The Self-Efficacy Beliefs of Secondary School Principals

by

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of my doctoral research was to address the question: "How do secondary school principals understand the relationship between beliefs of self-efficacy and their professional practice?" Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory served as the analytical framework with his construct of self-efficacy being the subject of this work. "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)

Nationally and internationally, the role of the principal has been cited as a critical factor in the improvement of student achievement and system accountability (Leithwood, 2008; Levin, 2010), and according to Bandura (1997), self-efficacy belief – the belief that people have in their ability to produce desired effects by their actions - is the most central and pervasive mechanism of human agency and is central to motivation and action. In Alberta, where there is a well-defined accountability framework, the *Principal Quality Practice Guideline* (2009) was designed to "be used as a basis for many activities including principal preparation and recruitment, principals' self-reflection and daily practice, principals' initial and ongoing professional growth and principal supervision, evaluation and practice review" (Alberta Education, February, 2009, p. 3). This draft document updated and currently titled *The Professional Practice Competencies for School Leaders* (March 11, 2011) details seven dimensions that are intended to be guidelines of school leader performance. As self-efficacy is related to individuals' persistence, analytical strategies, effort, aspiration or goal-setting, adaptability, organizational ability and success on tasks they perform, (Bandura, 1986; Gist & Mitchell, 1992 Green & Paglis, 2002; McCormick, 2001; Wood & Bandura, 1989), the value of the self-efficacy construct is one that will be critical as principals meet leadership expectations in Alberta schools as outlined by the *Alberta School*

Act (Province of Alberta, 2000). My research assists to further understanding and knowledge of the self-efficacy of principals with particular interest in the areas of management, instructional leadership and moral leadership embodied within the seven leadership dimension of the *Professional Practice Competencies for School Leaders* (PPCSL).   Deepening understanding of the construct of self-efficacy and its relation to principal efforts and skill may serve to create conditions that lend t to improvements in student achievement and growth. Within the Alberta context of high accountability, a principal's self-efficacy beliefs are of particular interest as a greater understanding of factors leading to effective principals, teams and schools may be illuminated through the study of self-efficacy.

Within the case study methodology and employing a purposeful convenience sampling technique, six high school principals were interviewed over a two month period. Face-to-face interviews allowed for in-depth interviewing while ensuring a multiplicity of perspectives The *Principal Sense of Efficacy Scale (PSES)* created by Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2004) was the survey tool utilized and basic demographic information was also collected.

Data analysis and interpretations of the relationship between principal beliefs of self-efficacy and professional practice resulted in the overarching theme of "relationship" and four major sub-themes: Clarity of Vision; Strong Focus on Student Success; Dedication to Instructional Leadership; and Experience Matters. The results from this study will serve to add to the growing knowledge base with regards to factors that may influence principal self-efficacy and principal effectiveness. Based on research findings, this study concludes with implications and recommendations for theory along with policy and practice directed at institutions that develop teachers, at school systems and at schools, as well as possibilities for further research relative to school and school system leadership development and the importance of the construct of self-efficacy.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Purpose and Objectives of the Research

This introductory chapter will serve to frame the purpose, objectives and significance of my research, delineate assumptions and beliefs, as well as outline the context, definitions and overall organization of this study. It is my intent that the reader will have a clear understanding of my research after reading this introduction and that it will lay the foundation for the review of literature in chapter two and the explanation of research methodology and design that will be presented in chapter three.

As was initially stated by Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2004) and echoed by Nye (2008), capturing the construct of self-efficacy has been an elusive task for educational researchers. Self-efficacy research in education has been primarily focused on teacher self-efficacy with early studies indicating that teacher self-efficacy beliefs are strongly related to student achievement (Armour, Conroy-Oseguera, Cox, King, McDonnell, Pauly & Zellman, 1976). There have been a limited number of studies undertaken that have focused on the principal and his or her self-efficacy but there has been some valuable research by Dimmock and Hattie, (1996) who claimed that self-efficacy was a valued element in school restructuring. Smith, Guarino, Strom and Adams (2006) also found efficacy as influential in the quality of teaching and learning and Nye (2008) who found statistical significance in six of twelve factors (gender, years of teaching experience, level, SES, parental involvement and student discipline) studied from original self-efficacy research conducted by Tschannen-Moran and Gareis, (2004). Lehman (2007) noted a relationship between lower socio-economic status of students and higher principal self-efficacy and Santamaria (2008) found that the principal's age was the strongest

negative predictor of a principals' sense of self-efficacy. Due to the inconsistencies with regards to findings it is important that further research is conducted across various contexts. As well, according to research conducted by Barth (2001) and Lindenburg and Ormstein (2004), principal leadership is vital to the improvement of schools in effectively preparing students and developing citizens for post-secondary studies and the world of work, and thus it is important that my study was conducted.

Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2004) developed a *Principal Sense of Efficacy Scale* survey instrument (PSES) (*Appendix A, p. 265*) which was based on the professional standards as outlined in *the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC)* for the United States of America. Three factors emerged from analysis of the *PSES* Scale related to management, instructional leadership and moral leadership. Two studies by Tschannen-Moren and Gareis (2004, 2005) and one study by Nye (2008) found this instrument to be both reliable and valid and Tschannen-Moren and Gareis recommended the use of the *PSES* survey, in contexts other than their study parameters, to further test this reliability and validity. Santamaria (2008) also utilized *the Principal Sense of Efficacy Scale (PSES)* in his work and articulated findings according to the three factors of managerial, instructional and moral leadership. More information regarding the PSES survey will be outlined in chapter three of this thesis.

The purpose of my research was to explore the nature of self-efficacy within a sample of Alberta secondary school principals. Specifically my research question was: "How do secondary school principals understand the relationship between beliefs of self-efficacy and their professional practice?" My study will focus on secondary school principals in the province of Alberta.

Context/Rationale

The research was conducted in Alberta, a province in Canada consisting of a multitude of schools that represent the needs of a vast number of students. There are approximately 2,000 schools in Alberta with 1950 principals and 321 high school principals. The province is well known for its vast offerings in terms of many educational programs and attempts to meet the needs of all students with its mandate of providing quality education in all schools and programs.

In an effort to increase accountability and school effectiveness (improvement), the Alberta Commission on Learning (2003) released a report that included recommendation 76 asking the Minister to "develop a quality practice standard and identify the knowledge, skills and attitudes required for principals (Alberta Education, 2003, pp. 121-122). *The Principal Quality Practice Guideline (PQPG)* and subsequent *Professional Practice Competencies for School Leaders (PPCSL)* evolved over a period of eight years and to date there has not been a mandate from Alberta Education requiring the use of the *PPCSL* draft document for principals. It is anticipated that this document will be utilized by all superintendents in the province of Alberta as a basis for outlining the roles and responsibilities of school leaders, and specifically principals, in this province. The document, complete with its *School Leadership Framework (SLF)* will serve to establish guidelines for preparation, induction and practice.

The significance of the Professional Practice Competencies for School Leaders (*PPCSL)* as well as the *Framework* illustrates the high accountability and emphasis on school improvement/effectiveness that is evident in the Alberta context. With this heightened expectation and accountability, it is my opinion that this was a timely and important study. Findings from my study may serve to illuminate important factors with regards to principal selection, recruitment and professional development in Alberta and beyond.

A more complete review of the context with regards to the historical development of the *Professional Practice Competencies for School Leaders (PPCSL)* and its significance in for Alberta principals is undertaken in chapter two of this proposal.

Research Question, Interview Questions and Demographic Information

The research question guiding this study was: "How do secondary school principals understand the relationship between beliefs of self-efficacy and their professional practice?" I selected participants using a purposeful convenience sampling technique and the six participants were scheduled for interviews according to availability. Each interview began with ascertaining the principal's basic level of self-efficacy through the *Principal Sense of Efficacy Scale (PSES)* instrument with questions addressing the principal participants understanding of the self-efficacy construct. Participants were then involved in semi-structured interviews serving to seek greater understanding and clarity regarding their beliefs and understandings regarding their (1) managerial, (2) instructional leadership and (3) moral leadership roles and responsibilities and how they perceived the relationship between self-efficacy beliefs and their professional practice. The eight questions asked of the participants are located in Appendix C.

Throughout the eight interview questions I sought to ascertain an insight into each principal and his/her own beliefs and their understandings with respect to the relationship between beliefs of self-efficacy and their professional practice. The final four of the eight questions were developed to delve more deeply into the thought processes of the principals and had them seeking clarity for their roles and responsibilities. I listened intently to their responses and discovered themes within their answers that may lead to a clearer understanding of the relationship between self-efficacy and their professional practice. Basic demographic

information was also gathered from each participant for the purpose of data analysis with regard to the *PSES* instrument and identification of factors linked to high and low principal self-efficacy beliefs.

I chose twelve demographics based on my research of other studies (which have used some or all of the noted factors) and have found that the representative twelve demographic characteristics have led to very interesting data analysis and statements of results and implications. These factors are also those that will serve to frame the context of the participants and through this process I was able to identify more relationships with regards to self-efficacy and contextual/personal factors.

It is now important to define the terms that were used within this study:

Definition of Terms

Definitions of conceptual terms are crucial to understanding any field of investigation inquiry. To provide clarity and uniformity, the following definitions were framed the present study.

Distributed Leadership: Distributed leadership or the distributed perspective on school leadership and management (Spillane, 2006) is a conceptual framework for thinking about and studying school leadership and management. "From a distributed perspective, leadership practice takes shape in the interaction of leaders, followers and their situation." (Spillane, 2006, p. 8)

Efficacy for Instructional Leadership: As identified in the questions, from the PSES Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2004) define this term as the ability to "motivate teachers; generate enthusiasm for a shared vision for the school; manage change in your school; create a

positive learning environment in your school; facilitate student learning in your school; raise student achievement on standardized tests" (p. 581).

Efficacy for Management: As identified in the PSES questions, Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2004) define this term as the ability to "handle the time demands of the job; handle the paperwork required of the job; maintain control of your own daily schedule; prioritize among competing demands of the job; cope with the stress of the job; shape the operational policies and procedures that are necessary to manage your school" (p. 581).

Efficacy for Moral Leadership: As identified in the PSES questions Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2004) define this term as "the ability to promote acceptable behavior among students; promote school spirit among a large majority of the student population; handle effectively the discipline of students in your school; promote a positive image of your school with the media; promote the prevailing values of the community in your school; promote ethical behavior among school personnel" (p. 581).

Efficacious schools: A school which has as its attributes: principals acting as instructional leaders; high expectations and standards for achievement; belief in student capacity to learn; mastery oriented instruction where students exercise control over their academic performance; good classroom management and parental support and involvement. (Bandura, 1997).

Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards: Educational Leadership Policy Standards developed by Council of Chief State School Officers (United States of America). These provide guidance to state policymakers as they work to improve education leadership preparation, licensure, evaluation, and professional development. The latest update was 2008 and there are six standards including **(1)** Setting a widely shared vision for learning; (2) Developing a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and

staff professional growth; (3) Ensuring effective management of the organization, operation, and

resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment; (4) Collaborating with faculty

and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing

community resources; (5) Acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner; and (6)

Understanding, responding to, and influencing the political, social, legal, and cultural contexts.

Principal: The designated leader of a school, appointed by the Superintendent, who holds a

Continuous Contract and an Alberta Teaching Certificate and who is responsible for the

provision of educational leadership under section 19 of the *School Act*. Within Alberta, Section

20 of the School Act broadly outlines the mandatory requirements of the principal's role:

The principal of a school must:
(a) Provide instructional leadership in the school;
(b) Ensure that the instruction provided by the teachers employed in the school is consistent with
the courses of study and education programs prescribed, approved or authorized pursuant to this
Act;
(c) Evaluate or provide for the evaluation of programs offered in the school;
(d) Ensure that students in the school have the opportunity to meet the standards of education set
by the Minister;
(e) Direct the management of the school;
(f) Maintain order and discipline in the school and on the school grounds and during activities
sponsored or approved by the board;
(g) Promote co-operation between the school and the community that it serves;
(h) Supervise the evaluation and advancement of students;
(I) evaluate the teachers employed in the school;
(j) Subject to any applicable collective agreement and the principal's contract of employment,
carry out those duties that are assigned to the principal by the board in accordance with the
regulations and the requirements of the school council and the board. (Section 20)

Principal Quality Practice Guideline (PQPG): The Principal Quality Practice

Guideline (PQPG) represents a first step in the process to develop a framework for quality school

leadership in Alberta. It includes a statement on Principal Quality Practice and seven leadership

dimensions with supporting descriptors, reflecting the Alberta context. The PQPG is to be used

as a basis for many activities including: principal preparation and recruitment, principal's self-

reflection and daily practice, principal's initial and ongoing professional growth and principal supervision, evaluation and practice review. It also provides a reference for faculties of education in developing and delivering principal preparation programs, for teachers and vice-principals who are preparing for school leadership roles, for beginning principals in their efforts to meet stakeholder expectations and for superintendents in their supervision and evaluation of principals. Seven leadership dimensions are noted: (1) Fostering effective relationships; (2) Embodying visionary leadership; (3) Leading a learning community; (4) Providing instructional leadership; (5) Developing and facilitating leadership; (6) Managing school operations and resources; and (7) Understanding and responding to the larger societal context. (Alberta Education, 2009)

Professional Practice Competencies for School Leaders (PPCSL): An updated version of the *Principal Quality Practice Guideline (PQPG)* that has been renamed and updated (most recently March 21, 2011). Currently in draft form, the *PPCSL* states that every school leader is expected to: (a) fulfill the applicable provincial requirements; (b) demonstrate the applicable Alberta Professional Competencies for School Schools (competencies as renamed from "dimensions" in the PQPG); and (c) meet the school authority's requirements for school leaders. Seven original dimensions (from PQPG) have been renamed as "competencies". (See Appendix B).

Self-efficacy: People's judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute a course of action required to attain designated types of performances (Bandura, 1986, p. 391)

Stakeholders: People who contribute, either directly, or indirectly, to the learning success of every student. Educational stakeholders may include: school boards, superintendents, jurisdictional and school personnel (administrators, teachers, teachers' aides, educational assistants, transportation and maintenance personnel, and administrative support staff), school

council members, professional learning providers, faculties of education, Alberta Education personnel and the Alberta Teachers' Association.

Student success: Student's demonstration of competency in subjects and areas of study with regards to meeting the acceptable standard on provincial and teacher development tests as well as demonstration and self-reporting of the accomplishment of personal academic and social goals.

The Researcher

This work is very meaningful and relevant to me. I am a currently a principal in a large urban school district in Alberta and I am personally dedicated and feel accountable to fulfill my roles and responsibilities with regards to my professional standards as outlined in the *Professional Practice Competencies for School Leaders (PPCSL)* (*Appendix B)*. I know that the seven dimensions of the *PPCSL* encompass a vast array of knowledge, skills and aptitudes and I was eager to explore the essence of the relationship between beliefs of self-efficacy and principal professional practice. I believe that the *Professional Practice Competencies for School Leaders (PPCSL)* is a very thorough study and interpretation of the roles and responsibilities of the principal and leaders in a school. As such I know that I have "significant responsibility for ensuring quality student learning, teacher practice efficacy and an effective learning culture." I am deeply committed to student and teacher learning and development and am dedicated to my role as principal or what I call "lead learner" in a school. I believe that my self-efficacy may be a very key factor in my motivation and commitment and I am continually refining my practice and developing skills in order to enhance my managerial, instructional and moral leadership. According to Bandura (1997) "principals who create a school climate with a strong academic emphasis and serve as advocates on behalf of teachers' instructional efforts with the central

administration, enhance their teachers' beliefs in their instructional efficacy" (p. 248). Knowing that the single most important factor in increasing student achievement is the effectiveness and skill of the teacher in the classroom, I am committed to advocacy and support for teachers to improve collective efficacy in the school. Highly efficacious schools are those where the collective efficacy of students, teachers, and administration are at a high level with an inherent belief in the ability to produce the desired effect which is ultimately the academic success of the student body. This success is usually measured by the provincial/state examinations and teacher awarded grades.

I wanted to explore the self-efficacy research to examine the relationship between self-efficacy and professional competencies and I have benefited both personally and professionally throughout this scholarly journey. As well, it is my intent to contribute to the knowledge base with regards to the self-efficacy of secondary school principals as the majority of the research has centered on elementary principals. I have felt very fortunate to have researched this topic as I know that is has enriched my practice through the insights I received regarding the self-efficacy beliefs of principals in Alberta and it has served to improve my knowledge of school principal preparation, induction and professional development and factors therein that affect commitment and motivation to professional competencies. I also know that I have become more familiar with my own beliefs, values, attitudes and self-efficacy, and will therefore further my introspection and reflection regarding my professional practice.

I have always been very interested in self-efficacy and social cognitive theory. My Masters of Education work was centered on self-efficacy with regards to high school students and their work with one particular career software. I found that I was always intrigued with Bandura's (1997) construct of self –efficacy as "beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and

execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments" (p. 3) and decided to continue my pursuit of this work. Bandura (1997) further related that self-efficacy beliefs influence the course of action people pursue, effort exerted, perseverance in overcoming obstacles or failures, resiliency to adversity, the extent to which thoughts are self-aiding or self-hindering when coping with environmental demands, and ultimately the level of accomplishments realized. According to Bandura (1977) self-efficacy is a cognitive construct that is task and context specific. People with a sense of self-efficacy, approach difficult tasks with a sense of capability and assuredness; face challenges "head on"; are motivated and committed to follow-through; and have a great desire to overcome adversity.

Assumptions and Beliefs

I was personally motivated to further study the construct of self-efficacy and to sharpen my social cognitive lens to study secondary school principals and how their self-efficacy beliefs relate to their professional practice. My assumptions were that principals with a high sense of self-efficacy would be those who had a higher sense of motivation and commitment towards their professional roles and responsibilities due to their internalized sense of belief in their capabilities to work to produce desired effects. I assumed that because of Bandura's impact with his social cognitive theory, which is very well respected and recognized for its sound principles of human agency and behavior, it would serve, with its construct of self-efficacy, to assist with a greater understanding of what may contribute to success for principals in the field. The research thus far has shown that self-efficacy leads to a greater sense of belief in accomplishment and thus I feel that this belief and a sense of perseverance will serve to enable individuals to become more

focused with regards to the tasks they must accomplish in their particular time and space. I acknowledge that within the interpretivist framework of this study are philosophical assumptions (ontology, epistemology, axiology and methodology) that serve to frame my theoretical lens of social cognitive theory and the self-efficacy construct in this study.

It was with great anticipation that I began this research to determine the relationship between beliefs of self-efficacy and professional practice and it has served to provide immense enhancement to my professional practice.

Significance of the Study

I believe that this was a very significant study to undertake due to the importance of the role of the principal in the leadership of the school. Within many research studies the role of the principal has been cited as a critical factor in the improvement of student achievement and system accountability (Leithwood, 2008, Levin, 2010). According to Bandura (1997), self-efficacy is the most central and pervasive mechanism of human agency; and the belief that people have in their ability to produce desired effects by their actions – efficacy beliefs – is central to motivation and action. Self-efficacy is known to be an important construct in predicting the success of an individual on multiple types of tasks and several studies have been conducted on the role of self-efficacy in the effectiveness on student success.

