02621711211243863

McGhee, M. W., & Lew, C. (2007). Leadership and writing: How principals' knowledge, beliefs, and interventions affect writing instruction in elementary and secondary schools. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *43*(3), 358–380. http://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X06297202

Meidl, T., & Lau, J. (2017). Principles for elementary principals: Keys to remember when it comes to being a literacy leader. *Literacy Today*, *35*(2), 24-25. http://viewer.zmags.com/publication/6d724b63#/6d724b63/26

Middlestadt, S., Lederer, A., Smith, N., Doss, D., Hung, C., Stevenson, L., & Fly, A. (2013). Determinants of middle-school students asking parents for fruits and vegetables: A theory-based salient belief elicitation. *Public Health Nutrition*, *16*(11), 1971-1978. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1368980012004557

Mills, J., Bonner, A., & Francis, K. (2006). The development of constructivist grounded theory. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 5*(1), 25-35. https://doi.org/10.1177/160940690600500103

Mohr, K., Ding, Q., Strong, A., Branum, L., Watson, N., Priestley, K. L., …Lundstrom, K. (2017). Reading the past to inform the future: 25 years of The Reading Teacher. *The Reading Teacher, 71*(3), 251-264. https://doi.org/10.1002/trtr.1636

Mombourquette, C. (2013). Principal leadership: Blending the historical perspective with the current focus on competencies in the Alberta context. *Canadian Journal of Educational Administration and Policy, 147*, 1-19 https://journalhosting.ucalgary.ca/index.php/cjeap/article/view/42854/30711

Mombourquette, C. (2017). The role of vision in effective school leadership. *International Studies in Educational Administration, 45*(1), 19-36. https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ehh&AN=126378979&site=eds-live&scope=site

Montoya, S. (2018, October 17-18). Defining literacy [Conference session]. UNESCO Global Alliance to Monitor Learning Meeting, Hamburg, Germany. http://gaml.uis.unesco.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2018/12/4.6.1_07_4.6-defining-literacy.pdf

Moore, D. T. (2004). Curriculum at work: An educational perspective on the workplace as a learning environment. *Journal of Workplace Learning*, *16*(6), 325–340. https://doi.org/10.1108/13665620410550303

Murphy, J. (2004). Leadership for literacy: A framework for policy and practice. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement, 15*(1), 65-96. https://doi.org/10.1076/sesi.15.1.65.27495

Myers, N., Jackson, B., Myers, N. D., Taylor, I. M., & Beauchamp, M. R. (2012). Relational efficacy beliefs in physical activity classes: A test of the Tripartite Model. *Journal of Sport & Exercise Psychology*, *34*(3), 285-304. https://doi.org/10.1123/jsep.34.3.285

Nahdi, D.S., Jatisunda, M.G, Cahyaningsih, U., & Suciawati, V. (2020). Pre-service teacher's ability in solving mathematics problem viewed from numeracy literacy skills. *Elementary Education Online, 19*(4), 1902-1920. http://dx.doi.org/10.17051/ilkonline.2020.762541

Newton, P., Tunison, S., & Viczko, M. (2010). The school principal's role in large-scale assessment. *Canadian Journal of Educational Administration and Policy, 105*, 1-24. https://journalhosting.ucalgary.ca/index.php/cjeap/article/view/42797/30653

Nguyen, T., & Pfleiderer, M. (2013). International empirical findings about the success of education and school policy. *International Education Studies, 6*(2), 188-196. https://doi.org/10.5539/ies.v6n2p188

Norton, A., & D'Ambrosio, B. S. (2008). ZPC and ZPD: Zones of Teaching and Learning. *Journal For Research in Mathematics Education*, *39*(3), 220-246. https://doi.org/10.2307/30034969

Novack, J., Park, S. J., & Friedman, A. N. (2013). Integrated masculinity: Using gestalt counseling with male clients. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, *91*(4), 483-489. https://doi.org/10.1002/j.1556-6676.2013.00121.x

O'Sullivan, D., & Strauser, D. (2009). Operationalizing self-efficacy, related social cognitive variables, and moderating effects. *Rehabilitation Counseling Bulletin, 52*(4), 251-258. https://doi.org/10.1177/0034355208329356

Ontario Principals' Council (2009). *The principal as instructional leader in literacy.* Corwin Press.