According to Bandura (1997) self-efficacy beliefs influence people's course of action, their efforts into tasks, their perseverance, their resilience to adversity, their self-talk and thought patterns, levels of stress and depression that they experience, and the level of accomplishment they realize. Research regarding the self-efficacy of principals is scarce and thus the findings of

this research may provide increased practical and conceptual understandings of the importance of the self-efficacy phenomenon.

Recently, Canadian provinces have been working to establish guidelines as they pertain to principals and their roles and responsibilities (British Columbia Principals and Vice Principals Association, 2007; The Principal's Qualification Program Guideline, Ontario, 2009; A Guide to Principal Practice: Principal Growth and Evaluation in the Northwest Territories, 2005). In Alberta, where there is a well-defined accountability framework, the *Principal Quality Practice Guideline* (2009) was developed in consultation with school boards and was designed to guide principal preparation and recruitment, professional growth, supervision and evaluation. At this time, principals are accountable to demonstrate the standards as set forth in the *Teaching Quality Standard (TQS)* in the province of Alberta, and it is anticipated that they will be further accountable to demonstrate the seven dimensions of leadership when this "cutting edge" *Professional Practice Competencies for School Leaders (PPCSL)* document is finally approved and released. As self-efficacy is related to individuals' persistence, effort and success on tasks they perform, the value of the self-efficacy construct is one that will be critical as principals enact the expected role of leadership in Alberta schools as outlined by the *Alberta School Act* (Province of Alberta, 2000).

The importance of competency and character in the leadership dimensions of the principal quality guideline: (1) fostering effective relationships; (2) embodying visionary leadership; (3) leading a learning community; (4) developing and facilitating leadership; (5) providing instructional leadership; (6) managing school operations and resources; and (7) understanding and responding to the larger societal context, is essential. Principal attention to the social construction of safe and caring school climates, and nurturing teachers to develop the

social context of classrooms in ways that support every student, is also critical. The three themes or factors that pervade the *PPCSL (*Management, Instructional Leadership and Moral Leadership) are also foundational in the ISLLC Standards and were identified by Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2004) in their *Principal Sense of Efficacy Scale (PSES*).

It is important that my study gives relevant and pertinent knowledge to those who come after, and to "add to existing knowledge or contribute to the educational process in a meaningful way" (Wiersma, 2000, p. 29). This study has both practical and theoretical significance in terms of its value to educational research. It is also anticipated that future research will occur with the development of a *Principal Efficacy Scale* that reflects the Alberta context which will serve to assist with the identification of principal candidates as well as serve to enrich the ongoing professional development of principals.

Practical Considerations

Understanding the practical reasons for the feelings of high self-efficacy among secondary school principals would be desirable given the level of importance that teachers, parents, and community place on leadership of the principal in the link to the school's student achievement. According to McCormick (2001) self-efficacy beliefs affect the development of functional leadership strategies and the skillful execution of those strategies, and Paglis and Green (2002) and Wood and Bandura (1989) found that these beliefs also influenced analytic strategies direction-setting and subsequent organizational performance of managers. In past studies (Chemers, Watson & May; 2000; Paglis & Green, 2002), the self-efficacy beliefs of educational leaders were also shown to impact the attitude and performance of followers and

their commitment to their tasks. These practical considerations together with the theoretical give added credence to the current study.

Theoretical Considerations

Self-efficacy is known to be an important construct in predicting the success of an individual on a multiple type of tasks and many studies have been conducted, especially within the realm of teachers and students, on the role of self-efficacy in the effectiveness on student success (Ashton & Webb, 1986; Goddard, Hoy, & Hoy, 2000; Rose & Medway, 1981; Ross, 1986). I believe as Bandura that people guide their lives by their beliefs of personal efficacy. According to Bandura (1997) self-efficacy beliefs influence people's course of action, their efforts into tasks, their perseverance, their resilience to adversity, their self-talk and thought patterns, levels of stress and depression that they experience, and the level of accomplishment they realize. Research regarding the self-efficacy of principals is scarce and thus the findings of this research may provide an increased practical and conceptual understanding of the self-efficacy phenomenon. An in-depth look at Social Cognitive Theory and the construct of self-efficacy will be addressed in chapter two.

Organization of this Dissertation

This dissertation is organized into six chapters with appendices and references. Chapter one consists of an introduction to my proposed study accompanied by research and interview questions, definitions of terms, assumptions and beliefs, significance, and context and rationale. Chapter two presents a review of the current, relevant literature that has assisted me in the preparation for this study. This chapter presents an overview of the context regarding

accountability and the guidelines for principal professional practice in Alberta, the existing theoretical and empirical literature on self-efficacy and highlights research regarding teacher and principal self-efficacy as well as specific research studies that have utilized the *Principal Sense of Efficacy Scale (PSES)* in their studies. Chapter three provides a detailed description of the research methodology and design for my study research paradigm, qualitative case study design, participant selection and sampling, data collection and analysis, ethical considerations, delimitations and limitations and implications of this research. Chapter four presents a detailed description of the case studies of the six principals who were interviewed in this research study. Chapter Five provides an overview of findings from each case as well as a cross case analysis detailing themes that emerged with regards to the relationship between self-efficacy beliefs and professional practice. Chapter six includes a refined conceptual framework, a synthesis of findings, implications and final thoughts.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Overview

In this chapter I will review the historical context of the evolution of the *Professional Practice Competencies for School Leaders (PPCSL)* (Alberta Education, 2011) located in Appendix B which are in a draft form but expected to be the document for standards of practice for the school leaders in Alberta. The time frame with regards to implementation is not known at the time of writing this dissertation as several changes have occurred with regards to the individuals in the Premier's Office as well as the Minister of Education. It is anticipated that finalization of the document into policy will occur in 2015-2016.This review will serve to situate my research within the province of Alberta and frame the accountability and school improvement mandate that Alberta Education has established most recently with their *Alberta School Leadership Framework (ASLF)* which contains the *Professional Practice Competencies for School Leaders (PPCSL)*. As well, in the contents of this chapter, I will review Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory as well as some of the existing theoretical and empirical literature on self-efficacy of teachers and school principals and the specific studies that have employed *the Principal Sense of Efficacy Scale* (PSES) (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2004). This review of literature has served to enrich my knowledge and understanding of the Alberta context for school leaders, social cognitive theory, the construct of self-efficacy, and the scholarly research that has been completed in the field. I internalized the literature review as I journeyed through my study and built the conceptual framework that guided my work.

Mertens (2010) identified that "almost every primary research study begins with a review of the literature….to provide the reader with an overall framework for where this piece of work

fits into the big picture and to explain the topic of research and to build a rationale for the problem that is studied and the need for additional research" (p. 90). When conducting this literature review I found that the rationale for my study became more clearly identified and solidified due to a lack of attention to the self-efficacy beliefs of secondary school principals. This lack of secondary studies coupled with the importance that has been afforded to principals in their leadership of instructional environments, substantiates my belief in the timeliness and relevance of this study.

This review of literature will be used to inform study of the research question which was "How do secondary school principals understand the relationship between beliefs of self-efficacy and their professional practice?" Specifically, in my review of studies, I was looking to identify those that utilized the *Principal Sense of Efficacy Scale (PSES)* in their research design. In doing so, I was eager to identify the results in the three subscales of the *PSES* instrument (management, instructional leadership and moral leadership) and begin to be thoughtful regarding my assumptions of how the secondary school principals in Alberta understand how their beliefs of self-efficacy relate to their professional practice. The findings offered by the literature shed some light on the factors contributing to high levels of self-efficacy in school principals and thus their perceived ability to fulfill their responsibilities of their role. However, results have not been consistent throughout previous research on what factors are related to the variance in principal efficacy. For example gender has often indicated mixed results as Smith et. al., (2005) reported that females reported higher self-efficacy for instructional leadership than males yet Lyons, 1994, Tschannen-Moren and Gareis, 2004, and Aderhold, 2005, found no relationship between principal self-efficacy and gender. As well, there have been mixed results with regards to years of teaching/principal experience as Aderhold (2005), Tschannen-Moren and Gareis (2004) found

no statistically significant relationship, while Lyons (1994) actually found that more experienced principals had lower self-efficacy.

I was very interested delving into my research data and exploring whether there were any relationships with regards the background/demographic information and the principal's sense of self-efficacy. I assumed that perhaps the contextual variables of campus and district level support may positively correlate with high self-efficacy (as was found by Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2005), and was very eager to explore and identify any other relationships that may exist.

I will begin this literature review with an overview of the historical development of the *Professional Practice Competencies for School Leaders* (*PPCSL*) and the Alberta context for principal leadership and development.

Context for this study

The development of the *Professional Practice Competencies for School Leaders (PPCSL)* has been evolving since 2003 with the Alberta Commission on Learning's 2003 report "*Every Child Learns, Every Child Succeeds*" where recommendation 76 asked the Minister to "develop a quality practice standard and identify the knowledge, skills and attitudes required for principals" (Alberta Education, 2003, pp. 121-122). The following figure outlines the development of the policy document with the most recent addition of an updated draft as of March 11, 2011.

Figure 2.1 Development of the Professional Practice Competencies for School Leaders (PPCSL)

2003 The Alberta Commission on Learning recommendations to the Minister of Education in "Every Child Learns, Every Child Succeeds"	→	2003 Recommendation #76: Develop a Quality Practice Standard and identify the knowledge, skills and attitudes required for principals	→	2005 Alberta Stakeholder Advisory Committee formed
Spring of 2009 Stakeholder groups issued the Principal Quality Practice Guideline from Alberta Education	←	2006 Draft sent to superintendents, principals, school boards, school council members and stakeholder groups for review and input	←	2006 Draft of the Principal Quality Practice Guideline (PQPG) from Alberta
June 2010 Alberta Education releases "The Alberta School Leadership Framework: Promoting Growth, Development and Accountability".	→	September 2010 Release by Alberta Education of the draft of the Professional Practice Competencies for School Leaders (PPCSL).	→	March 21, 2011 Updated draft of the Professional Practice Competencies for School Leaders (Alberta Education)

The draft policy has undergone several revisions and has been held due to changes within the province regarding leadership of the educational portfolio and changes in other governmental policies and leadership parties.

During my tenure with the Alberta Teachers' Association *School Administrator Issues and Concerns Committee (SAICC)*, 2006 to 2008, I was fortunate to be involved with the draft process of the *Professional Practice Competencies for School Leaders* (then named the *Principal Quality Practice Guideline-PQPG*) and was able to be a part of a cadre of people who informed the Minister with regards to the crafting of draft documents. During the spring of 2009, I participated with all Edmonton Public Schools (EPSB) principals in meetings to discuss the

initial draft of a *Principal Quality Practice Standard* (PQPS) that was presented by the District

advisory team for our feedback. Input was given on the potential sample evidence for meeting

the requirements of each of the seven dimensions and an updated draft was further presented at

the October 7, 2009 Superintendent's Leadership Meeting. The eventual recommendation dated

November 3, 2009, asked that the *District Principal Quality Practice Standard* (*PQPS*) with

sample evidence be shared with all principals to be used for reflection, development of annual

growth plans and as a basis for discussion between assistant superintendents and principals.

 The Alberta School Leadership Framework (Alberta Education, June 2010), which has

the *Professional Practice Competencies for School Leaders* (PPCSL) as one of its four elements,

identifies its purposes as "promoting innovative and transformative leadership models,

evaluating and defining the role of school leaders, accommodating local priorities and contexts

and extending the traditional concept of 'school'" (p. 3). This document makes reference to

many community-based sites for students' learning, including the home and the larger

community. The changing nature of the school leadership role is acknowledged and attention to

the situation of school leadership is being paid as a result of a large number of retirements of

practicing school leaders, a drop in qualified applicants, research illuminating the impact of

school leaders on the success of students, an increase in accountability for results and the

emergence of models identifying a more balanced approach to management and instructional

leadership responsibilities. Alberta Education identifies the urgency in creating the *Alberta*

School Leadership Framework (ASLF) document and recognizes

> notable differences between the knowledge, skills and attributes required
> of school leaders a generation ago and those required now….school leaders'
> workloads have become arduous as a consequence of increased managerial
> responsibilities related to school-based budgeting, decision-making and
> governance and their greater accountability for results. (p. 5)

School leaders are also being challenged to devote time to instructional leadership and their ability to support, supervise and evaluate teachers is compromised depending on the level of knowledge, skills, confidence and credibility that school leaders have. Knowledge of assessment practices is also critical in order for school leaders to work with teachers. Within this framework document, statistics are also given regarding field data that has been gathered and analyzed. For example, "as of 2008: The average age of school leaders was 48.3 years and 49% were over the age of 50 years; the average age of retirement of school leaders was 57 years; 28% of new leaders had less than eight years of teaching experience with 48% having less than seven; 32% of new school leaders relinquished their role within three years; and 44% of assistant, associate and vice principals had less than four years of leadership experience" (Alberta Education, 2010, pp. 6-7). Implications for school leaders include: (1) far less preparation and teaching/leadership experience than generations past with higher levels of accountability and more diverse community expectations; (2) necessity to devote time to support, supervise and evaluate the increasingly large numbers of new teachers; and (3) school leaders must master the routine duties of the role in order to pro-active and innovative in responding to emergent issues and education reform initiatives (Alberta Education, 2010, pp. 6-7). The *Alberta School Leadership Framework* has recently undergone another revision and the committee is currently preparing the document for the Minister of Education.

On February 2, 2011, the Minister of Education released the Education Business Plan 2011-14 which outlined the three goals of: (1) success for every student; (2) transformed education through collaboration; and (3) success for First Nations, Métis and Inuit students. The Alberta Education Action Agenda 2011-14 was released concurrently with the Business Plan and the very first paragraph states that "we need to transform our early childhood services to grade

12 (ECS-12) education system to make sure Alberta's students are prepared for the opportunities and challenges of the 21st century" (p. 3). The document describes the importance of assisting young Albertans in fulfilling their individual potential and to acquire the attitudes, skills, knowledge and competencies to be successful in tomorrow's economy. There is a definite call to action to strengthen and sustain the economy and this is especially echoed when Alberta Education says that "the continued development of a highly skilled, knowledgeable, innovative and productive workforce is critical to ensuring that Alberta sustains its competitive advantage in a global economy, allowing the province to attract investment, and high value-added industries" (p. 3). The education system is to strengthen the economy and also teach the essential characteristics of citizenship which are fundamental to building communities across Alberta.

In these Alberta Education documents, transformative change is seen to be critical in order to ensure that we are looking carefully at every student's needs and are examining our pedagogical and engagement strategies as well as using research to inform practice. *The Alberta Education Action Agenda* 2011-14 asks all educational stakeholders to model behaviors of commitment to change and improvement and to understand the vision and values, strategic directions, goals and priorities that form the building blocks of change. They define transformational change as a holistic and integrated approach in which "transformative change refers to changing the education system by re-examining student needs, how we teach students, what we teach them, how to better engage communities in educating students and how research can be harnessed to inform change." Throughout the document, a collaborative approach is described which encourages the involvement of all stakeholders to improve our education system. Links to the *Ministry Business Plan* are included within *the Action Agenda* 2011-14, and the stated vision is that "all students are inspired to achieve success and fulfillment as engaged

thinkers and ethical citizens with an entrepreneurial spirit" (p. 6). Values of opportunity, fairness,

citizenship, choice, diversity and excellence are noted and it is evident that the themes of

inclusion, high expectations and preparation for the world of work and post-secondary education

are foremost. The strategic policy directions of (1) rethinking student needs; (2) rethinking what

is being taught in the 21st century; (3) rethinking excellence in teaching students; (4) rethinking

how to engage with communities; and (5) rethinking research, are detailed within the document

and it is promising to see that "rethinking research" is a priority. Alberta Education (2011) states

that:

> Alberta's education community needs to harness the power of research to
> continue to be on the leading edge of educational practice and benefit from
> innovation in other parts of the world…this will enable better evidence-based
> decision making in educational policy and programming. (p. 8).

The "Action On" section of *Alberta Education's Action Agenda 2011-2014* describes six

specific initiatives to support the business plan goals and outlines the government's

comprehensive program for educational change. Within goal two of the plan: "Transformed

education through collaboration," there are initiatives on inclusion, teaching and leadership,

legislation and research. It is within the "Action on teaching and leadership" initiative that the

implementation of the *Alberta School Leadership Framework* will occur, which includes the

Professional Practice Competencies for School Leaders (*PPCSL*) along with improvements to

the *Teaching Quality Standard* (*TQS*) and teacher induction, preparation and professional

learning. Alberta Education (2011) budget documents note that there will be a new Education

Act and that there will be the development of an "Education Research Framework to enhance

research and innovation capacity to improve teaching and learning" (p. 13). It is evident (Pal,

2010), that three major shifts have occurred in the past five years and are reflected in the Alberta

Education policy documents to date: "(1) a renewed appreciation of the special nature of the public sector, of public sector values, and of how public institutions (government, but the para-public sector as well) serve the public interest; (2) a new emphasis on accountability and ethics; and (3) a desire to make government more responsible to public needs" (2010). The final section of the Alberta Education Action Agenda 2011-14 is entitled "Engagement" and asks that: as we – Alberta Education, school boards, educators, business and community stakeholders, parents and students – embark on this journey, the successful transformation of the early childhood to grade twelve education in Alberta will depend on:

- the joint development of a well-planned, student-focused and effectively executed transformation action plan;

- the entire education sector sharing and demonstrating commitment to the transformation process;

- the Ministry and stakeholders sharing leadership and taking initiative within the scope of their respective mandates; and

- all parties being open minded, innovative, and willing to examine traditional assumptions and consider new ways of doing things

  (Alberta Education, 2011, p. 16)

The final pages of the Action Agenda detail the generalized process with which Alberta Education wishes to ensure that change is managed over time and that foundational pieces such as decisions and mechanisms are in place before other work is started. Cultural and organizational change, program change, joint implementation and evaluation are all stated as pivotal in the process. The relationship of the *PPCSL* to the Alberta Education Business Plan is outlined in Figure 2.2

Figure 2.2 Alberta Education Business Plan and situation of the Professional Practice Competencies for School Leaders

Alberta Education Business Plan 2011-14		
Goal #1: Success for every student	Goal #2: Transformed Education through collaboration	Goal #3: Success for FNMI students

↓

Goal #2: Transformed Education Through Collaboration
Action on Teaching and Leadership

↓

Implement the School Leadership Framework to strengthen school leadership capacity	
(1) Professional Practice Competencies	(3) School Leader Induction
(2) School Leader Preparation	(4) School Leader Professional Development

Policy development and implementation in Alberta are located within a bureaucratic and tiered model of responsibility. The "state" or the "central state agency" is Alberta Education and it invites stakeholders to provide information regarding policy and policymaking and encourages collaboration and cooperation in working towards consensus on issues of importance. A message from Alberta's education partners in *the Guide to Support Implementation: Successful Conditions* (Alberta Education, September 2010) states that "successful implementation requires the coordinated efforts of education partners (all those who contribute, either directly or indirectly, to the learning success of every student) working together towards a shared vision of learning success for all students" (preface). It remains to be seen if the collaborative efforts of the contributing education partners/stakeholders: (Alberta Regional Professional Development Consortia (ARPDC), Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA), Alberta School Boards Association (ASBA), Alberta School Councils' Association (ASCA), Association of School Business Officials of Alberta (ASBOA), College of Alberta School Superintendents (CASS), Faculties of

Education, Alberta Universities, Alberta Assessment Consortium (AAC) and Alberta Education),

will be successful in the implementation of education policies, curricula, priorities, programs and

initiatives. The challenge of falling into a transactional rather than transformational vision or

purpose may occur when the neoliberal vision of some stakeholders focused on school

performance and instrumental outcomes (transactional purposes) clashes with those who focus

on holistic education with social as well as instrumental learning outcomes (transformational

purposes). Mapping relationships with regards to the bureaucratic structure as well as the

contributing stakeholder input and discourse identifies the amazingly intricate articulations in

terms of communication and power.

The historical context as illustrated in the previous pages highlight the importance of the

School Leadership Framework (SLF) and the *Professional Practice Competencies for School*

Leaders (PPCSL) as ultimately serving to frame the roles and responsibilities of leaders, and

specifically, principals, in this province. The documents also serve to establish a framework for

preparation, induction and practice which also reflects in the *School Leader Growth, Supervision*

and Evaluation Policy. Of critical importance to this study is the theoretical framework of Social

Cognitive Theory which will be reviewed in the following section. I will examine the literature

regarding the theoretical framework of Bandura's social cognitive theory and its importance in

understanding human behavior across many social contexts. I will present an overview of

Bandura's theory as well as his construct of self-efficacy and then follow with sections regarding

teacher and principal self-efficacy and the research in these areas.

Theoretical Framework: Social Cognitive Theory and Self-Efficacy

Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (1986) was designed in response to his dissatisfaction with the principles of behaviorism and psychoanalysis. Belief in human agency and in people having the power to make things happen; self-directedness; formed the foundation of his theory.

> People bring cognitive productions into being by the intentional exercise
> of personal agency…In social cognitive theory, the self is not split into
> object and agent; rather, in self-reflection and self-influence, individuals are
> simultaneously agent and object." (Bandura, 1997, p. 5).

According to Bandura (1986), people are seen as self-organizing, proactive, self-reflecting and self-regulating and not just reactive organisms. Bandura (1986) argues that people's beliefs are the primary determinant to human behavior and motivation. The dynamic interplay of personal, behavioral and environmental factors is described in a model of triadic reciprocal causation (also known as reciprocal determination). "In this transactional view of self and society, internal personal factors in the form of cognitive, affective, and biological events; behavior; and environmental events all operate as interacting determinants that influence one another bio directionally".

Figure 2.3: Triadic reciprocal causation (Bandura, 1997, p. 6)
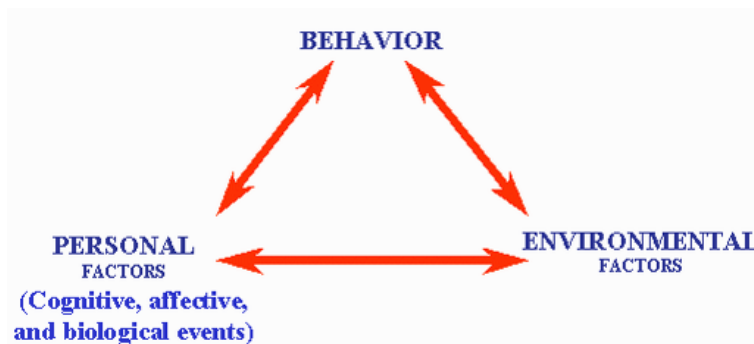
As noted by Bandura (1997)

> People make causal contributions to their own psychosocial functioning
> through mechanisms of personal agency. Among the mechanisms of agency,

none is more central or pervasive than beliefs of personal efficacy. Unless
people believe they can produce desired effects by their actions, they have
little incentive to act. Efficacy belief, therefore, is a major basis of action. (pp. 2-3)

Bandura (1997) defines self-efficacy as "beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the

courses of action required to produce given attainments" (p. 3). Sometimes confused with the

concept of self-esteem, Bandura (1997) differentiates between the terms with stating that:

"Perceived self-efficacy is concerned with judgments of personal capability, whereas self-esteem

is concerned with judgments of self-worth" (p. 11). Self-efficacy theory espouses that "people's

beliefs in their efficacy affect almost everything they do: how they think, motivate themselves,

feel and behave" (Bandura, 1997, p. 19). Bandura (1997) further related that self –efficacy

beliefs influence the course of action people pursue, effort exerted, perseverance in overcoming

obstacles or failures, resiliency to adversity, the extent to which thoughts are self-aiding or self-

hindering when coping with environmental demands, and ultimately the level of

accomplishments realized. Self-efficacy is also a cognitive construct that is task and context

specific (Bandura, 1977).

Bandura (1997) suggests the people with confidence in their abilities tend to approach

difficult tasks with a sense of capability and assuredness and challenges are seen as issues to be

mastered and not avoided. Furthermore, motivation is high in efficacious people and they tend to

have a strong commitment to follow-through, resiliency in continuing with the task when failure

may occur, and reduced stress and depression. The efficacious outlook creates a belief in

capabilities that overcomes many adversities in contrast to those who may doubt their abilities

and tend to stay away from any tasks they deem too difficult or threatening. Focusing on

deficiencies rather than concentrating on their assets, creates feelings of ineptness and lack of

motivation and thus losing faith in them and their abilities results in inability to persevere and

complete the task. Stress and depression may also be by-products with this lack of self-efficacy.

It is important to note that, according to Bandura (1997) self-esteem and perceived self-

efficacies are entirely different things.

> Perceived self-efficacy is concerned with judgments of personal
> capability, whereas self-esteem is concerned with judgments of
> self-worth…in ongoing pursuits, perceived personal efficacy
> predicts the goals people set for themselves and their performance
> attainments, whereas self-esteem affects neither their personal goals
> nor performance. (Bandura, 1997, p. 11)

It is also important to understand, more fully, the construct of self-efficacy, beginning with its

sources.

Sources of self-efficacy

Bandura (1997) set forth four main sources of self-efficacy: mastery experiences,

vicarious experiences provided by social models, social persuasion and physiological and

affective states, from which people partly judge their capability, strength and vulnerability to

dysfunction. The four sources of self-efficacy are as follows:

> *Mastery experiences* is the most effective way of creating a strong sense of efficacy as
> successes build up confidence and belief and failures undermine them. Resiliency with
> efficacy enables a person to persevere through obstacles and hardship and to succeed
> through adversity. Quick rebounds from any setbacks are seen in people with a high
> sense of self-efficacy as their belief in their abilities overrides the doubts they may be
> experiencing.

> The second way of creating and strengthening self-efficacy is through *vicarious
> experiences* provided by social models. The impact of modeling on self-efficacy is
> strongly influenced by whether or not the person perceives a similarity to the model.
> Seeing people perceived to be similar to oneself succeed in the face of obstacles, creates a
> higher belief in the observer that they too would be able to face adversity and succeed.

> *Social persuasion* is a third way that Bandura (1997) outlined as a way of strengthening
> people's beliefs that they have what is necessary to succeed. "It is easier to sustain a
> sense of efficacy, especially when struggling with difficulties, if significant others
> express faith in one's capabilities than if they convey doubts" (p. 101). People who have

been persuaded that they lack the ability to succeed with challenging activities may quickly give up in the face of adversity. People who contribute to the self-efficacy of others will purposefully structure situations to build on strengths and to illuminate the capabilities of those they empower.

The final or fourth source of self-efficacy as detailed by Bandura (1997) is *psychological and affective states*. People rely somewhat on their somatic and emotional states in judging their capabilities. They often interpret their stress and tension as signs of inability to perform as well as their fatigue, aches and pains. Another way of modifying self-beliefs of efficacy according to Bandura (1997) is to "enhance physical status, reduce stress levels and negative emotional proclivities, and correct misinterpretations of bodily states." (p. 106)

"Once formed, these efficacy beliefs contribute to the quality of human functioning in diverse ways. They do so by enlisting cognitive, motivational, affective and decisional processes through which accomplishment is realized" (Bandura, 1997, p. 115). These processes are called "efficacy regulated processes" and are discussed in the next section.

Efficacy-activated processes

There has been substantial research conducted on the four major psychological processes through which self-beliefs of efficacy affect human functioning. These, as outlined by Bandura (1997) are: cognitive processes; motivational processes; affective processes; and selection (decisional) processes.

Cognitive processes

According to Bandura (1997) efficacy beliefs affect thought patterns that can enhance or undermine performance. The stronger the perceived self-efficacy, the more positive forethought is involved in goal setting and the stronger the self-efficacy the higher the goal challenge set and the firmer the commitment. Due to the organization of courses of action in thought processes, people's beliefs in their efficacy shape the types of anticipatory scenarios that they will construct and rehearse. Those with a high sense of efficacy will visualize successful scenarios and not have self-doubt sneak into the picture. The predicting of events and the development of coping

strategies and control mechanisms provide skills that lead to successful resolving of issues. A person with a strong sense of efficacy will face tasks with resolve and optimism and will use good analytic thinking when working towards accomplishment of performance tasks.

Motivational processes

According to Bandura (1997), self-efficacy beliefs play a key role in the self-regulation of motivation. The capability for self-motivation and purposive action is rooted in cognitive activity and people motivate themselves and guide their actions by bringing the projected future into the present through forethought. "By being cognitively represented in the present, conceived future states are converted into current motivation and regulators of behavior" (Bandura, 1997, p. 122). People's motivation is then cognitively generated and they set goals for themselves and design action plans to achieve those goals based on realized outcomes. There are different forms of cognitive motivators and different theories have been built around them. Attribution theory, expectancy-value theory and goal theory are explained further by Bandura (1997) in his published research and books. Motivation based on goals or personal standards is governed by three types of self- influence. These include: self-satisfying and self-dissatisfying reactions to one's performance; perceived self-efficacy for goal attainment; and readjustment of personal goals based on one's progress. Self-efficacy beliefs contribute to motivation in several ways: They determine the goals people set for themselves, how much effort they expend, how long they persevere in the face of difficulties, and their resilience to failures. When faced with obstacles and failures people who harbor self-doubts about their capabilities slacken their efforts or give up quickly. Those who have a strong belief in their capabilities exert greater effort when they fail to master the challenge.

Affective processes

According to Bandura (1997), the self-efficacy mechanism also plays a major role in the self-regulation of affective states and distinguishes "three principle ways in which efficacy beliefs affect the nature and intensity of emotional experiences: through the exercise of personal control *over thought, action* and *affect*" (p. 137). Perceived self-efficacy to exercise control over stressors plays a key role in anxiety arousal. Those with a high sense of efficacy will not be anxious regarding taxing and threatening activities and will be able to control disturbing thoughts to a much greater degree.

Selection processes

As outlined by Bandura (1997), beliefs of personal efficacy can have key roles in shaping the courses lives take by influencing the types of activities and environments people choose to get into as well as the types of environments they produce" (p. 160). By the choices they make, people cultivate different competencies, interests and social networks that determine life courses.

Figure 2.4: Summary of Social Cognitive theory and self-efficacy

<table>
<tr><td>
<p align="center">Social Cognitive Theory</p>
Provides a framework for understanding, predicting, and changing human behavior. The theory identifies human behavior as an interaction of personal factors, behavior, and the environment-Triadic Reciprocal Causation. (Bandura, 1977)

<p align="center">Self-Efficacy</p>
The belief in one's capacities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments.

<p align="center">Sources of Self-Efficacy</p>

(1)Mastery experiences   (2) Vicarious experiences
(3) Social persuasion states   (4) Psychological and affective states

<p align="center">Four Major Psychological Processes: "Efficacy Activated Processes"</p>

(1)Cognitive processes   (2) Motivational processes
(3)Affective processes   (4) Selection processes
</td></tr>
</table>

Outcome Expectancy Theories

When exploring the research question of "how do secondary principals understand the relationship of their beliefs of self-efficacy and their professional practice" I wanted to also include a brief basic description of outcome expectancy theory as it does relate to the construct of self-efficacy. Bandura (1997) discusses the relationship between efficacy beliefs and outcome expectancies and notes that: "beliefs about whether one can produce certain actions (perceived self-efficacy) cannot, by any stretch of the imagination, be considered the same as beliefs about whether actions affect outcomes (locus of control)" (Bandura, 1997, p. 20). According to Bandura (1997), "People take action when they hold efficacy beliefs and outcome expectations that make the effort seem worthwhile. They expect given actions to produce desired outcomes and believe that they can perform those actions" (p. 21) As outlined by Bandura (1997), outcomes arise from actions and how one behaves largely determines the outcomes one experiences. The causal relationship between beliefs of personal efficacy and outcome expectations is depicted in Figure 2.5.

Figure 2.5 Relationship between efficacy beliefs and outcome expectancies

In given domains of functioning, efficacy beliefs vary in level, strength, and generality. The outcomes that flow from a given course of action can take the form of positive or negative physical, social, and self-evaluation effects. (Taken from Bandura, 1997, p. 22)
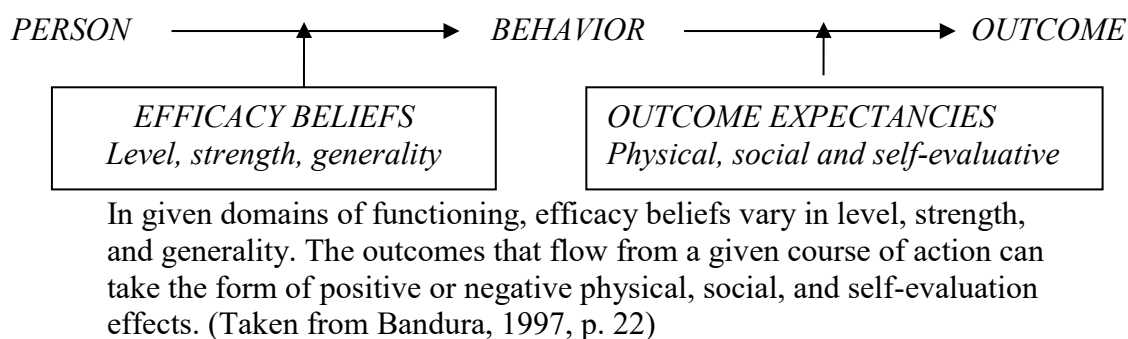
To clarify, an outcome is the consequence of the performance and not the performance itself. As Bandura (1997) explains:

Where performance determines outcomes, efficacy beliefs account for most of the

variance in expected outcomes. When differences in efficacy beliefs are controlled, the outcomes expected for given performances make little or no independent contributions to the prediction of behavior…it is because people see outcomes as contingent on the adequacy of performance, and care about those outcomes, that they rely on outcomes, that they rely on efficacy beliefs in deciding which course of action to pursue and how long to pursue it. (p. 24)

Relationship between Self-Efficacy and Performance

There are also three assessment processes within the construct of self-efficacy "which appear to be involved in forming self-efficacy" (Gist & Mitchell, 1992, p. 189). These are (a) analysis of task requirements; (b) attributional analysis of experience; and (c) assessment of personal and situational resources/constraints. When analyzing task requirements the individual makes inferences about what it will take to perform a task at various levels. If they have completed the task before they will then have a higher interpretive ability. The second form of analysis involves the individual making judgments regarding their level of performance and the final or third form of analysis is an "examination of self and setting by which the individual assesses the availability of specific resources and constraints for performing the task at various levels" (Gist & Mitchell, 1992, p. 190). Personal and situational factors are considered in this analysis. Figure 2.6 illustrates this interplay of factors with regards to performance.

Figure 2.6 Model of self-efficacy-performance relationship
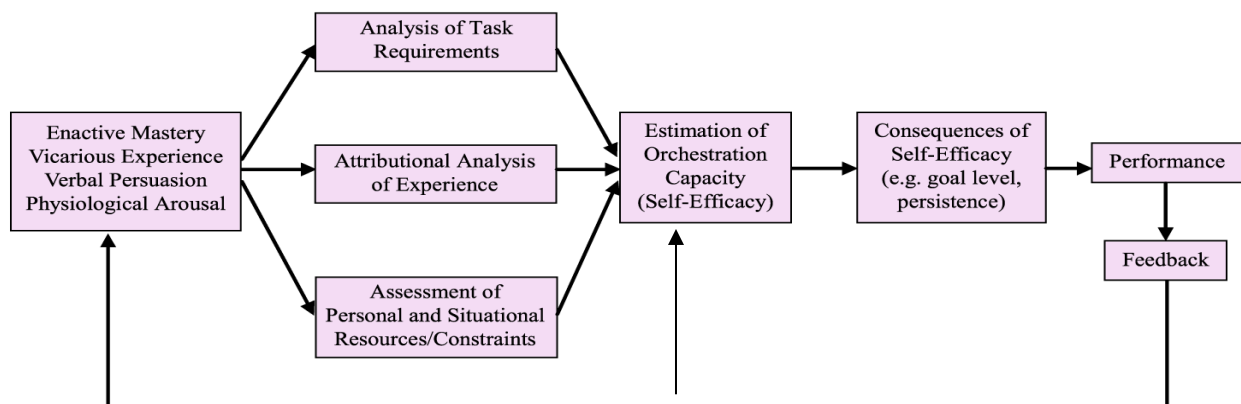
Source: Gist and Mitchell (1992)

Measures of self-efficacy

There have been several measures of self-efficacy developed in the United States with regards to their *Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC)* Standards for School Leaders. *The Principal Self-Efficacy Survey (PSES)* by Smith, Guarino, Strom and Adamas (2006); *Principal's Sense of Efficacy Scale (PSES)* by Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2004) and the *School Administrator Efficacy Scale (SAES)* by McCollum et. al (2006). In this doctoral research I used the *Principal Sense of Self-Efficacy Scale (PSES)* as developed by Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2004) as it is has been proven to be a very reliable and valid measurement tool (Nye, 2008; Smith & Guarino, 2005). Nye (2008) in his doctoral dissertation stated that "although there was no research question addressing instrumentation, this study provided confirmation of reliability and validity of the Principal Self-Efficacy Scale (PSES) –Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2004) – and adds supporting evidence to previous research using the PSES" (p. 91). The eighteen-question scale, based on the ISLLC Standards, (which resemble the PPCSL), incorporate the aspects of instructional leadership, management and moral leadership. The eighteen item survey has also been used in three studies and has proven to be a valid and reliable instrument.

In the following section I will examine the literature on teacher self-efficacy as the importance of the teacher in the classroom and the significance of the principal as instructional leader of teachers is a very important aspect with regards to the effectiveness of the school and ultimately student success.

<div align="center">

Teacher Self-Efficacy

</div>

The school functions as a primary setting for the cultivation of cognitive competencies. Children acquire problem solving and other skills necessary for their participation in the wider

community and society. The ability to nurture and enhance the creative and intellectual capacities of children is largely under the guidance of teachers. "Evidence indicates that teachers' beliefs in their instructional efficacy partly determines how they structure academic activities in their classrooms and shape student evaluations of their intellectual capabilities" (Bandura, 1997, p. 240). As children master their cognitive skills, with the guidance of skillful teachers, they then develop a growing sense of intellectual efficacy. Schools where teachers believe in their power to have each child succeed create a positive school climate that promotes academic achievement regardless of the socioeconomic level, age, gender, etc., of their students. As Bandura (1997) explains:

> Many social factors, apart from the formal instruction, such as peer modeling of cognitive skills, social comparison with the performances of other students, motivational enhancement through goals and positive incentives, and teachers' interpretations of children's successes and failures in ways that reflect favorably or unfavorably on their ability also affect children's judgments of their intellectual efficacy.   (p. 242)

According to Ross and Gray (2006) "teacher efficacy is a set of personal efficacy beliefs that refer to the specific domain of the teachers' professional behavior" (p. 182). With a sense of high teacher efficacy the teacher would believe, and have high expectations, that they would be able to enhance student learning. Many researchers have been interested in teacher efficacy research as it relates to a willingness to try out new ideas (Ross, 1992), a production of higher student achievement in core academic subjects (Ashton & Webb, 1986; Ross, 1992' Ross & Cousins, 1993); and high teacher self-efficacy has seen relationships with improvement of self-esteem (Borton, 1991), self-direction (Ross & Medway, 1981), motivation (Roeser et al, 1993); and increased positive attitudes toward school (Miskel et al, 1983). According to Ross (1998) who conducted numerous studies "Teacher efficacy contributes to achievement because high

efficacy teachers try harder, use management strategies that stimulate student autonomy, attend more closely to low ability student needs, and modify students' ability perceptions" (p. 7).