Overholt, R., & Szabocsik, S. (2013). Leadership content knowledge for literacy: connecting literacy teachers and principals. *The Clearing House: A Journal of Educational Strategies, Issues, and Ideas, 86*(2), 53-58. https://doi.org/1080/00098655.2012.742034

Padgham, J., & Chatto, H. (2013). Principals leading literacy – what works and why? *Practically Primary*, 1-8. https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ehh&AN=86229354&site=eds-live&scope=site

Paglis, L. (2010). Leadership self-efficacy: Research findings and practical applications. *Journal of Management Development, 29*(9), 771-782. https://doi.org/10.1108/0262171101072487

Parylo, O., Zepeda, S., & Bengtson, E. (2013). Career paths in educational leadership: Examining principals' narratives. *Alberta Journal of Educational Research*, *58*(4), 565-599. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/277010471_Career_Paths_in_Educational_Leadership_Examining_Principals'_Narratives

Pearson, P. D. (2004). The reading wars. *Educational Policy, 18*(1), 216-252. https://doi.org/10.1177/0895904803260041

Pepper, K. (2010). Effective principals skillfully balance leadership styles to facilitate student success: A focus for the reauthorization of ESEA. *Planning and Changing*, *41*(1–2), 42–56. http://education.illinoisstate.edu/planning/articles/vol41.php

Petridou, A., Nicolaidou, M., & Williams, J. (2014). Development and validation of the School Leaders' Self-Efficacy Scale. *Journal of Educational Administration, 52*(2), 228-253. https://doi.org/10.1108/JEA-04-2012-0037

Plaatjies, B. (2019). Investigating Principal Capacity in Literacy Instructional Leadership at Selected Primary Schools. *Journal of Social Studies Education Research*, *10*(3), 136–160. https://eric.ed.gov/contentdelivery/servlet/ERICServlet?accno=EJ1229399

Polínek, M. (2016). Gestaltdrama as an integrative psychotherapeutic approach. *Review of Artistic Education, 11*(1), 139-145. https://doi.org/10.1515/rae-2016-0017

Priebe, C., Flora, P., Ferguson, L., & Anderson, T. (2012). Using efficacy information to manipulate proxy efficacy in novice exercisers. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise, 13*(5), 562-568. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychsport.2012.03.004

Purzer, S. (2011). The relationship between team discourse, self-efficacy, and individual achievement: A sequential mixed-methods study. *Journal of Engineering Education, 100*(4), 655-679. https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2168-9830.2011.tb00031.x

Ramalho, R., Adams, P., Huggard, P, & Hoare, K. (2015). Literature review and constructivist grounded theory. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research, 16*(3). https://doi.org/10.17169/fqs-16.3.2313

Redmond, M. (2015). Symbolic interactionism. *English Technical Reports and White Papers, 4*, 1-34. http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/engl_reports/4

Rhodes, C. (2013). Coaching and mentoring for self-efficacious leadership in schools. *International Journal of Mentoring and Coaching in Education, 2*(1), 47-63. https://doi.org/10.1108/20466851311323087

Rigby, J. (2014). Three logics of instructional leadership. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 50*(4), 610-644. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013151X13509379

Sackney, L. & Walker, K. (2006). Canadian perspectives on beginning principals: Their role in building capacity for learning communities. *Journal of Educational Administration, 44*(4), 341-358. https://doi.org/10.1108/09578230610676578

Saggurthi, S. & Thakur, M. (2016). Usefulness of uselessness: A case for negative capability in management. *Academy of Management Learning and Education, 15*(1), 180-193. https://doi.org/10.5465/amle.2013.0250

Sanzo, K., Clayton, J., & Sherman, W. (2011). Students with special needs, reading education, and principals: Bridging the divide through instructional leadership. *International Journal of Educational Leadership Preparation, 6*(1), 1-20. https://eric.ed.gov/contentdelivery/servlet/ERICServlet?accno=EJ972881

Schmoker, M. (2001). *The results fieldbook: Practical strategies from dramatically different schools.* ASCD.

Shafritz, J., Ott, J., & Jang, Y. (2016). *Classics of organization theory (8th ed.)*. Cengage Learning.

Shaked, H., Gross, Z., & Glanz, J. (2019). Between Venus and Mars: Sources of gender differences in instructional leadership. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, *47*(2), 291–309. http://doi.org/10.1177/1741143217728086

Sio Jyh Lih, J., & Ismail, R. B. (2019). Binary logistic regression analysis of instructional leadership factors affecting English language literacy in primary schools. *3L: Southeast Asian Journal of English Language Studies*, *25*(2), 22–37. https://doi.org/10.17576/3L-2019-2502-02

Skaalvik, C. (2020). School principal self-efficacy for instructional leadership: relations with engagement, emotional exhaustion and motivation to quit. *Social Psychology of Education*, *23*(2), 479–498. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11218-020-09544-4

Smith, R.W., & Guarino, A. (2006). Confirmatory factor analysis of the Principal Self-Efficacy Survery (PSES). *Academy of Educational Leadership Journal, 10*(3), 73-78. http://www.alliedacademies.org/academy-of-educational-leadership-journal

Smith, R.W., Guarino, A., Strom, P., & Adams, O. (2006). Effective teaching and learning environments and principal self-efficacy. *Journal of Research for Educational Leaders, 3*(2), 4-23. http://www2.education.uiowa.edu/archives/jrel/spring06/documents/Strom_0510.pdf

Stajkovic, A., Bandura, A., Locke, E., Lee, D., & Sergent, K. (2018). Test of three conceptual models of influence of the big five personality traits and self-efficacy on academic performance: A meta-analytic path-analysis. *Personality and Individual Differences, 120*, 238-245. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2017.08.014

Steele, M. D., Johnson, K. R., Otten, S., Herbel-Eisenmann, B. A., & Carver, C. L. (2015). Improving instructional leadership through the development of leadership content knowledge: The case of principal learning in algebra. *Journal of Research*

on Leadership Education, *10*(2), 127–150. http://doi.org/10.1177/1942775115569353

Sum, R., & Shi, T. (2016). Lived experiences of a Hong Kong physical education teacher: Ethnographical and phenomenological approaches. *Qualitative Report*, *21*(1), 127-142. http://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol21/iss1/11

Sun, J., Chen, X., & Zhang, S. (2017). A review of research evidence on the antecedents of transformational leadership. *Education Sciences, 7*(15), 1-27. https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci7010015

Sun, M., Frank, K., Penuel, W., & Kim, C. (2013). How external institutions penetrate schools through formal and informal leaders. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 49*(4), 610-644. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X12468148

Taylor, F. (2016). The principles of scientific management. In J. Shafritz, J. Ott, & Y. Jang, (Eds). *Classics of organization theory (8th ed.)* (pp. 66-77). Cengage Learning.

Taylor, N., Wills, G., & Hoadley, U. (2019). Addressing the "leadership conundrum" through a mixed methods study of school leadership for literacy. *Research in Comparative and International Education*, *14*(1), 30–53. http://doi.org/10.1177/1745499919828928

Terosky, A. (2014). From a managerial imperative to a learning imperative: Experiences of urban, public school principals. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 50*(1), 3-33. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X13488597

Timperley, H., & Parr, J. (2007). Closing the achievement gap through evidence-based inquiry at multiple levels of the education system. *Journal of Advanced Academics, 19*(1), 90-115. https://search.proquest.com/docview/222747630?accountid=14474

Townsend, T., Bayetto, A., Dempster, N., Johnson, G., & Stevens, E. (2018). Leadership with a purpose: Nine case studies of schools in Tasmania and Victoria where the principal had undertaken the Principals and Literacy Leaders (PALL) program. *Leadership and Policy in Schools, 17*(2), 204-237. https://doi.org/10.1080/15700763.2016.1278245