Gibson and Dembo (1984) developed a 30-item and then subsequently a 16-item measure of teacher efficacy which they utilized in their research.

> Gibson and Dembo (1984) predicted that the teachers who scored high on both teaching efficacy and personal teaching efficacy would be active and assured in their responses to students and that these students would persist longer, provide a greater academic focus in the classroom, and exhibit different types of feedback than teachers who had lower expectations of their ability to influence student learning. Conversely, teachers who scored low on both teaching and personal efficacy were expected to give up readily if they did not get results. Research generally has supported these predictions.
> (Tschannen-Moran, Wollfolk-Hoy & Hoy, 1998, p. 9)

As mentioned above, studies to date see teacher self-efficacy assessed in terms of "sense of personal teaching efficacy" or "sense of teaching efficacy". The first refers to individuals' assessment of their own teacher competence; the second refers to teachers' expectations that teaching can influence student learning. Pajares (1997) also explains that you must be careful with regards to the factors that are being measured with teacher efficacy instruments as they are asked to "express confidence judgments on matters as disparate as classroom management and the influence of family background on student learning and then compare the composite score of these judgments with outcomes such as student achievement indices or varied teaching practices." (p. 40). It is important to remember, as Bandura (1986) cautions with regards to the importance of context, that "researchers should endeavor to assess the teacher beliefs that correspond to the criteria of interest rather than assess those beliefs with a generalized measure and then make the connection with this assessment to specific practices or outcomes." (Guskey & Passaro, 1994, p. 40).

Students' belief in their capabilities to master academic activities affects their aspirations, their level of interest in academic activities, and their academic accomplishments (Bandura, 1997). Classroom structures affect the development of intellectual self-efficacy, in large part, by the relative emphasis structures place on social comparison versus self-comparison appraisal. Self- appraisals of less able students suffer most when the whole group studies the same material and teachers make frequent comparative evaluations. Self-comparison of improvement in a personalized classroom structure raises perceived capability. Teachers have the capacity and the knowledge to create learning environments that best meet the needs of the students and that directly contribute to the modeling and enhancement of efficacy. Cooperative learning structures, in which students work together and help each other, also tend to promote more positive self-evaluations of capability and higher academic attainments than do individualistic or competitive ones (Bandura, 1997).

Woolfolk-Hoy and Burke-Spero (2005) suggested that mastery experiences during student teaching and the first years of teaching influence the development of teacher efficacy. Field experiences, they found, give student teachers opportunities to evaluate their capabilities. Observations of other teachers might serve as "vicarious experience," which is another effective tool for promoting a sense of efficacy. In addition, Bandura (1997) pointed out the importance of feedback and support from environment in the cultivation of efficacy. Effective teachers believe that they can make a difference in children's lives, and they teach in ways that demonstrate this belief. What teachers believe about their capability is a strong predictor of teacher effectiveness. In studies of student teachers, scholars have found that those with a higher sense of efficacy do a better job in presenting lesson plans, drawing students out in discussions, and managing their classrooms during the subsequent course of their training (Saklofske, Michayluk & Randhawa,

1984). According to Gibson and Dembo (1984) teachers who have high self-efficacy, tend to persist in situations that present many challenges and potential failures and tend to use new teaching approaches. Further according to Gibson and Dembo (1984) and mentioned in Bandura's 1997 text:

> Teachers who have a high sense of instructional efficacy devote more classroom time to academic activities, provide students who encounter difficulties with the guidance they need to succeed, and praise their academic accomplishments. In contrast, teachers of low perceived self-efficacy spend more time on non-academic pastimes, readily give up on students if they do not get quick results, and criticize them for failures. Thus teachers who believe strongly in their ability to promote learning create mastery experiences for their students, but those beset by self-doubts about their instructional efficacy construct classroom environments that are likely to undermine students' judgments of their abilities and their cognitive development. (Bandura, 1997, p. 241)

Teachers with a low sense of efficacy tend to hold a custodial orientation that takes a pessimistic view of students' motivation, emphasizes rigid control of classroom behavior, and relies on extrinsic inducements and negative sanctions to get students to study (Woolfolk & Hoy, 1990). "Teachers with a high sense of instructional efficacy also operate on the belief that difficult students are teachable through extra effort and appropriate techniques and they can enlist family supports and overcome negating community influences through effective teaching" (Bandura, 1997, p. 240).

Collectively the work of these scholars noted in this section emphasize that teachers with a high sense of self-efficacy are those who are more likely to persevere in the face of obstacles and are more likely to believe in their abilities to affect change and to work through any issues, with optimism and resilience, in order to create a pathway for student success. I believe that teachers, who have this ability to see the best in every situation and to persevere through any issue with a positive and creative attitude, cannot help but establish a wonderful learning

environment for students and enable and develop a "possibilities" atmosphere for themselves, their students and colleagues.

Although many studies have been conducted with regards to teacher self-efficacy fewer have been undertaken with regards to administration and specifically with respect to principals. The literature with regards to principal self-efficacy will now be explored.

Principal Self-Efficacy

In this section I will be writing with regards to the studies published that have addressed the construct of self-efficacy as it pertains to the role of principal of a school. According to Bandura (1997) a principal's sense of efficacy is a judgment of his or her capabilities to structure a particular course of action in order to produce desired outcomes in the school he or she leads. Self-efficacy research has been primarily focused on teachers with early studies indicating that the construct is strongly related to student achievement (Armour et. al. 1976), and there have been very few studies undertaken that focus on the principal and his/her self-efficacy beliefs. According to Dimmock and Hattie (1996) and Guarino, Strom and Adams (2006), self-efficacy is influential in determining the quality of teaching and learning, and as a valued element in the school restructuring process. Also, as reported by McCormick (2001), self-efficacy beliefs affect the development of functional leadership strategies and the skillful execution of those strategies, and Paglis and Green (2002) and Wood and Bandura (1989) found that these beliefs also influenced analytic strategies direction-setting and subsequent organizational performance of managers. In past studies, (Chemers, Watson & May; 2000; Paglis & Green, 2002), the self-efficacy beliefs of school leaders were also shown to impact the attitude and performance of followers and their commitment to their tasks.

According to Bandura (1986) and Gist and Mitchell (1992), a principal's self-efficacy beliefs have a significant impact on his or her level of aspiration or goal-setting, effort, adaptability and persistence. When a principal believes that he/she is able to structure a particular course of action in order to produce desired outcomes he/she will have a strong sense of self-efficacy and seemingly work to persevere and not settle for less than the best solutions to the intricate issues they face in their work. With a strong sense of self-efficacy principals are more likely to not doubt their capabilities and not give up and settle for any mediocre or "less than the best" solutions for the problems they face. For example, in the study by Osterman and Sullivan (1996), principals with high self-efficacy viewed change as a slow process and were steadfast in their efforts to achieve their goal. According to Lyons and Murphy (1994) when confronted by problems, principals with a high sense of self-efficacy do not interpret their inability to solve problems immediately as failure. Further to this principals tend to "regulate their personal expectations to correspond to conditions, typically remaining confident and calm and keeping their sense of humor, even in difficult situations" (Tschennan &Moran, 2005).

It has been noted by Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2005) and Osterman and Sullivan (1996) that principals with low self-efficacy perceive an inability to control the environments and are less likely to identify appropriate strategies or modify unsuccessful ones. According to Dimock and Hattie (1996) the inability to see possible solutions to problems and an inability to be flexible or develop support is also a characteristic of low self-efficacious principals. It would seem to follow then, and has been detailed by researchers (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2005; Friedman, 1997) that levels of burnout are higher among principals with low self-efficacy and a sense of exhaustion, lack of accomplishment, negative attitudes and lack of empathy towards stakeholders is evident. "A poor sense of self-efficacy, therefore, has been associated with a

sense that one can no longer perform the role of principal" (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2005, p. 6).

According to Bandura (1997) in highly efficacious schools, principals are foremost instructional leaders who seek ways to improve instruction. Academic leadership by the principal serves to build teacher's sense of instructional efficacy. The single highest determinant of success for students in the classroom is the effectiveness and skill of the teacher and thus high expectations for achievement pervade the environment of efficacious schools. The facilitation of group attainment of collective goals involves organizing, directing and motivating the action of others and the self-efficacy beliefs of leaders have indeed been shown to impact the attitude and performance of followers (McCormick, 2001; Wood & Bandura, 1989). According to Lyons and Murphy (1994), principals with low self-efficacy have been found to perceive an inability to control their environment, are more likely to blame others, and are unable to see opportunities to adapt or to develop support. These principals are also more likely to rely on coercive, positional and reward power (Lyons & Murphy, 1994). Pointing to the similarity of efficacy and self-confidence, Leithwood, (2008) and McCormick (2001) claim that leadership self-efficacy or confidence is likely the key cognitive variable regulating leader functioning in a dynamic environment. "Every major review of the leadership literature lists self-confidence as an essential characteristic for effective leadership" (McCormick, 2001, p. 23).

Findings from Smith, Guarino, Strom and Adams (2006) suggested that principal efficacy beliefs tended to increase with the complexity of the job and the size of the school and that the majority of the principals felt very confident in their abilities to facilitate an effective learning environment. Leadership self-efficacy has been related to performance evaluations from peers and supervisors, and the self-efficacy of leaders were also shown to impact the attitudes of the

teachers/followers. Chemers, Watson and May (2000); Paglis and Green (2002); Dimmock and

Hattie, (1996), Woolfolk and Hoy, (2005) have determined that efficacious principals are most

likely to inspire a common sense of purpose amongst staff, have developed an orderly and

positive school climate, have centered the context on student achievement, and have given

flexibility and trust to the teachers in the classroom. When staff holds a collective sense of

efficacy they can promote high levels of academic progress contribute significantly to the

school's academic achievement level (Bandura, 1997). Collective teacher efficacy is a specific

belief in collective capacity within the interactive social system within which they work.

"Collective teacher efficacy refers to the perceptions of the teachers in a school that the efforts of

the faculty as a whole will have a positive effect on students" (Goddard, Hoy & Hoy, 2000, p.

480). As Bandura (1997) stated: "When staff who firmly believe that, by their determined

efforts, students are motivatable and teachable whatever their background, schools heavily

populated with poor and minority students achieve at the highest percentile ranks based on

national norms of language and mathematical competencies" (p. 250). As Bandura (1997)

explains:

> The quality of leadership is often an important contributor to the production
> and maintenance of organizational climates. In the educational domain, strong
> principals excel in their ability to get their staff to work together with a strong
> sense of purpose and belief in their abilities to surmount obstacles to educational
> attainments. Such principals display strong commitments to scholastic attainment
> and seek ways to enhance the instructional function of their schools. (p. 248)

Bandura (1997) speaks about the importance of supporting teachers in their schools and

hopefully contributing therefore to a positive school climate, and is clear in stating that this does

not lead directly to improvement in teacher's self-efficacy. However, as noted by Woolfolk and

Hoy (2004) principals who create a school climate with a strong academic emphasis and serve as

advocates on behalf of teachers' instructional efforts with the central administration enhance

teacher's beliefs in their instructional efficacy. "High expectations and standards for achievement pervade the environment of efficacious schools…..Teachers regard their students as capable of high scholastic attainment, set challenging academic standards for them, and reward behaviors conducive to intellectual development" (Bandura, 1997, p. 244).

There have been several measures developed in the United States with regards to their *Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards for School Leaders*. The *Principal Self-Efficacy Survey (PSES)* by Smith, Guarino, Strom and Adamas (2006); *Principal's Sense of Efficacy Scale (PSES)* by Tshannen-Moran and Gareis (2004) and the *School Administrator Efficacy Scale (SAES)* by McCollum et. al.,(2006). As was stated previously, I will be using the *Principal Sense of Self-Efficacy Scale (PSES)* as developed by Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2004) as it is has been proven to be a very reliable and valid measurement tool (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2004; Nye, 2008).

The next section will explore the studies that have utilized the *Principal Sense of Efficacy Survey (PSES)* (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2004) in their studies as it is the instrument I have chosen for a tool in my study.

Relevant Studies utilizing the Principal Sense of Efficacy Scale (PSES)

"The study of principal self-efficacy had been hampered in the past by the lack of reliable and valid instruments to capture the construct" (Hughes, 2010). In 2004 Tschannen and Gareis published a paper entitled *Principals' Sense of Efficacy: Assessing a Promising Construct.* This particular paper outlined that the empirical studies to date were "enticing" but few and they conducted three mini-studies in "the search for a valid and reliable measure to capture principals' sense of efficacy" (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2004, p. 576). The first study worked with the

series of vignettes that had been adapted from the Dimmock and Hattie (1996) study where nine

chosen vignettes were presented and the participants responded on a ten point scale with their

confidence in solving the issue presented. 97 schools participated and the results were

disappointing from the view of the researchers. Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2004) concluded

that the instrument was of insufficient stability and reliability to prove useful for future study.

The second mini-study was one of measuring principal self-efficacy based on the Goddard

(2000) measure of collective self-efficacy with a 22-item measure. The third mini-study saw the

authors (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2004) develop their own measure of self-efficacy, the

Principal Sense of Efficacy Scale (PSES), adapted from the *Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale*

(TSES) developed by Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001). 50 initial items were generated and a

factor analysis eventually reduced the survey to 18 items and three subscales emerged –

management, instructional leadership and moral leadership.

The *PSES* included a 9-point rating scale and based on the findings from the third mini-

study the authors recommended further testing of the instrument. The results from a selected

sample of 558 principals from across the state of Virginia found that gender, race and years of

administrative experience were largely insignificant with regards to principal sense of efficacy;

quality and utility of principal preparation had the strongest relationship to principal self-efficacy

of all demographic and context variables; the availability of teaching materials and financial

resources was the strongest context variable in relation to principals' sense of efficacy; and

principal self-efficacy was strongly correlated with teacher support with parent/student support

also positively correlated. Overall, principal preparation, resources, and interpersonal support

played the most important role in cultivating a principal's belief that they can make a difference.

Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2004) noted that the *PSES* was the most promising instrument

studied and they suggested future studies including factor analysis to see if the results were stable across other populations.

Aderhold (2005) used the *PSES* instrument in studying the relationship between South Dakota elementary school principals' self-efficacy and student achievement in reading, with instructional leadership behaviors as well as personal and demographic characteristics being considered. 165 principals were surveyed and the most significant finding was the correlation between perceived instructional leadership self-efficacy and perceived leadership behaviors or practice. A factor analysis of the *PSES* was not done in this study and the results cannot be generalized to secondary school principals as only elementary principals were studied. No statistically significant relationship was found regarding any of the subscales of the *PSES* (management, instructional leadership and moral leadership) and there was no statistically significant relationship between principal efficacy and reading achievement. There was a noted relationship between principal sense of self-efficacy and class size with higher self-efficacy scores noted for principals in schools with larger class sizes.

Lehman (2007) found, in the study of 316 principals in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, that high principal self-efficacy beliefs were associated with higher student achievement in reading in a sample of fifth grade students. As well, it was noted that students with high proportions of free and reduced lunch eligibility and reduced-price lunch, tended to have principals with higher self-efficacy although the authors cautioned interpretation and urged more research in this area. Other findings by studies using the *PSES* have found that there is not a strong relationship between principals' sense of efficacy beliefs and school effectiveness (Lovell, 2009). Lovell (2009) studied 387 school administrators from the state of Georgia and with regard to statistical findings; six hypotheses related to principal effectiveness were tested. "Statistical significance

was obtained in regard to principals' years of experience and in regard to whether or not a principal worked in a school that met the Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) or not" (Lovell, 2009, p. 75). Lovell (2009) urged researchers to continue the study of principal sense of efficacy at the secondary level.

Santamaria (2008) examined the *No Child Left Behind Program (NCLB)* and explored the relationship between 695 California principals' perceptions of their levels of self-efficacy and environmental influences, such as Program Improvement. Findings from the study were that principals in schools with a program for school improvement (NCLB school programs) had significantly lower perceptions of their self-efficacy then principals in non-program improvement schools, and remaining in those schools targeted for improvement had a negative effect on those principals who were over fifty years of age and had less than six years of experience…and age was the strongest negative predictor of a principals' sense of self efficacy (Santamaria, 2008). Santamaria's (2008) indication of the significance of age, number of years of educational experience, program improvement status, school level, and percentage of English learners as predictors of principal efficacy are in contrast to previous studies that have examined many of the same variables. Santamaria (2008) does note that "the four factors of sample size, response bias, response rate, and total amount of explained variance served in limiting the generalizability of the findings produced from the study" (p. 72).

Nye (2008) in his dissertation entitled "*Principal's Leadership Beliefs: Are Personal and Environmental Influences Related to Self-efficacy*?" utilized the PSES instrument and electronically distributed it to a random sample of 965 Texas public school principals with 289 principals completing the study. Nye (2008) provided further support for the reliability and validity of the *PSES* and out of 12 variables examined he found that a statistically significant

relationship was found for gender, years of experience, level, SES, parental involvement, and student discipline. "However, all six of the statistically significant variables had a small effect size indicating limited practical significance" (Nye, 2008, p. i) and Nye (2008) further stated that "the results of this study support the need for continued research of principal self-efficacy beliefs" (p. i).

In summary, there have been several studies that utilized the *PSES* scale in their research methodology and have highlighted empirical data on the relationship of demographic variables to high levels of efficacy. The results have not been consistent throughout previous research with conflicting findings with regards to gender, years of experience as a teacher or principal, level of education, etc. According to Smith et. al (2005) and Nye (2008) females have a higher sense of self-efficacy then males yet Lyons (1994), Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2004, 2005), and Aderhold (2005) all found no relationship between gender and sense of self-efficacy. Aderhold (2005) and Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2004, 2005) also found that there was no statistical relationship between years of teaching and principal experience and Lyons (1994) found lower reported self-efficacy in those principals with the most experience while Nye (2008) found a "statistically positive relationship with self-efficacy in instructional leadership" (p. 89). Santamaria (2008) found that age was the strongest negative predictor of a principal's sense of self-efficacy Aderhold (2005), Lehman (2007) and Nye (2008) also found that the principals who reported having the highest proportion of economically disadvantaged students also had the highest mean self-efficacy scores for instructional leadership yet Tschannen-Moren and Gareis (2004) found no significant relationship when analyzing *SES*.

The inconsistency with regards to findings in the above-mentioned studies encouraged me to pursue this study in order that I may see what the Alberta context would illuminate with regards to the factors studied.