Tremont, J. W., & Templeton, N. R. (2019). Principals as instructional leaders: An embedded descriptive case study of one rural school's effort to improve student outcomes through reading plus. *School Leadership Review*, *14*(2), 1–24. https://doaj.org/article/052f5744729a4165bcf060d9d29559e3

Trujillo, T. (2012). The politics of district instructional policy formation: Compromising equity and rigor. *Educational Policy, 27*(3), 531-559. https://doi.org/10.1177/0895904812454000

Tschannen-Moran, M., & Gareis, C. (2004). Principals' sense of efficacy: Assessing a promising construct. *Journal of Educational Administration, 42*(4/5), 573-585. https://doi.org/10.1108/09578230410554070

Tudge, J., & Winterhoff, P. (1993). Vygotsky, Piaget, and Bandura: Perspectives on the relations between the social world and cognitive development. *Human Development, 36,* 61-81. https://doi.org/10.1159/000277297

Uiterwijk-Luijk, L., Krüger, M., Zijlstra, B., & Volman, M. (2017). Inquiry-based leadership: The influence of affective attitude, experienced social pressure and self-

efficacy. *Journal of Educational Administration*, *55*(5), 492–509. https://doi.org/10.1108/JEA-12-2015-0114

UNESCO (2005). *Education for all global monitoring report 2006: Education for all - literacy for life*. Paris, France: UNESCO. http://www.unesco.org/education/GMR2006/full/chapt5_eng.pdf.

van Veelen, R., Sleegers, P. J. C., & Endedijk, M. D. (2017). Professional learning among school leaders in secondary education: The impact of personal and work context factors. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *53*(3), 365–408. http://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X16689126

Veresov, N. (2017). ZBR and ZPD: Is there a difference? *Cultural-Historical Psychology, 13*(1), 23-36. https://doi.org/10.17759/chp.2017130102

Versland, T. & Erickson, J. (2017). Leading by example: A case-study of the influence of principal self-efficacy on collective efficacy. *Cogent Education, 4*, 1-17. https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2017.1286765

Versland, T. (2016). Exploring self-efficacy in education leadership programs: What makes a difference. *Journal of Research on Leadership Education, 11*(3), 298-320. https://doi.org/10.1177/1942775115618503

Wahlstrom, K. & Louis, K. (2008). How teachers experience principal leadership: The roles of professional community, trust, efficacy, and shared responsibility. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 44*(4), 458-495. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0013161X08321502

Walpole, S., & McKenna, M. (2015). Best practices in professional development for improving literacy instruction in schools. In L. Gambrell & L. M. Morrow (Eds.), *Best Practices in Literacy Instruction* (5th ed.), pp. 414-433. Guilford Press.

Wanzare, Z., & Da Costa, J. (2001). Rethinking instructional leadership roles of the school principal: Challenges and prospects. *Journal of Educational Thought, 35*(3), 269-295. http://www.jstor.org/stable/23767241

Willard, J. (2015). School and district administrators learning and leading to help close the graduation gap (Doctoral dissertation). ProQuest Education Database. (3732675)

Wilson, A., Katz, M., & Greenleaf, C. (2020). The staying power of worthwhile work: What it takes to lead literacy change. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, *63*(6), 702–710. https://doi.org/10.1002/jaal.1050

Woulflin, S., Donaldson, M., & Gonzales, R. (2016). District leaders' framing of educator evaluation policy. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 52*(1), 110-143. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X15616661

Wright, N., & Losekoot, E. (2012). Interpretive research paradigms: Points of difference. *TUWHERA Open Research,* 416-422. http://hdl.handle.net/10292/4523

Xu, L., Wubbena, Z., & Stewart, T. (2016). Measuring invariance of second-order factor model of the multifactor leadership questionnaire (MLQ) across K-12 principal gender. *Journal of Educational Administration, 54*(6, 727-748. https://doi.org/10.1108/JEA-01-2015-0001

Yau, Y. (2018). Efficacy beliefs and homeowner participation. In E. Altman & M. Gabriel (Eds.), *Multi-owned property in the Asia-Pacific region* (pp. 231-250). Palgrave Macmillan, https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-56988-2_13