Significance of the Literature

This literature review supported my personal goal of lifelong pursuit of continuous improvement. All course work and literature review during my doctoral journey added immensely to my professional practice. I know that I will continue to read and learn and enrich my life and practice. I know that I will continue to find studies that have utilized or mentioned the construct of self-efficacy and thus I also am confirmed in the knowledge that this is a very important construct that will bring new dimensions to the study of the principalship. The construct of self-efficacy, which lies within the theoretical framework of social cognitive theory, has the potential to support the development of guidelines and procedures with regards to the recruitment, retention and professional development of principals.

There is still much to be learned about self-efficacy as there have been extensive studies regarding student and teacher self-efficacy but relatively few studies regarding the principal, especially in Canada. Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2004) have developed the *Principal Sense of Efficacy Scale (PSES)* that has been determined to be reliable and valid but since it has only been used in a handful of studies to date, there have been no clear patterns established and further research is required. Although the *PSES* reflects closely the main elements in the *PPCSL* it may be desirable to create an Albertan scale to reflect the social and cultural contexts of school in Canada. Researchers have identified factors that influence self-efficacy but there have generally been mixed results due to the use of various instruments and even inconsistencies when

the same instrument is used. Nye (2008) identified the importance of using the same leadership dimensions, preferably those of Tshannen-Moran & Gareis (2004) of management, instructional leadership and moral leadership to establish some consistencies in research.

As studies continue to delve into the construct of self-efficacy I believe there will be more instruments developed that will be utilized in specific contexts. I also believe that this study with qualitative semi-structured interviews complimented by the use of the *PSES* and demographic and contextual factors will further enrich the knowledge regarding the factors that actually may influence how to explain what may create or contribute to more effective principals. The results from this interpretive qualitative case study will serve to add to the growing knowledge base with regards to the factors that may influence principal self-efficacy and principal effectiveness.

Preliminary Conceptual Framework

When I first began this study I had a very simplistic conceptualization of how I believed beliefs of self-efficacy would relate to professional practice of secondary school principals. Figure 2.7 is a visual representation or conceptual framework that I had envisioned at the beginning of this research study. In Chapter 6, figure 6.1, I present the revised conceptual framework.

Figure 2.7 Initial Conceptualization Guiding the Research

51
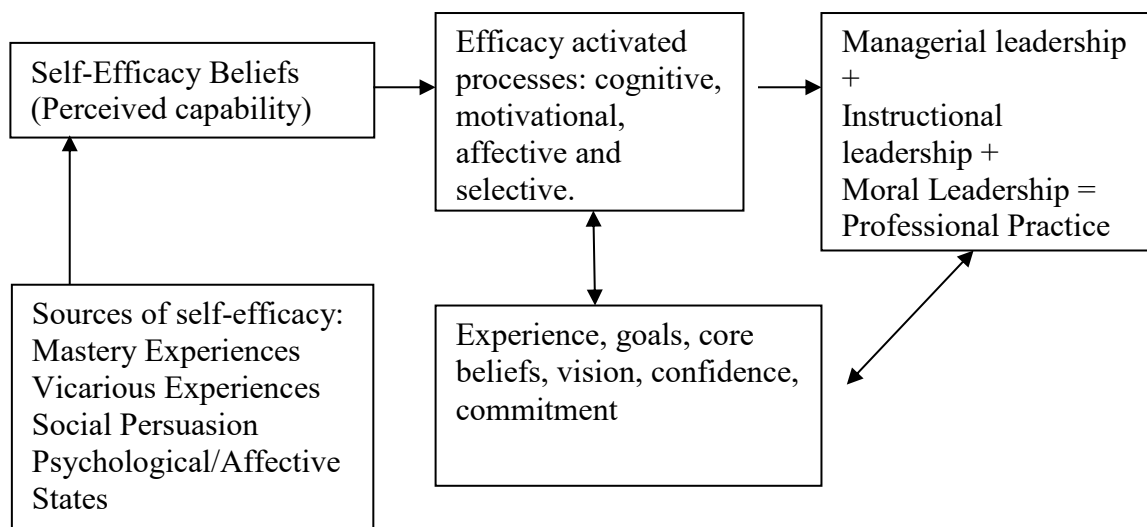
According to Miles and Huberman (2004) "a display is an organized, compressed assembly of information that permits conclusion drawing and action." (p. 11). They further speak about conceptual frameworks as "explaining, either graphically or in narrative form, the main things to be studied – the key factors, constructs or variables –- and the presumed relationships among them…Frameworks can be rudimentary, or elaborate, theory-driven or commonsensical, descriptive or causal." (Miles & Huberman, 2004, p. 18).

Summary

This chapter has served as a review of the historical context of the *Professional Practice Competencies for School Leaders (PPCSL)* which is in a draft form but expected to be the document for standards of practice for the school leaders in Alberta. This review will serve to situate my research within the province of Alberta and frame the accountability and school improvement mandate that Alberta Education has established most recently with their *Alberta School Leadership Framework (SLF)* which contains the *PPCSL*. My theoretical framework of Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory as well as the construct of self-efficacy and some of the existing theoretical and empirical literature on self-efficacy of teachers and school principals and the specific studies employing *the Principal Sense of Efficacy Scale (PSES)* has also been detailed. I have also presented a preliminary conceptual framework that has helped to diagrammatically represent my research to identify the key entities in my study.

Chapter 3 details the particulars of the research design and methodology for the current study.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

This chapter begins with an identification and explanation of the research paradigm and continues with an explanation of my qualitative case study design, participant selection and sample as well as information regarding data collection and analysis methods. Subsequently I will speak about the ethical considerations, delimitations and limitations and the implications of my research.

Research Paradigm

The design or methodology is the structure of any scholarly study. It gives direction and systematizes the research and thus is an action plan or detail of the journey. I conducted this research in the province of Alberta as it is an ideal place to investigate principal self-efficacy with regards to the *Principal Quality Practice Guideline* (Alberta Education, 2009) given the historical and policy framework. To address the question I have employed a qualitative collective case study approach based on the work of Cresswell (2009), Merriam (2009), Mertens (2010), and Stake (2005), demographic data was gathered to serve in analysis of the cases. I utilized the Principal Sense of Self-Efficacy Scale (PSES) (Tschannen-Moran& Gareis, 2004) to focus the participants on their self-efficacy beliefs and further conversation regarding the questions posed during the follow-up semi-structured interview.

"A paradigm is a way of looking at the world. It is composed of certain philosophical assumptions that guide and direct thinking and action." (Mertens, 2010, p.7). I have found it useful to consult various texts (Cresswell, 2009; Marriam, 2009; Mertens, 2010; Stake, 2010) in order to write this overview of my epistemological, ontological and methodological assumptions

underpinning this study and my role as a researcher. I have come to an understanding of my

study being situated within the constructivist or interpretivist paradigm. As Merriam (2009)

explains:

> Interpretive research, which is where qualitative research is most often located,
> assumes that reality is socially constructed, that is, there is no single, observable
> reality. Rather there are multiple realities or interpretations of a single event.
> Researchers do not "find" knowledge, they construct it. Constructivism is a term
> often used interchangeably with interpretivism. (pp. 8-9)

The interpretivist paradigm therefore acknowledges that there is an active construction of

knowledge by those involved in the research process and that reality is socially constructed.

> Therefore multiple mental constructions can be apprehended, some of which
> may be in conflict with each other, and perceptions of reality may change
> throughout the process of study… researchers go one step further by rejecting
> the notion that there is an objective reality that can be known and take the stance
> that the researcher's goal is to understand the multiple constructions of meaning
> and knowledge. (Mertens, 2010, p. 18).

Throughout this study and analysis of the cases I sought to understand the participant's multiple

social constructions of meaning and knowledge as they related to their understandings of their

personal beliefs of self-efficacy and their professional practice. I was very aware that each

participant would be influenced by cultural, historical, moral and political values and thus I

endeavored to develop an understanding of the world from their perspective. I also understood

that in my role as researcher I was immersed in the study and "served as an instrument for data

collection, analysis and synthesis (Cresswell, 2009) and thus my interpretations would be shaped

by my own values and beliefs. Cresswell (2009) explains that:

> Researchers recognize that their own backgrounds shape their interpretations
> and they position themselves in the research to acknowledge how their
> interpretation flows from their personal, cultural and historical experiences.
> The researchers intent is to make sense of (or interpret) the meanings others
> have about the world. Rather than starting with a theory (as in postpositivism),
> inquirers generate or inductively develop a theory or pattern of meaning.
> (Cresswell, 2009, p. 8)

It is important that I be aware of my philosophical assumptions and be able to clearly articulate these in this qualitative collective case study. Crotty (1998) set forth that there are four major elements in designing any study which are illustrated in Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1 Four Levels for Development a Research Study

Paradigm worldview
 (beliefs, e.g., epistemology, ontology)

     Theoretical lens
     (e.g., feminist, racial, social science theories)

          Methodological approach
          (e.g., ethnography, experiment, mixed methods)

               Methods of data collection
               (e.g., interviews, checklists, instruments)
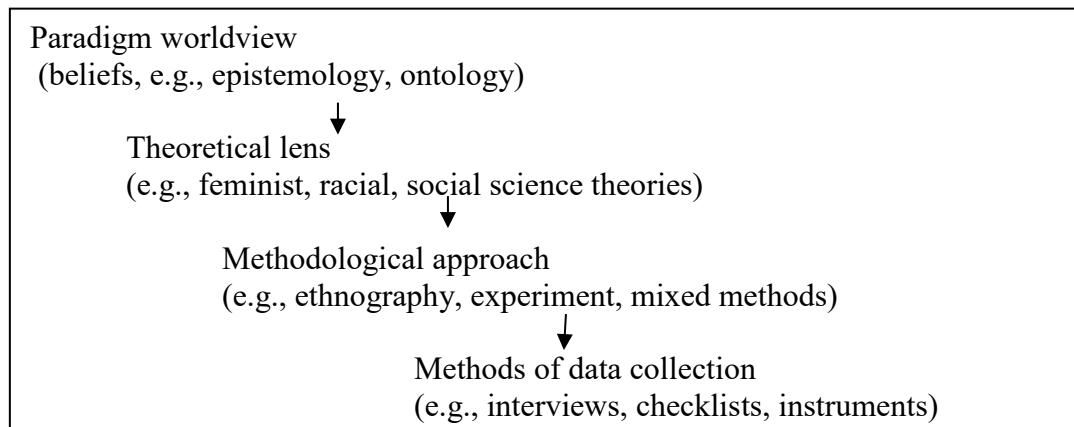
The theoretical lens from which I am viewing this study is Bandura's social cognitive theory and the construct of self-efficacy. "Perceived self-efficacy refers to beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments" (Bandura, 1997, p.3). I find that I am very centered in this theory and it provided the direction for my study. The use of a validated and reliable instrument in the *Principal Sense of Efficacy Scale (PSES)* as the ice-breaker and focus instrument, as well as the subsequent interviews which delve further into the three subscales of the *PSES*, serve to frame this research study.

In summary it is important to note the ontological and epistemological assumptions underpinning this research study include:

- Meanings are constructed by human beings as they engage with the world they are interpreting.
- Humans engage with their world and make sense of it based on their historical and social perspectives – we are all born into a world of meaning bestowed upon us by our culture. Thus qualitative researchers seek to understand the context or setting of the participants through

visiting this context and gathering information personally. They also
interpret what they find, an interpretation shaped by the researchers
own experiences and background.
- The basic generation of meaning is always social, arising in and out of
interaction with the human community. The process of qualitative research
is largely inductive, with the inquirer generating meaning from the data
collected in the field. (Crotty, 1998)

Qualitative studies are predominant in the interpretivist paradigm and this study is no exception.

Qualitative Case Study Research Design

I have identified the research problem, decided on a case study approach, and reflected on

the philosophical and theoretical foundations of this study, and now will outline the specific

design that best fits the problem and the research questions in this study.

"A case study is an in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system." (Merriam,

2009, p. 40). Researchers have created some confusion in definition of the case study in that they

speak of both the unit of study and the product of the investigation. Yin (2008) defines case

study in terms of the process of empirical inquiry and Stake (2005) focuses on pinpointing the

unit of study- the case. Thus researchers have framed case study as an end product of field-

oriented research, and both a strategy and method. I agree with Merriam (2009) and Stake (1995)

that "the single most defining characteristic of case study research lies in delimiting the object of

the study, the case." (Merriam, 2009, p. 40). It is a "choice of what is to be studied" (Stake,

2005, p. 443) and I have chosen to study six different principals and then do a cross case analysis

to make some comparisons and contrasts. I chose to situate case study, as Mertens (2010) does,

as one option in qualitative research strategy choices. My decision to focus on qualitative case

study is my interest in "insight, discovery and interpretation rather than hypothesis testing."

(Merriam, 2009, p. 42). I will define case study according to Stake (1995) where he outlines that

case studies are a strategy of inquiry in which the researcher explores in depth a program, event, activity, process or one or more individuals. Cases are bounded by time and activity and researchers collect detailed information using a variety of data collection procedures over a sustained period of time. The term "collective case study" was also adopted from Stake (1995) in that I am "studying several cases within the same project." (p. 169). Within this study there is also some comparisons made with regards to the collection of case studies and thus it may also be said that this study is also comparative in nature.

Researchers from different philosophical worldviews have embraced case study. Yin (2009) who is a post-positivist and Merriam (2009), an interpretivist, have both strongly supported this research strategy choice when wishing to seek a greater understanding of individual, group, organizational, social, political and related phenomenon. "The case study method allows investigators to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events-such as individual life cycles, small group behavior, organizational and managerial processes, neighborhood change, school performance, international relations and the management of industries." (Yin, 2009, p. 4)

In terms of rationale for choosing case study for a research design, Merriam (2009) speaks of case studies as being anchored in real life and that they offer "insights and illuminate meanings that expand its readers' experiences acting as tentative hypotheses that help structure future research; hence case study plays an important role in advancing a field's knowledge. (p. 51)

Although the issue of generalizability is present, Yin (2009) suggests that "much can be learned from a particular case." (p. 51). Through the narrative description provided to the reader, the researcher can learn vicariously from an encounter (Stake, 2009).

> Shields (2007) also argues for qualitative case studies in saying that "the strength of qualitative approaches is that they account for and include difference – ideologically, epistemologically, methodologically-and most importantly, humanly. They do not attempt to eliminate what cannot be discounted. They do not attempt to simplify what cannot be simplified. Thus, it is precisely because case study includes paradoxes and acknowledges that there are no simple answers, that it can and should qualify as the gold standard."
> (From: Merriam, 2009, pp. 52-53)

Perhaps the greatest concern regarding case study has been a perceived lack of rigor "in the collection, construction and analysis of empirical materials that give rise to the study." (Merriam,2009, p. 52). Further to this perceived limitation, case study research has also come under attack for issues involving reliability, validity and generalizability.

> Case studies, like experiments, are generalizable to theoretical propositions and not to populations or universe. In this sense, the case study, like the experiment, does not represent a "sample" and in doing a case study, your goal will be to expand and generalize theories (analytic generalization) and not to enumerate frequencies (statistical generalization).   (Yin, 2009, p. 15)

Two other cited limitations or criticism of case study research are that they "take too long and result in massive, unreadable documents" (Yin, 2009, p. 15) and that case study research is not a true experiment which can lead to the establishment of causal relationships. Yin (2009) offers a counter to these criticisms in saying that "this complaint may be appropriate given the way case studies have been done in the past, but it is not necessarily the way it may be done in the future." (p. 15). I agree with this statement as I did not find that the documents were "massive" if organized in a manageable, systematic manner. With regards to criticism of the inability to make any causal relationship justifications, "that is whether a particular "treatment" has been

efficacious in producing a particular "effect" (Yin, 2009, p. 16), I echo the sentiment that case studies offer important evidence to compliment experiments.

In Chapter 17 of the *Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research* edited by Denzin & Lincoln (2007), Brent Flyvbjerg presented five misunderstandings about case study research that were restated as benefits to case study research which are presented in Table 3.1. This misunderstanding and restatement assisted me in achieving clarity in the value of case study. Also, included within his article, Flyvbjerg (2007) presented a complementarity of case studies and statistical methods (Table 3.2) that served to illustrate their compatibility as a partnership. This illuminates the possibility for mixed methods design to be utilized when involving case study and it also served to summarize for me the strengths and weaknesses of case study research.

Table 3.1: Case Study misunderstandings and statements clarifying benefits

Misunderstanding	Restatement
1. General knowledge is more valuable than context-specific knowledge.	Universals can't be found in the study of human affairs. Context-dependent knowledge is more valuable.
2. One can't generalize from a single case so a single case doesn't add to scientific development.	Formal generalization Is overvalued as a source of scientific development; the force of a single example is underestimated.
3. The case study is most useful in the first phase of a research process; used for generating hypotheses.	The case study is useful for both generating and testing of hypotheses but is not limited to those activities.
4. The case study confirms the researcher's preconceived notions.	There is no greater bias in case study toward confirming preconceived notions than other forms of research.
5. It is difficult to summarize case studies into general propositions and theories.	Difficulty in summarizing case studies is due to properties of the reality studied, not in the research method.

Source: Flyvbjerg (2007)

Table 3.2 Complementarity of Case Studies and Statistical Methods

STRENGTHS	CASE STUDIES	STATISTICAL METHODS
	Depth	Breadth
	High conceptual validity	Understanding how widespread a phenomenon is across a population
	Understanding of context and process	Measures of correlation for population of cases
	Understanding of what causes a phenomenon, linking causes and outcomes	Establishment of probabilistic levels of confidence.
	Fostering new hypotheses and new research questions.	
WEAKNESSES	Selection bias may overstate or understate relationship	Conceptual sketching, by grouping together dissimilar cases to get larger samples.
	Weak understanding of occurrence in population of phenomena under study.	Weak understanding of context, process and causal mechanisms.
	Statistical significance often unknown or unclear	Correlation does not imply causation
		Weak mechanisms for fostering new hypotheses.

Source: (Denzin & Lincoln, 2007, p. 314)

I have also used a collective case study approach in my research so that I may "study a number of cases to investigate a phenomenon, population or general condition." (Merriam,2009, p. 48). It is important to understand that "case study research is not sampling research", (Stake, 1995, p. 4), and as such we concentrate on each case and do not "study a case primarily to understand other cases." (Stake, 1995, p. 4). Using this collective case study approach enabled me to analyze each case and then do a further cross-case analysis to develop themes that emerged which therefore addressed my research question.

Participant Selection and Sample

The participants in this study were identified by using a purposeful convenience sampling technique, which assumes that sampling is selected "in a nonrandom manner, based on member characteristics relevant to the research problems" (Wiersma, 2000, p. 459). Following ethics approval I was in contact with the research supervisors in two of the school divisions and they gave me permission from the Superintendent to proceed with contacting principals in their high schools. One school division declined participation citing an enormity of current issues and mandates. The six principals who agreed to participate in my study were contacted by e-mail and sent the "Information Letter for Principals" (Appendix C), the "Letter of Consent" (Appendix D) and a copy of the "*Principal Sense of Efficacy Scale*" (Appendix A). Permission was also obtained for use of the *PSES* survey (Principal Questionnaire) designed by Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2004). The six principals were selected on the basis of gender (three male and three female), years of service (over 4 years of service as a confirmed principal), and school context (high school). I wanted to have equal representation of male and female as well as have over four years of experience so that principals were fairly familiar with the school district and the operations of the school. High schools were selected for comparison purposes. Patton (1990) believed that "the determination of the sample size is very dependent on the particular inquiry and what will be useful to the researcher and community and what is feasible in the particular circumstance." (p. 525). I deemed the sample size as a good one for the purpose of my study in order to delve deeply into the interview questions and have a multiplicity of perspectives to draw upon in the analysis. Data collected through the six interviews afforded for a variety of interpretation.

Data Collection

Cresswell and Clark (2011) claim that the basic idea of collecting data in any research study is to gather information to address the question being asked in the study. In each interview I had the participants complete a demographic data sheet with regards to personal and school characteristics; followed by the presentation and completion of the *Principal Sense of Efficacy Scale (PSES)*. Subsequently the participants were each asked the same eight semi-structured interview questions. The interviews averaged one and a half to two hours in length and in all instances the setting was the participant's office in their respective high schools. All sections of the interview were completed in the one visit to each participant's school.

Survey Instrument

The *Principal Sense of Efficacy Scale (PSES)* developed by Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2004) (Appendix A) was selected as the instrument for this study. The authors based their questions largely on the Interstate *School Leader Licensure Consortium (ISLLC Standards*) and input from a panel of experts from various leadership positions in the field. *The Professional Practice Competencies for School Leaders (PPCSL)* (Appendix B) closely resembles the *Interstate School Leader Licensure Consortium* (ISLLC) document and thus I felt that this also served to strengthen my reasons for utilizing this instrument. The 18-item measure assesses the principal's self-perception of his or her ability to accomplish various aspects of school leadership and the "written directions direct the participants to "respond to each of the questions by considering the combination of your current ability, resources, and opportunity to do each of the following in your present position" (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2004, p. 582). Each of the items has the same sentence stem at the beginning which says "In your current role as a principal, to what extent can you…" and a nine point scale is used: (1=none at all; 3=very little;

5=some degree; 7=quite a bit; and 9=a great deal. Three sub scales are located within the PSES with six items or questions in each. The subscales are: Efficacy for management; efficacy for instructional leadership and efficacy for moral leadership. A study by Nye (2008) provided further confirmation of the reliability and validity of the *PSES* and thus supports the use of the *Principal Sense of Efficacy Scale (PSES)* as a measure. See Appendix A for the *Principal Sense of Efficacy Scale (PSES).*

For my purposes this survey tool was used as to initially ascertain the participants' basic level of self-efficacy and then we debriefed through questions relating to the survey and their answers. The principals were then able to have a preliminary focus on questions (the 18 items in the *PSES*) that would assist them when reflecting on their managerial, instructional and moral leadership roles and their relation to their beliefs of self-efficacy. The use of the *PSES* assisted me in creating an anticipatory set in which the participants were able to reflect on their practice and somewhat prepare for the questions that were to follow.

Interviews

Stake (1995) asserts that:

> Qualitative researchers take pride in discovering and portraying
> the multiple views of a case. The interview is the main road to
> multiple realities.   (Stake, 1995, p. 64)

Interviews occurred during February and March of 2014. Six high school principals were the participants in the face-to-face, in-depth interviews, lasting approximately one and a half to two hours. The demographic questions asked at the onset of the interview as well as at the completion of the *PSES (Principal Sense of Efficacy Scale)* enabled me to create the following participant profile summary chart. More detailed descriptions of the participants and their context is included in Chapter 4

Table 3.3 Participant Profiles

	Principal Andrews Ambrose School	Principal Baker Brockton School	Principal Clements Caswell School	Principal Denton Dungren School	Principal Ellis Ekert School	Principal Fallow Freeborn School
Gender	M	M	M	F	F	F
Age	56	61	66	54	58	54
Ethnicity	Caucasian	Caucasian	Caucasian	Caucasian	Caucasian	Caucasian
Years in	7	15	8	11	11.5	17
Highest degree	BPE/Ed after degree and supplemental courses	BSC, BEd, Masters course work	MEd	MEd – Policy studies	MEd-Secondary studies	BA with BEd after degree
Type of school	Public	Public	Public	Public	Public	Public
School Type	Suburban	Urban	Suburban	Urban	Urban	Urban
# of students	950	1040	1187	1170	1100	2400
# of teachers	45	45	62	55	52	115
Grade levels	High (10-12)	High (10-12)	High (10-12)	High (10-12)	High (10-12)	High (10-12)
Prep course/ training	University credit short admin course-8 years ago	LED and PED	No	PED	PED/1st year principal grp.	PED/Intensive class/
Mentorship	Yes-medium	Yes-high	Yes-High with executive coaching certification	Yes - small	Yes-medium	Yes-extensive
*PSES overall	7.5	8.44	6.89	6.83	7.78	8.28
*PSES Management	6.83	8.33	6.33	6.00	6.50	7.33
*PSES Instructional Leadership	8.17	8.5	8.00	6.83	8.33	8.67
*PSES Moral Leadership	7.50	8.5	7.4 (one question not answered)	7.33	7.12	8.67

*Principal Sense of Efficacy Scale (PSES) mean scores

The interviews were taped as well as I took notes throughout. Participants were asked to

consent to the use of the audio-recorder and I personally transcribed each interview and sent a

copy to each participant to review and provide feedback on any concerns or omissions. All

participants responded favorably and no changes were requested. The semi-structured interviews afforded me the opportunity to have flexibility for exploration and inquiry into the unique narrative of each participant. The interview questions were designed with the purpose of the study and research question in mind and identified the three factors of managerial, instructional and moral leadership. The eight questions were designed in two sections: (a) to firstly explore the participants understanding of their personal sense of self-efficacy, the *PPCSL (Professional Practice Competencies for School Leaders),* and relationships between the two; and (b) to talk about their managerial, instructional and moral leadership roles as well as essential supports that were required in these roles. The eight questions were as follows:

1. What does the term self-efficacy mean to you?

2. What is your reaction after completing the *PSES* survey?

3. How familiar are you with the *PPCSL (Professional Practice Competencies of School Leaders*, 2011) and how has this competency document affected your life as a principal?

4. How do you see the *PSES* relating to your professional practice?

5. Would you please reflect on your <u>management role</u> and share with me your beliefs and feelings with regards to the relationship of your self-efficacy beliefs and your professional practice regarding management?

6. Would you please reflect on your <u>instructional leadership role</u> and share with me your beliefs and feelings with regards to the relationship of your self-efficacy beliefs and your professional practice regarding instructional leadership?

7. Would you please reflect on your <u>moral leadership role</u> within your school and share with me your beliefs and feelings with regards to the relationship of your self-efficacy beliefs and your professional practice regarding moral leadership?

8. What supports do you see as essential to you being an effective principal in meeting your managerial, instructional leadership and moral leadership roles and responsibilities (competencies)?

Due to my role in this qualitative study as the researcher and instrument for collecting the data, I was very aware of my own values, assumptions, beliefs and biases and monitoring these as I progressed through my study. Through my research journal and notes in the margins of transcribed interview, I constantly reflected in order to more adequately understand the effect and impact on this study's data and interpretations.

Researcher's Journal

A researcher's journal was kept during this experience in which I recorded my reflections and thoughts and continued to locate myself in the research journey. Field notes, conversations, interviews, comments were all written in my journal so that I could experience the journey as a participant and be able to reflect back. The journal comprised an important piece of data where I wrote my reflections on the journey through the interview process, the analysis phase of the study and ultimately the interpretations and discovery of themes and conceptual framework.

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Data Analysis

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Although a qualitative approach is the overarching framework associated with this study in the participant's understanding of their beliefs of self-efficacy and their relationship to professional practice, I found that the use of the *PSES (Principal Sense of Efficacy Scale),* a quantitative measure, served as a focus and information gathering tool. The PSES assisted the participants in centering their attention on the concept of self-efficacy and their professional competencies with the reflection on the 18 item scale and subsequent responses to each. The responses from the *PSES* were helpful in the transition to the subsequent interview question period as well as allowing the participants to review their answers within the three categories or roles on the PSES of managerial, instructional and moral leadership. Analysis occurred on an on-

going basis during this study as the process of interviewing, transcribing and reflecting

constantly gave rise to the evidence of themes and categories. When researching the process of

data analysis I found that Cresswell (2009) has diagrammatically conceptualized the steps very

nicely for me. (Figure 3.2). Although the figure is linear, I see the process, as does Cresswell

(2009) as very much interactive in nature. He states that "the figure suggests a linear,

hierarchical approach building from the bottom to the top, but I see it as more interactive in

practice; the various stages are interrelated and not always visited in the order presented." (p.

185).

Figure 3.2 Data Analysis in Qualitative Research
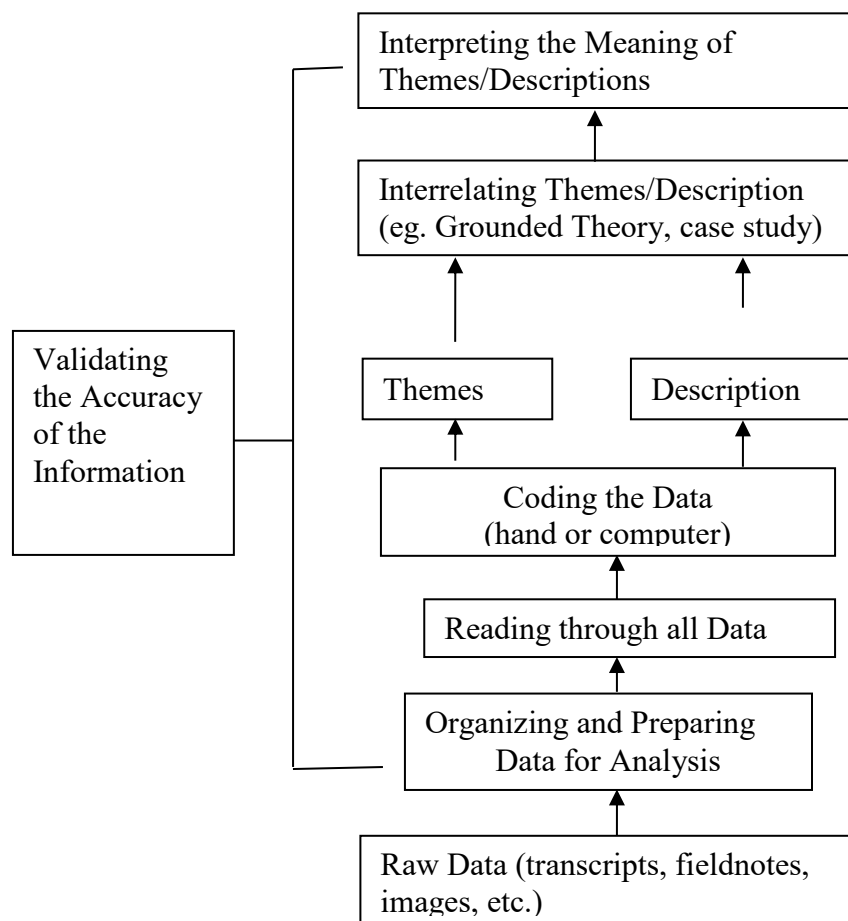
(Cresswell, 2009, p. 185)

In organizing and preparing the data for analysis I reflected on my written notes and also transcribed each interview within two days after sitting with each participant. After the transcription I once again played the selected interview audiotape and listened, with transcription and pen, to ensure that I had captured the complete interview. Then I listened once again and read each transcript many times to "obtain a general sense of the information and to reflect on its overall meaning." (Cresswell, 2009, p.185). I listened to identify what general ideas were being disseminated and the tone of their ideas and thoughts as well as my reflections and impressions of the credibility of the information. Notes in the margins of the transcripts and referral and highlighting of my written notes supported and strengthened my analysis (Cresswell, 2009; Merriam, 2009; Stake, 2010; Yin, 2009). Table 3.3 of the participant profiles emerged so I could keep the basic demographic and complimentary information foremost in my mind when reflecting and writing about each case. Data was subsequently "organized and labelled according to a scheme that makes sense" (Merriam, 2009, p. 174) where I created a subsequent table that highlighted each of the eight questions and the words, phrases, sentences of the participants that were transcribed from the interview. This table or "data display" as Miles & Huberman (1994) would call it, assisted me in having a more succinct visual representation of the responses to the questions. This initial data display organization in tabular form was the basis of my coding as it assisted me in the process of organizing the material into chunks or segments of text so that I could bring meaning to all of the data collected.

According to Holloway (1997) in his book entitled *Basic Concepts for Qualitative Research*, data analysis in qualitative research means "breaking down the data and searching for codes and categories which are then reassembled to form themes" (p. 43). From the tabular organization of questions and participant responses, I used self-created codes "for assigning units

of meaning to the descriptive or inferential information compiled during the study." (Miles &

Huberman, 1994, p.56).

> Coding is analysis. To review a set of field notes, transcribed or synthesized,
> and to dissect them meaningfully, while keeping the relations between the parts
> intact, is the stuff of analysis. (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 56)

Chapter 4 presents each of the six case studies within a "rich, thick description of the

phenomenon that was studied." (Merriam, 2009, p.43). The six case study participants are detailed

individually framed by their responses to the eight interview questions. Subsequently in chapter 5 I

utilize cross-case comparative analysis to present findings across all six participants again

following the format of the eight interview questions. Thereafter I explore findings from cross-

case analysis regarding the demographic information collected as well as scores from the

Principal Sense of Efficacy Scale (PSES). Finally, I subsequently re-coded and further reduced

the data to find themes across all six case studies. These themes were: (a) Clarity of vision; (b)

Focus on student achievement; (c) Dedication to instructional leadership; and (d) Experience

matters: Confidence and competence from experience in the position.

Both Marriam (2009) and Stake (2009) outline the process for multiple or collective case

study research identifying a two stage analysis in which there is *within-case analysis* and the

cross-case analysis. As Marriam (2009) states:

> For the with-in-case analysis, ease case is first treated as a comprehensive case
> in and of itself. Data are gathered so the researcher can learn as much about the
> contextual variables as possible that might have a bearing on the case. Once the
> analysis of each case is completed*, cross-case analysis* begins. A qualitative,
> inductive, multi-case study seeks to build abstractions across cases. Although the
> particular details of specific cases may vary, the researcher attempts to build a
> general explanation that fits the individual cases.   (p. 204)

The final step in my analysis involved making an interpretation or meaning of the data in

asking "what are the lessons learned?" (Lincoln & Guba,1985).

> These *lessons* could be the researcher's personal interpretation, couched in the understanding that the inquirer brings to the study from his or her own culture, history, and experiences. It could also be meaning derived from a comparison of the findings with information gleaned from the *literature* or *theories.* In this way, authors suggest that the findings confirm past information or diverge from it. It can also suggest *new questions* that need to be asked – questions raised by the data and analysis that the inquirer had not foreseen earlier in the study.
> (Cresswell, 2009, pp. 189-190)

My final analysis included all of the aforementioned interpretations as I included my personal interpretations as well as meaning derived from the study of Bandura's concept of self-efficacy which either confirmed past information or diverged from it. A conceptual framework was also developed and presented in the final chapter as well as implications and recommendations for future research and policy and the identification of new questions arising from the data analysis process that I had not anticipated.

Ethical Considerations

This study was conducted according to the ethical guidelines established by the University of Alberta. The research proposal and ethics application was submitted to and examined by the University of Alberta Research Ethics Board. The proposed study was considered to have met the standard for ethical treatment of human research participants, and approval was granted. Several other measures were taken to comply with the University of Alberta standards. A Cooperative Activities Program (CAP) application was also submitted and approved granting me the ability to contact principals in four districts. Finally, approval was sought and granted by the interviewees for their participation in my study.

The following addresses several ethical issues listed in the document entitled *Standards for the protection of Human Research Participants*. In particular, the issues of informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity are considered.

Informed Consent

Fully informed and voluntary consent was obtained from each participant in the study (Appendix E). All participants were given a letter regarding the purposes and procedures involved with the research and were provided with an opportunity to ask any clarifying questions. Additional information was communicated regarding the participant's time commitment, their rights in the study, how confidentiality will be maintained, and an explanation of whom they should contact if any questions arose regarding the research.

During the interview session, Letters of Consent were used to inform the participants of the expectations for their involvement and they were allowed to decline from involvement with an assurance of confidentiality in doing so. Participants were given as much information as possible regarding why they were selected and when the interviews would be conducted. All signing of forms was given ample time in order to answer any questions that may arise.

Confidentiality

Participants in the study were assured of complete confidentiality as far as possible under the law. The names of the participants were changed for ethical and legal reasons and other safeguards were incorporated to ensure confidentiality. All tape recordings were personally transcribed by the researcher and no data was discussed with anyone with the exception of my doctoral supervisor, Dr. Rosemary Foster. Great care was exercised in obtaining, transcribing, and storing the raw interview data. All raw data was stored in a locked cabinet in the researcher's

home office. All transcriptions was done immediately following each of the interviews by the researcher alone, and the transcription data will not discussed with anyone with the exception of Dr. Rosemary Foster.

Delimitations and Limitations of the Study

Delimitations

"Delimitations" are limitations on the research design that are imposed deliberately by the researcher. These delimitations usually restrict the population to which the results of the study can be generalized.

The study has the following delimitations:

The study was delimitated to principals from public secondary schools located in Alberta, Canada.

The research was delimited to the study of six principals over a six month period of time. The number of participants allowed for a multiplicity of perspectives but kept the sample small enough to allow for in-depth interviews which provided more thorough dialogue and description.

Participants were selected based on being a principal at the high school (grades 10-12 level) and having been a confirmed and practicing principal for more than four years. This delimitation served to sample more seasoned principals who would have a better sense of their district management, services and supports as well as would have a better understanding of the competencies in their professional practice.

All six principals live and work in central Alberta. Although potentially limiting in the understanding of diverse local contexts, this geographic proximity to the researcher ensured ease of access to schools.

Limitations

"Limitations" are the restrictions in the study over which the researcher has little or no control. This study has the following limitations:

The accuracy of the findings will be limited by the subjective opinions obtained through the interviews with principals.

The respondent's ability to remember experiences, attitudes and feelings may have been a limiting factor. They might not have said something that they think "society" might disapprove of or that may jeopardize their professional role and status in the organization.

Due to the selective or purposeful sampling techniques, the results from the study cannot be generalized. In the present study, the data will be collected on a voluntary basis; consequently, nothing guarantees that the principals selected were typical of the general population in the province of Alberta.

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Summary

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This chapter has been dedicated to outlining my research methodology and design including the identification and explanation of my research paradigm (interpretivist); the qualitative case study method; participant selection and sampling; data collection including the *PSES* survey instrument, interviews and research journal; data analysis; ethical considerations and the delimitations and limitations of this study.

Within Chapter Four I will share the case studies of the six principals who were the participants of my study. I have framed each interview using the eight interview questions posed to each of the participants.

CHAPTER 4

THE CASES

This chapter describes the six principal interviews that comprise this case study research. In a collective case study "a number of cases are studied to investigate a phenomenon, population or general condition." (Merriam, 2009, p. 48). The phenomenon I am investigating is how the participant's understand the relationship between their beliefs of self-efficacy and their professional practice. The intent of this chapter is to provide an in depth description of each case and to give the reader an overview or summary of responses to the eight interview questions and the results of the completion of the *Principal Sense of Efficacy Scale (PSES)* within case study description. The purpose of providing this background is to inform the reader of the variety of perspectives that the participants brought to the study. The researcher took care to protect the identity of the participants and each was assigned a different pseudonym for their names and schools. The order of the interviews (three males and then three females) was simply a matter of availability of participants and had no other rationale.