Zahed-Babelan, A., Koulaei, G., Moeinikia, M., & Sharif, A. R. (2019). Instructional leadership effects on teachers' work engagement: Roles of school culture, empowerment, and job characteristics. *Center for Educational Policy Studies Journal*, *9*(3), 137–156. https://eric.ed.gov/contentdelivery/servlet/ERICServlet?accno=EJ1230433

Zarnowiecki, D., Parletta, N., Zarnowiecki, D. M., Dollman, J., & Parletta, N. (2014). Associations between predictors of children's dietary intake and socioeconomic position: a systematic review of the literature. *Obesity Reviews*, *15*(5), 375-391. https://doi.org/10.1111/obr.12139

Zimmerman, J. A. (2011). Principals preparing for change: The importance of reflection and professional learning. *American Secondary Education*, *39*(2), 107–114. https://www.jstor.org/stable/23100404

Appendix A

Participant Information Letter

Principals' Self-Efficacy as Instructional Leaders of Literacy
Doctoral Research Project

January 2, 2020

Dear School Principal,

My name is Kathleen Durance and I am a graduate student in the Doctor of Education in Educational Administration and Leadership Program at the University of Alberta. The purpose of this letter is to invite you to participate in my dissertation research project titled "Principals' Self-Efficacy as Instructional Leaders of Literacy." The purpose of my research is to find out how school principals have developed their confidence, or self-efficacy, to carry out instructional leadership of literacy. The goal of my research is to better understand how participants experience self-efficacy as instructional leaders of literacy in their schools in order to support future principals in their leadership development, especially considering new principal certification requirements and the new Leadership Quality Standard.

I invite you to participate by allowing me to interview you at your convenience sometime in the coming month. This interview will take from 30-45 minutes and can be conducted in person, by phone, or via Skype at a location of your choosing. I will be interviewing you about your experiences as an instructional leader, especially in the area of literacy. My questions will also focus on how your sense of efficacy as an instructional leader has developed over time and the advice you would give future principals about developing their own instructional leadership self-efficacy. I will respect your confidentiality and all data will be anonymized. You will be able withdraw any or all of your data at any time up until two weeks after I have shared the written transcript and summary of my interview notes with you without penalty or harm. After that, I will consolidate all data and remove identifying information. You also have the right to not answer any of the questions in the interview. If you choose to complete the interview and later decide that you want to withdraw or redact any or all of your comments you will may do so by responding in writing within two weeks of receiving a copy of your interview transcript and summary via email. In that case all of your information will be destroyed. Your participation is voluntary; you are free to decide not to participate or to end participation after the interview and there will be no consequence to you regardless of your decision. It is possible that you may not receive any direct benefit from participation in this research.

Data will be handled in compliance with the University of Alberta Standards for the Protection of Human Research Participants.

All hard copies of data, including written notes, will be locked in my home office and stored securely. Digital recordings and documents containing data will be stored on my computer under a secure password protected system. In compliance with University of Alberta policy, all data will be securely stored for five years and will then be destroyed. Although I intend to do the transcription of the interviews, if I hire a transcriber, he or she will be required to sign a confidentiality agreement.

When writing my dissertation, all information that might indicate participants' identities will be deleted or anonymized. Although it will be clear to readers that participants were either principals or school administrators in an urban school district, any specific information that might identify you will be omitted to ensure your anonymity. To protect confidentiality, pseudonyms will be used in all written representations of the data. The information you provide will be used to complete my Ed. D. dissertation and may be used as well in future presentations and publications in educational contexts.

If any concerns, complaints, or questions arise from your participation, please contact me, Kathleen Durance, at kdurance@ualberta.ca or 780-904-0010. Or you can contact my supervisor, Dr. Jose da Costa at jdacosta@ualberta.ca.

The plan for this research project has been reviewed for its adherence to ethical guidelines and approved by Research Ethics Board 1 at the University of Alberta: University of Alberta Research Ethics Office Project #Pro00093864. For questions regarding participant rights and ethical conduct of research, contact the Research Ethics Office at (780) 492-2615.