Participant A – Principal Andrews and Ambrose High School

Entering the front door of Ambrose High School I encountered five students who were so engrossed in their dramatic craft that they barely noticed my presence. Passing through their midst and into the main office, I stood for a few minutes before anyone acknowledged and greeted me. Principal Andrews entered the office a few minutes later and acknowledged me immediately. His welcome and escort to his office also included a trip to the staff room for a cup of tea. His gracious manner immediately calmed my "first interview jitters" and we were soon seated around a circular table in his spacious and comfortable office.

Ambrose High School, located in a small city in North Central Alberta, has a population of 950 students and 45 teachers. Principal Andrews is a 56 year old Caucasian male who has been a confirmed principal for 7 years. He has been at Ambrose School for the last two years and before that was the principal of a K-9 school in the same school district. He holds a Bachelor of Physical Education Degree with a Bachelor of Education after Degree and has taken supplementary educational classes during his career in the form of a university school administration short course. He has been involved in various mentorship opportunities including guidance opportunities from seasoned principals in his first and second year as a principal, participation in a collegial principal group, and one-on-one meetings with the Superintendent three to four times per year.

Completion of the *Principal Sense of Efficacy Scale (PSES)* reflected a fairly high sense of personal efficacy in that Principal Andrews had a mean score of 7.5 on the full scale analysis with mean sub-scores of 6.83 in efficacy for management; 8.17 in efficacy for instructional leadership and 7.5 in efficacy for moral leadership. The scale is on a 9 point Likert Scale.

Throughout the interview my overall sense of Principal Andrews was one of a gentle, gracious man displaying a very humble attitude and quiet strength. Defining self-efficacy Principal Andrews noted that it was "your belief in your ability to change something" as well as the "power to influence outcomes". Turning thought into action with "few restrictions", "lots of latitude" and "support from central administration" were also noted as a positive aspect of his principalship. He also said that "you feel like you have an effect on the outcomes and what happens." Principal Andrews likened the support to being able to travel down a road with "bumper pads on the side" that will ease you back onto the path if you should need assistance and support. His recognition of the importance of the site-based management and the confidence

and trust given to principals by the superintendent to manage their own schools, was highlighted as heightening his feelings of self-efficacy. The collegial and collective allocation of funds within the small district was also seen by Principal Andrews as a very healthy decision making process that led to schools in financial difficulty being supported by a purposeful redirection of funds. This collective effort was also accented by great accountability as a leader by colleagues and central office administration which Principal Andrews respected and appreciated.

Principal Andrews' humble and reflective attitude was evidenced by his answer to the second question regarding his reflections after completing the PSES where he replied: "One of my first reactions is that I thought that as I was filling it out, that if I have this much effect then how come I'm not doing more?" He personally lamented in saying that "he has a lot to say in all these areas and has the ability to positively impact change in all the areas". I could sense his reflective contemplation regarding his completion of the *PSES* and how he would like to be doing more in terms of influencing and creating positive outcomes. Principal Andrews also said he felt it was "scary" to think about the power he had to influence what happens in the school and although he seemed quietly saddened with perhaps not doing all he could to move things ahead he did say that he was confident he would positively affect the areas of the *PSES* in his school. With regards to handling the managerial aspects of the job (handling the paperwork; controlling your schedule) he expressed a lack of control at times, but still expressed a confidence in being able to make a difference. "Some days you feel like you have very little control. You know its Open House that night or whatever, and you have to do what you have to do. But for the most part you have some control. But yeah, I guess I can positively affect those areas."

Principal Andrews also spoke further about the challenges of the job in terms of balance with his home life. He acknowledged the stressful things at work and then said that "living that life and then, you know, combining it with things at home…it is always a challenge". He also spoke about the feel of his office being a "relational kind of environment" which was evident in the spacious round table, blinds open in the floor to ceiling windows, and a comfortable non-cluttered space. He also noted that

> The position carries enough weight that you don't need to have necessarily a stuffy environment, so I like to have some level of, I like to be somewhat disarming when you're meeting people and I think that's important and think our staff is pretty comfortable with me and we are able to discuss really important issues but we are also, um, we don't have to be too officious with each other, overly officious.

He presented as a gracious leader who wanted to ensure that people felt honoured and relaxed in his presence. The manner with which he greeted me at the door, offered me tea, and welcomed me into his office, demonstrated to me this sense of grace and kindness. I truly felt that the relational environment created did, as Principal Andrews stated: "allow you to have some of those fierce conversations more easily."

Principal Andrews felt that he was aware of the *Professional Practice Competencies for School Leaders (PPCSL)* and although he mentioned that he "should have studied them again" he said that it was an excellent document that did encompass and reflect the work of a principal. He also expressed the importance of being familiar with the document (competencies) as he did address them in his regular meetings with the Superintendent. Also noted was the importance of surrounding himself with staff who have competencies in areas that he may not be as strong in, and how allowing others to lead facilitated growth in their sense of efficacy.

> I've always felt comfortable with that, like having other people make decisions and talking with them about their decisions and again I think that speaks to their

self-efficacy. That by allowing assistant principals to make decisions, by processing what happened with the decisions; you know that's currently what I am working on; I believe strongly in…I'm not the, you know the kind of dictator leader that's never been my style, although I know some people feel comfortable with that, like making decisions and this is my decision, and they like that hierarchical structure but I have always felt more comfortable by using the strengths of all the people around… more the distributed look.

The competencies were seen by Principal Andrews as reflected in the work of the entire team in the school and not a singular focus of only his leadership. Teamwork with everyone working together in a distributed leadership style was definitely highlighted by Principal Andrews. Trust and belief in his teachers and administrative team to make decisions and work in the best interest of students was evident throughout our interview.

Moving to the fourth question about the relationship of the PSES to professional practice saw Principal Andrews reflect on his desire to do more to effect change and particularly improvement in all the areas noted in the scale. He commented that "it was a very good questionnaire to fill out" and helped him with establishing priorities for his and his team's practice and continuous improvement. He was cognisant of the importance of his reflection on the eighteen items on the *PSES* and spoke about an example of his ability to "raise student achievement on standardized tests." He cited an example of tackling an initiative championed by teachers in the math department to improve test scores through grade 12 tutorials, and how his belief in his ability to resource and support was pivotal in accomplishing their goal. Strengthening relationships through trusting his staff and proliferating their collective efficacy was deemed very important by Principal Andrews. The "relational piece" is critical in his professional practice with his smiles, interactions and conversations with staff and students enhancing his daily leadership. Being trustworthy and visible was definitely important to Mr. Andrews. Encouraging and supporting risk-taking was also mentioned by Principal Andrews.

> And they absolutely, you know, the trust part with staff; I think is good and that
> Whole thing about letting the staff do things and if there's mistakes made then
> We'll talk about them and then we'll just add more trust and move on.

Walk-throughs and collegial collaboration was also mentioned as a priority for the coming year. His belief in his decision making and in the ability to guide his team was also noted when Principal Andrews talked about high school re-design and the foundational principles governing the design. He was very cognisant of the input he had received from staff, students and other stakeholders and thus was designing a strategy with his leadership team of "moving the school forward and honoring the stakeholders that chose the school for the kind of school it is."

With regards to reflection on his management role and his beliefs and feelings with regards to the relationship of self-efficacy belief to professional practice Principal Andrews had a mean score of 6.83 which was the lowest of the three sub scales. All six of his answers to the questions related to efficacy for management were located in columns 6 or 7 of the 9 point Likert Scale. This reflected his attitude that he felt more than "some degree" and "quite a bit" of his ability to handle the demands of the job; shape the operational policies and procedures that are necessary to manage his school; handle the paperwork required of the job; cope with the stress of the job; and prioritize among competing demands of the job. Lowest on the scale was his perceived ability to maintain control of his own daily schedule (scored 6) where he said that "it depends on the day…some days you feel like to have very little control...you know it's Open House that night or whatever, and you have to do what you have to do…but for the most part you have some control." Principal Andrews felt that budget management was an area where he felt less self-efficacious as the calculation process kept changing and he would like to be more confident in this area. His re-designation to a high school after a K-9 experience also served to have him less confident in his management of funds which was coupled with the changes in

Alberta Distance Learning Credits, Work Experience credits, and removal of AISI (Alberta Initiative for School Improvement) funding.

With regards to reflection on his instructional leadership role, and his beliefs and feelings with regards to the relationship of self-efficacy belief to professional practice, Principal Andrews had a mean score of 8.17 which was the highest of the three sub scales on the PSES. The highest ranking of an answer to the PSES scale was noted in this section with "to what extent can you generate enthusiasm for a shared vision for the school" scoring a 9. From the first moment I met Principal Andrew I felt his enthusiasm for the school and it continued throughout our interview as he spoke about staff, students and community. Principal Andrews' first thoughts when asked to reflect on this question was to cite an experience with teacher-led professional development and their leadership in the sharing of professional reading to highlight improvement in teacher practice. Once again the theme of distributed leadership was illuminated with the deemed importance of teachers assuming leadership roles throughout the school. Principal Andrews definitely did not see himself as a micromanager and relied on the strengths of his staff in order to maintain effective practice and initiate change for teacher growth and development. He mentioned the strength of his eight department heads and that they "are highly skilled people so you know, stay out of their way and let them be the instructional leaders that they are." His belief was in the provision of necessary supports and resources and in relying on, and trusting in his staff, to do what was best for the students. A great reputation for great teaching through knowledgeable and invested staff was noted as established and recognized by the community.

> In a school this big you have to know and rely on your staff I think. Like that whole facilitating leadership…the last two years that's what I have sort of been focusing on here, you know, partly maybe because I didn't know what the heck was going on and partly because you, you trust the people that are here and so you have to get into that first year of your position trusting what has happened as it stood the test of time anyways.

Principal Andrews also related a story regarding his past experience in a K-9 school and how his belief in the importance of relationships and in bringing together community resulted in a sleepover for students, the tradition of which continues today. The event served to bring students, parents and teachers together to help them connect to each other and their learning. This example spoke to sense of efficacy for instructional leadership with his work in facilitating student learning in his school, generating enthusiasm for a shared vision for the school, managing change in his school, creating a positive learning environment in this school, and motivating teachers. Sense of efficacy for instructional leadership in the question of raising standardized test scores was highlighted earlier in the math tutorial example as well as in a Cogito program example where Principal Andrews held a meeting as parents were beginning to speak about leaving the school to pursue other programs.

> So it was interesting because we went through that and then at this meeting I talked about-I knew a little bit about Edmonton Public Cogito because I had talked to some members and some of their research, some of the statistical information, so I said you know when you start a program there is like a genesis phase of the program and then you know the second phase is an improvement phase and then the third phase is an exemplary program phase. It you really work hard and work at continuously improving then it is the third phase, in terms of quality instruction, in terms of getting the right teachers in the right places, getting the right clientele because when you first start something you don't get the right students, and so I took my time and explained that to the parents and it was interesting; I felt that it made a difference, again speaks of self-efficacy; I felt like that communication to the parents made a difference, it helped them to understand that evolution, how the program was going to progress, and many parents, a few parents left but many parents chose to stay and the program is still doing very well I think.

Principal Andrews said he had a great sense of accomplishment from that meeting and that his self-efficacy was very high as

> it was a moment where he felt that he had the ability." His instructional leadership was also noted when he said that he had "also brought some teachers to sit in too

so they could hear and because some of those parent concerns are real specific and so I felt like when I left the school, or when they were back in the classroom, they would hear those words and they would act accordingly.

With regards to reflection on his moral leadership role, and his beliefs and feelings with regards to the relationship of self-efficacy belief to professional practice, Principal Andrews had a mean score of 7.5. His first statement was that "I am sure that there are many things that I do that lack morality", but as we conversed he presented as someone with a very strong moral compass and one who truly looked for the best in others and sought to have a win-win in all relationships and issues. He spoke about the importance of trust and how critical it was to have people know that he had their best interests in mind and that "you need that moral compass whenever you are doing things and so I take no joy in doing something behind someone's back or doing things that are counterproductive to an individual." In terms of promoting acceptable behavior among students, promoting school spirit among a large majority of the school population, handling effectively the discipline of students in his school, promoting a positive image of his school with the media, promoting the prevailing values of the community in his school and promoting ethical behavior among school personnel, Principal Andrews seemed to feel quite confident in his belief in his ability to lead with a strong moral compass. Promoting a positive school spirit, positive image of the school and ethical behavior among staff saw *PSES* scores of 8 and in our conversation it was evident that through his interactions with staff, students and parents, that he was invested in doing all he could do for his stakeholders with integrity and trustworthiness. When speaking about an incident where a student called him a racist, Principal Andrew's simply told the student "I am sorry but I don't even know what nationality you are so I don't think I'm a racist…but that was confusing for that student because they had always played the racist card but it's sad that they would think that way right away." I

knew Principal Andrews is not oblivious to cultural differences with this statement and I was very impressed by his soft spoken, gentle reply to a very fervent accusation but then again his demeanor throughout the interview spoke of a very similar quiet and gentle demeanor.

The last question asked what supports Principal Andrews saw as essential to him being an effective principal in meeting his managerial, instructional and moral leadership roles. Principal Andrews felt that he was never alone in his role and that he was surrounded by personnel in the school and district office who would quickly clarify or answer any questions he may have. He talked about meeting monthly when he went from his K-9 school to the high school, so that that management of the budget was a joint collaboration with district supervisors. He also mentioned that there was support for supervision and evaluation of staff although he had only encountered one staff member in the past 7 years that was in difficulty. Citing his background in physical education and coaching with regards to instructional supervision he says

> I have followed more of a coaching model and an assistant's model and how can that increase their effectiveness and what role can they play in the school of the district that will make then become a better educator, so that's you know, that's something that I've always tried to do.

Principal Andrews also mentioned that he feels very good about his role in being able to assist those teachers who may be stagnant or needing to move in order to "prolong or add quality to their careers". He also felt that he has great trust and respect for the integrity and ability of his department heads and thus felt very supported by them and in the knowledge that they are competent and doing a great job of their managerial, instructional and moral leadership roles. Noted also was strong support by the district in terms of support for the cross disciplinary adolescent literacy initiative that they are undertaking. Principal Andrews also mentioned that

teachers are also involved in the initiative and are improving and enhancing their instructional and assessment practices which then creates value-added to his work.

During our conversation it was evident that Principal Andrews was also very confident with the effective communication and feedback from central office and noted that "anything that gets onto the superintendent's desk or Deputy Superintendent's desk from our school, you know, it will always come back to you." He also felt very supported in decision making as he cited an example of a dilemma regarding the splitting of a class and receiving a call from the Superintendent offering his opinion and support with risking the hiring of another teacher and splitting the existing class. The manner with which the Superintendent spoke with Principal Andrews about the decision gave him confidence and belief in his own ability to understand a situation and an issue and to resolve it. Principal Andrews saw the conversation with the Superintendent as a "strong suggestion" tempered with belief in his abilities and felt very supported and empowered.

It was within the last part of our interview that Principal Andrews said that when the Superintendent in this current district first hired him as a principal, that he told him the "statement of the century." He was not sure where his Superintendent got it from but he said "if you aren't successful in this principalship it's because I haven't given you enough support." He also said that he had moved through the district from teacher to leadership roles to the principalship without having negative experiences of not being promoted when he applied for positions so that also led to him having a higher sense of personal efficacy due to the belief he felt in his performance from central office leadership staff. Principal Andrews shared with me that he felt that they have full authority to hire their own teachers and thus if they're not successful then he takes the blame for lack of support.

And I have used that with teachers I hire. And that's another thing in terms of self-efficacy, we hire our own teachers in our district…if you're not successful, we picked you, it's our mistake, you know, we have to make it work for you. So I really like that he has, because it's just that we haven't provided enough supports.

From this statement I felt that Principal Andrews felt a great deal of accountability for each and every teacher and was dedicated to supporting them to the very best of his ability. His belief in his ability to hire staff members and then support them to success was high and therefore I sensed a high level of self-efficacy. Principal Andrews also noted that principals feel more self-efficacious in his district when they know that they are also supported and that they are not encouraged to move schools every five years or so as he perceived was the case in many of the other districts.

Throughout the interview and at the end of our time together Principal Andrews exuded a quiet confidence and a humble attitude that spoke of the importance of distributed leadership and the shared vision and strength of all staff and stakeholders. His sense of self-efficacy was deemed quite high in terms of his personal reflection on the PSES, yet his humble, gracious, reflective style continued to speak to him wishing to be more effective in his role. He noted again at the end of the interview that he "wanted to do more in all the areas of the *PSES*" because they were there for a reason and he wanted so much to continue to create a positive learning environment for the school.

Participant B – Principal Baker and Brockton High School

Brockton High School is situated in a large urban centre and has a student population of 1040 with a teaching compliment of 45. I arrived at one o'clock on a Wednesday afternoon and there were a few students in the front foyer and several more in the hallway as I made my way to

the main office. I was greeted promptly and professionally by the front desk secretarial staff and was told that Principal Baker was in a teacher meeting but was very aware of our appointment and would be joining me as soon as possible. The office was a warm, friendly environment and I perceived that all who entered were greeted with genuine interest and respect.

Principal Baker entered the office just minutes after 1:00 p.m. and quickly ushered me back into his office offering me a water or coffee on our way there. His office was a spacious, neatly appointed room with a large round table with four chairs as well as a desk and two bookshelves. The space was neatly arranged and there was a definite sense of order.

Principal Baker is a 61 year old Caucasian male who has been a confirmed principal for 15 years. He has been at Brockton School for the past four years and at other junior high and high schools within the same district. He mentioned that he has been in a total of 14 schools in his career and has thoroughly enjoyed each learning community. He holds a Bachelor of Science Degree with a Bachelor of Education after Degree and has taken supplementary Masters Course work. He has participated in a structured principal preparation course and has been mentored and has been a mentor in his career. In his years at Central Office Principal Baker was also involved as a consultant principal with a focus on student achievement and did extensive visits and coaching with the ten principal's under his tutorage.

Completion of the Principal Sense of Efficacy Scale (PSES) reflected a high sense of personal efficacy in that Principal Baker had a mean score of 8.44 on the full scale analysis with mean sub-scores of 8.33 in efficacy for management; 8.5 in efficacy for instructional leadership and 8.5 in efficacy for moral leadership. The scale is on a 9 point Likert Scale.

Throughout the interview my overall sense of Principal Baker was one of a self-secure, articulate and confident man who was very relaxed and comfortable in sharing his experiences and insights with me. Defining self-efficacy Principal Baker noted that it was "the ability for me to have control is the first thing that comes to mind; some sense of control over all the things that are related to my job." When reflecting on where those feelings of efficacy come from, Principal Baker outlined that he felt that he had "these things in my work that are straight up natural predispositions that I have through my personality" coupled with "training and experience in leadership positions since 1986". Thus during the 28 years of leadership experience Principal Baker felt that he had the "rhythm of the school" and his "sense of being able to have any kind of control over the environment comes from the familiarity with it and the ability to anticipate." I could hear the confidence in his voice as he spoke about his comfort in "knowing" the calendar of the school which led him to have a great sense regarding teachers and their need for extra support, etc. His sense of being "in it and not observing from the outside" due to his teaching of an academic class at the school, greatly contributed to his sense of self-efficacy as he felt that the teachers appreciated his "hands on" approach.