Thank you for considering my invitation to participate in my research. If you would like to participate, please sign the attached consent form (s) and please return via scanned pdf to kdurance@ualberta.ca or via internal EPSB truck mail in a sealed envelope marked "confidential" to Kathleen Durance at Ellerslie Campus. I have included one copy of the consent form in hard copy with this letter and can also include a digital copy via email. I look forward to hearing from you if you would like to participate. Please return the signed consent form and keep a copy for your own record.
Sincerely,

Kathleen Durance
Ed. D. Candidate in Educational Administration and Leadership
Department of Educational Policy Studies
Faculty of Education
University of Alberta
780-904-0010 (c)
kdurance@ualberta.ca

Appendix B

Consent Form for Participant

University of Alberta
Doctor of Education Dissertation Research

Title: Principals' Self-Efficacy as Instructional Leaders of Literacy
Researcher: Kathleen Durance
Date: _____

I, _____, hereby
(*print name of participant)*

- ❑ consent
- ❑ do not consent

to participate in this research project.

To:

- ❑ *Be interviewed for 30-45 minutes with the researcher*
- ❑ *Be audio-recorded*
- ❑ *Allow notes to be taken and saved as documents during the interview*

by Kathleen Durance as part of her doctoral research for completion of her dissertation and degree of Doctor of Education in Policy Studies at the University of Alberta.

I understand that

- My participation in this research project assignment is completely voluntary.
- I might not receive any direct benefit from participation in this research.
- I may withdraw from the research project assignment without penalty at any time up until two weeks after I receive a copy of my transcript and summary of interview notes as described in the Letter of Information.
- All information gathered will be treated confidentially and used only for the purposes described in the Letter of Information.
- There will be no identifying information on the audio recordings, transcriptions, notes, or in the assignment.

The plan for this research project (#Pro00093864) has been reviewed for its adherence to ethical guidelines and approved by Research Ethics Board 1 at the University of Alberta. For questions regarding participant rights and ethical conduct of research, contact the Research Ethics Office at (780) 492-2615.

_____ _____
Signature of Participant Date

Appendix C

Principals' Self-Efficacy as Instructional Leaders of Literacy
Participants' Interview Schedule

1. Introductory Statement—Verbal Consent

Do you have any questions about the interview process, collection of your data, or timeframe for withdrawing from the study? I have your signed consent form; do I have your verbal consent to proceed with this recorded interview?

2. Would you begin by giving me a quick description of your leadership role(s) to date (including your current position). [Add follow-up on university training and teaching background, etc.]
3. If someone outside your school asked about your literacy instruction at your school, what response would you give?
    a. In what ways do you see your instructional leadership in your school's literacy programming?
    b. What do you think has enabled you to have the impact that you have had?

As you're aware, effective September 1, 2019, the new Leadership Quality Standard came into effect as follows: Quality leadership occurs when the leader's ongoing analysis of the context, and decisions about what leadership knowledge and abilities to apply, result in quality teaching and optimum learning for all school students.

School principals are now accountable for meeting this standard through demonstration of nine competencies. My research, and the topic of this interview, focuses primarily on competency six. (See Hard Copy)

4. What's the first thought that comes to mind when you read through this description of your role as an instructional leader?
    a. How do you think principals approaching certification for the first time might feel/respond?

5. In terms of [connect to prior response] what does it mean to you to be considered an instructional leader <u>of literacy</u>?
    a. In the research, some findings suggest that principals find literacy leadership challenging. Why do you think that is?
    b.

I'd like to know how your understanding and skills as an instructional leader of literacy have developed.

6. How does your understanding and implementation of instructional leadership now compare to how you felt about instructional leadership as a new principal?
    a. What were some important moments in your journey as an instructional leader from then to now?

7. Now that anyone wanting to become a principal will need to obtain principal certification based on the new *LQS*, what advice would you give new principals about instructional leadership in literacy?

8. As we wrap up this interview, what else do you think it would be important for me to know about principals as instructional leaders, especially in the area of literacy?
    a. What would surprise me?
    b. What questions should we be asking?