> That allows me to have a much stronger feeling of a connection to the kids, to the teachers and to the ebb and flow, you know, the movement, the rhythm, what I call the rhythm of school, by being in it. I coach football and rugby here. So I know boys in the school…We have some of the best kids in the city. We just don't have misbehaviours. We had one kid sent from class this year.

Principal Baker highlighted that only one student was sent down from class this year in an effort to illustrate his belief in the high collective efficacy of the staff and their investment in the students.

> I don't believe that I would feel that I would have my own self-efficacy or any ability to monitor, move or see change happen in this school if I didn't have teachers that felt that they had self-efficacy… We are feeling like we have some,

again that word control pops up, that it is within our realm of influence I guess; that I'm not; that it's not being done to me, I am actually in the center of this. Things are changing in this school because of what I'm doing and what we're doing and not that things are happening to us.

Thinking about his answer to the second question regarding his reflections/reactions after his completion of the *PSES* he first replied that he "had an arrogant view of himself" and subsequently mentioned that he believed that "schools will go as the principal is" and "schools may crumble with a new leader and flourish in the presence of gifted leaders." Illuminating the sense of revitalization that is occurring in his district with a recent change of leadership at the superintendent level, he emphasized that real true belief in oneself and those that surround you will lead to influencing what happens in a school district or a school.

> I truly believe that I have skills and things will go as I set them up…In my school I don't believe things happen that are happening *to* me or my school…that I believe that there was something that I did or did not do that led to that change or that feeling…there's no sense of being a victim to circumstance or anything.

Principal Baker also noted that he "gets now from the people who supervise me the same kind of support and trust and confidence that I try to impart to my teachers."

> And by standing by them and believing in them and helping them pick themselves up and dust themselves off when they fall, and do the same thing that I want my teachers to do with the kids here, that all the way through the organization now is this sense that, that this is all happening because of what you are doing.

Principal Baker used the word "magnificent" when he was expressing the support he felt during the current school year. This seemed to have stemmed from the fact that the new Superintendent is connecting with him through phone calls and messages from Central Office as well as his Assistant Superintendent is "checking in with him" in a respectful, supportive manner.

> And she pushes the thinking which is a thing which is a real skill. Ok so that's where you're at.   That's what you're thinking, that's what you're doing and what's next? Where are you going from here? What is the thing from here?...Why is that like that? It's really the question to further understand.

It's not threatening.

It is a conversation and not a confrontation and Principal Baker truly appreciates the respectful and trustworthy relationship that he feels he has developed and maintained with the district administration team. When I reflected his thought and asked him if the relationship piece was big for him his response was "well if it isn't about relationships then what is it about?"

Principal Baker spoke as well about the support he gives to the teachers in "managing change in the school" as per question four on the *PSES* and he said that he is very supportive of his teachers and department heads but that "it is not blind support for wherever they want to go and whatever they want to do."

> We are certainly here to guide these decisions and not really mistakes, although lots of people characterize it that way. Things will go off the rails so maybe that is a mistake, and the real feeling that you get in a building is, that its group efficacy, right? And everyone has a sense of that; that it's just something we need to work through. It's not, "oh my goodness"; it's not just this deflating thing and you're just going through huge ebbs and flows…it's not a train wreck. ..Let's just figure this out and get back on track.

Very telling of his high sense of self-efficacy, Principal Baker talked about the ten principal leaders he mentored in the past and how the best part of his position in Student Achievement Services was the visits to the school sites and assisting principals with thinking and processing their issues and solutions.

> Why do you feel that you don't have any control over what's happening in your building? That stuff is just happening to you its just collapsing around you and there's really nothing you can do? You're reactionary rather than really feeling that you're inside of it. And not to detract too much, but I had quite a sense from some of them that they were quite lost and when you're talking about self-efficacy and it didn't exist. They just felt like I'm here trying to push buttons and just manage this building and keep my head above water…it's like oh my goodness…how do you get up every day?

Principal Baker spoke about the circle of influence and how some of the principals he mentored did not have a belief in their ability to improve the conditions in their schools. They seemingly

proposed to have no control of their circumstances and situations and Principal Baker found that

a "horrid place to be" in their expression of little or no circle of influence thus no sense of self-

efficacy.

> You know, that's a horrid place to be and I don't actually quite frankly remember
> any time in my career when I felt like that. I really honestly believe that even
> when against odds you're still , if you can figure it out…then we can solve this.
> There's always been that sense.

Principal Baker also reflected on the wording of the *PSES* in saying that it asked "whether he can

do things" and he said that he always believes he has the ability to succeed whereas the ten

principals he worked with seemed to have very low belief in themselves and thus he said that "if

I would have had this questionnaire *(PSES)* with some of the people as I think back it would

have been very sad." Clarifying again the wording of the *PSES* with the "to what extent do you

think you can…" Principal Baker was very confident in saying that after his 36 years in the

district he has "the background, history and the skills" to deal with anything. He mentioned that

"he has had a kid who has committed suicide in his school, he has had kids die in his school" and

many other intricate issues and horrible accidents. He is simply confident in his ability to have

his staff ready to face any situation and to be able to mobilize quickly and professionally.

Speaking about a recent incident where a young lady had convulsions in the school and blacked

out in class, Principal Baker said that his staff acted quickly and appropriately and thus although

there are many stresses in the job, they are manageable because "you're not doing it yourself."

He did not even know of the above mentioned incident until later in the day as he was teaching a

class and then coaching, and the staff had dealt with the issue and had not felt the need to call for

his support.

I found that Principal Baker was very comfortable with his staff handling emergencies

and high level problems and he was very proud of the way they worked as a team. He was also

very happy that he did not have to answer the phone or the door every 15 minutes with his staff asking questions about what to do in certain situations. He believed that his team has a high sense of collective efficacy and that they are very capable and confident. It would be very interesting to interview staff to see what their feelings are regarding their personal and collective efficacy.

Principal Baker was familiar with the *Professional Practice Competencies for School Leaders (PPCSL)* as it was incorporated into his professional growth plans each year and he was required to comment on the work done in the various competency areas. He also said that the first time he saw it "there wasn't anything that surprised me as an expectation for a principal" and that he just felt that they were just "putting a nice little title around it." Fostering effective relationships was cited as incredibly important as well as promoting the prevailing value of the community in the school. Once again Principal Baker reiterated his strong belief in establishing, enhancing and supporting relationships and thus believed that the *PPCSL* was an important guideline for principal practice.

> So it doesn't tell me what I am supposed to do, because that would suggest that I didn't know what I was supposed to do, but it has hinge-points or connect back to points for the work that I do. So I can think about something and go, oh, yeah, that would fit into here and this would fit into here.

He also feels very strongly that "he can do this stuff" and thus belief in his ability is high and he sees himself as meeting and/or exceeding all of the *PPCSL* competencies.

When reflecting on how Principal Baker sees the *PSES* relating to his professional practice he said that if he had an hour to go through the scale and if there was a line that asked "in what way?" then he would think further regarding each statement. He said that the 8's that he answered on the scale could be "pushed up a little bit more" but that it was related to the size of the school and the number of staff and students in terms of how much impact he has.

It's interesting how you know some of them related to maintaining control of your daily schedule. I put an 8. I have absolutely no control of my own daily schedule but I don't feel that I am out of control with it. So that's an interesting thing. Because I hesitated to put that number on it. Because I have absolutely no clue what will happen tomorrow even now, you know, they could knock on my door and there's a parent there that wants to see me and you know, so, it becomes on my schedule and its like sorry Maureen we're going to have to do this another day because this just went off the rails. But yet the reason for the 8 or whatever in this, my sense of control over that is that it won't derail my day. It won't derail the functioning of the school.

Further conversation illuminated the fact that he had spoken with one principal colleague in the district who had their staff book times to see them during the day. Principal Baker was amazed that this practice was happening in schools as he was very concerned giving guidance/assistance to his staff in a timely, professional manner. Principal Baker's "open door policy" was something he was proud of as well as he wanted to ensure that staff felt listened to and supported each and every day. He also said that "insecurities are huge in this idea of maintaining control" and that he believed all principals have "phenomenal control" and need to be open to dialogue with staff at any time if necessary. Being available for his staff and students was certainly an important leadership principle as I interviewed Principal Baker. The general rule for Principal Baker is that "if the door is open, interrupt." It was very important to him that if you came all the way down from your classroom that it is a question or problem that needs his attention.

Principal Baker also spoke about his "open agenda staff meetings" and how his administration comes with no announcements ready to discuss anything the staff wishes to bring forth. Attendance is said to be optional but the majority attend as they "want to be there and want to see what comes up." Other meetings are only called by Principal Baker when there are items that have to "do with everybody and then everybody is always engaged and it has something to do with them." There are also no subject specific department heads at the school as Principal

Baker wanted to ensure that the voices of those closest to the issues were heard and that they weren't filtered through another person, namely a department head.

> Who speaks for your department if you have an issue or something like that? The department head right? So you would go to that person and get them to rail your case against the administration…but where's the self-efficacy of that individual?; it really doesn't exist. It is all hinged upon the power and then we have a weak department head and we never get the stuff we want…and so after my first year I just dissolved all my subject area department heads and we have department heads for our professional development strands. So we have monthly professional development that those people lead or coordinate...and people in the science department look at what's coming up and decide who is going to go based on meeting their needs. If its talking about re-organizing the chemistry curriculum why should the biology teacher department head go to the chemistry meeting when it's like what does that have to do with me? So I have to take this information back and talk to my chemistry teacher, no, well send the chemistry teacher. My teachers love it. And it's all about distributive leadership.

Principal Baker sees the distributive leadership "bubbling up a leader at any time that works." Within the no department head model he also sees "an efficacy model that's phenomenal." He referred to the book "*The Starfish and the Spider*" by Ori Brafman and Rod A. Beckstrom and said that he uses the starfish model of leadership so that "the organization is not disabled because the head is not there." He has found that teachers show up to meetings that are truly invested in the outcome and follow through on all initiatives that they undertake.

Reflecting on the relationship between his self-efficacy beliefs and his professional practice with regards to his management role, Principal Baker oozed confidence as he said the "management of this school comes so naturally for me" as his self-efficacy and control rolls out so that he feels prepared and experienced. He said that he felt that "his job is actually really easy" and when he thinks about the management things he says that:

> To be really frank about this, I almost even have a sense that I dismiss them; that I see them as almost trivial parts of my job. And it isn't that I don't do a good job of my reports, of my things, but there's such a – the paperwork, control of my schedule, competing job demands, job stress, operational policies and

procedures, like I know the operational policies and procedures, I know the way
things work out, and I really believe that I have such a strong sense of my position;
see I told you I was arrogant and self-centered.

When I acknowledged that what I heard was confidence and belief he said that he had such

confidence in the fact that it was just going to "roll out" and that "the management part of my job

is the easiest part of my job."

Certainly the management of the building, financially, the resources, the personnel,
things like that, it just comes so easily, the scheduling… all of these things just come
as such an easy flow.

Principal Baker spoke about the sense of "flow" and that when you are in that sense, that you

"really don't think about options or am I going to make a mistake?" and so "the management

things, even if they are phenomenally complex, seem very easy." His final words with regards to

the question was to say that "the management part of my job is very easy." He noted that having

the experience and background knowledge lends itself to allow him to "just roll" and thus I heard

evidence of a very self-efficacious man as he answered this question.

Reflecting on his beliefs and feelings with regards to instructional leadership and the

relationship of his self-efficacy beliefs and his professional practice regarding instructional

leadership, Principal Baker began by saying that "of course I have very strong beliefs about

teaching and learning." He has a very strong sense of the type of school that he wants to create

and he has confidence that he is setting up the learning environment in the "right way."

We basically have a single rule: Behave appropriately to a learning environment
and you can't interfere with the learning of others. And we don't have a student;
we don't even have a teacher handbook. We just do the things that are appropriate
to a school setting. There is a district code of conduct and behavior policy that
everybody has to adhere to; there's a professional code of conduct for teachers;
maintaining the psychological, physical and well-being of students, delivering
curriculum and assessing students in an appropriate manner.

Principal Baker feels that he does not need to prepare a teacher handbook as there are regulations and policies at the district level that are clearly articulated and he does not have many incidents or situations that come up. He was clearly confident when speaking about his instructional leadership and his ability to motivate teachers, generate enthusiasm for a shared vision for the school, manage change, create a positive learning environment, facilitate student learning and raise student achievement on tests.

> You know this idea of enthusiasm, managing change, and motivating teachers, all of these things come from that group efficacy idea that they know that they have the support, backing, encouragement and all of those things from the people who they perceive, who are the designated leaders in the school, and the emerging leaders who come up. It's a very interesting thing in our meetings without our department heads that teacher voice, is in their hierarchical mind, levelled out.

This "levelling out" was seen as having teachers who did not have to wait to voice concerns or determine appropriate courses of action as there was no department head to go through in order to speak with administration.

Principal Baker also has very strong beliefs with regards to how students should view the adults in the building and his "general idea is that the kids in this school have to feel that the adults are standing by their side…In my school I want the kids to feel as though it's them and the teacher against the task." He really wants the students to not feel that it's them against the teacher and the task and to have students see the teacher as "being by their side" and not being adversarial. He notes that "it is the difference between a coach and a judge" and he wants a "school full of educational coaches." Combined classes, with teachers having the so called "streams" altogether in one class, assists in creating a community of learners where students are coached through to success in whichever course level they are able to attain. Also, none of the things the students do are weighted toward their final mark so everything is "just stuff" and "so at any time you can re-do or get re-assessed on work and jump a level if that's where you're

at…and it also eliminates the idea of failures." Principal Baker spoke of the fact that students

feel that teachers are accommodating and supporting them in their learning and that they will get

to the next level and be successful.

> We address high school completion through course completion. You can't complete
> without completing courses. So we're going to make sure basically nobody fails that
> comes here. If you come to school you'll pass. Because we don't end it at the end of
> the semester. You're almost there so if you need a couple more weeks, you've got a
> couple of weeks.

Principal Baker also mentioned that the teachers have stressed moments when they are getting

together evidence of the grades for the students, as they are at various points in the curriculum,

but he felt that they had great ownership and liked the process and were excellent at coming up

with "resolutions to their own problems." The flexible high school program is one that Principal

Baker is very excited about and notes that his teachers "truly understand and start to think about

kids and their progress through the course." He also stated that "the power of the model is that it

pushes a change in practice."

> Reflecting on his moral leadership role and his beliefs and feelings with regards to the

relationship between his self-efficacy beliefs and moral leadership he pointed up to a picture

behind his desk.

> Probably the best gift I have ever received from a staff was that they decided that
> my going away gift from the school was going to be a poster about integrity. There
> couldn't have been a more impactful message to me that that's what they thought
> about me.

His belief is to model, each and every day, his belief of being "all about the kids." He therefore

does not sit in his office all day and chose to teach a course and coach rugby and football in order

to model his dedication to the students and the school community. He said that "it's very

difficult for the teachers to not trust and believe in me" when he is so involved with teaching and

coaching. Trustworthiness is also very important to Principal Baker and he says that "at staff

meetings we really look at this idea of this integrity model and speaking our truth." He believes that the integrity and trustworthiness has led to very few suspensions and expulsions in the school. There have only been three or four suspensions and one expulsion. The expulsion was in regards to a sexual predator so it was placing other students at too high of a risk to have him continue to be a student there. For the most part though, Principal Baker believes in in-school suspensions and other ways of disciplining students as the message to students at Brockton High School is that "I care about your learning, and I can in-school you for a couple of days and monitor your learning and supervise you, but I can't feel that way and send you home." He reiterates by saying that "he cannot tell kids he loves them and then tell them they can't be here…there's just an incongruence there." The in-school suspension time for students is not one that they enjoy as they come to the office and there is direct supervision until deemed by Principal Baker that they have shown enough initiative in completing work and that they will be respectful and not disruptive when re-entering the class. Principal Baker also feels that the inclusive nature of all classes, the background knowledge that teachers hold regarding their students and their personal and academic struggles, and the commitment to being coaches not judges, serves to have students be more respectful within the classes. He also notes that the teachers have the resources and supports so that the teachers say "yeah, I can handle that because I know it is within my sphere of influence and I'm controlling this and you're supporting me and holding me up as soon as I wobble."

The final question was asking what supports Principal Baker saw as being essential to being an effective principal in meeting his managerial, instructional and moral leadership roles and responsibilities. He quickly answered that he needed support from his supervisors in the form of "support and pressure." He noted that "he needed the same support and the same

pressure that I provide for my teachers and for my students…and that it's collegial." The importance of having a supportive Assistant Superintendent was critical to the support felt in the current school year. In the past he has had a supervisor who did not support a change in procedure as he asked for a "guarantee" that it would work. He said "he could guarantee that it wasn't working right now" and was asking for the supervisor to support him and not the decision.

Support from his Superintendent was also important and Principal Baker felt that he received excellent support and assistance and that his personal well-being was a central key point in discussions they have had. Principal Baker was thrilled that his health and welfare was paramount in the conversation and that "so as much confidence that surrounded me in my work, had just been enhanced by that statement." His words were "I can take on the world now" which illustrated how a belief in his abilities by the superintendent had enhanced his own personal level of self-efficacy.

Principal Baker also spoke about his connection and commitment to the parents as they have been very supportive of the school. On Valentine's Day the staff went out to the drop-off area of the road and gave out coffee and little red candy hearts to thank people for being "Brockton School parents." Parents were yelling out of the car with words of support like "we love this school" and "this is the best school in the world" and over 30 staff were out there waving and serving.

Also noted was the support given by the previous administrator in leaving a healthy surplus so that Principal Baker could spend some money on upgrades to a very sad physical plant. This money assisted with painting, new blinds, updated technology, new washrooms, new lockers and other upgrades. He is now also "paying it forward" with assisting other, less

fortunate schools in the area, with upgrades to their buildings, furniture and technology which has given much needed support and improved collective efficacy among the principals. He expressed his dedication to the elementary schools where there is a necessity to "teach those kids how to read…and you have to have the resources to do that." It is a moral imperative to Principal Baker to "assist any elementary schools who are suffering in their primary resource pool" and to also provide appropriate resources and supports to his teachers. He was very concerned that teachers felt that the administration listened to their issues and concerns and expressed confidence in their abilities.

Throughout the interview Principal Baker exuded a confidence and self-assuredness that I believe came from his extensive fifteen year experience as a principal. I was impressed with his sense of commitment to the children and staff in his learning community and to the distributed leadership model that he believed empowered his staff and led to a high sense of collective efficacy at Brockton School. His sense of self-efficacy on the *PSES* was very high and it was evident throughout the interview that he felt confident in every aspect of his job and that he met and exceeded the competencies expected in his professional practice. His sincere appreciation for the work of the teachers and his apparent joy in being at Brockton School created a very vibrant and engaging interview. Having a school where the students were "coached and not judged" also presented a very efficacious model and it would be very interesting to see how the staff and students felt about their experiences.

Participant C: Principal Clements and Caswell High School

Caswell High School is a suburban public school with a student population of approximately 1200 students and 62 teachers. Principal Clements is a 66 year old Caucasian

male who has been a confirmed principal for 8 years. He has been at Caswell School for the past year and a half and before that was a principal at another high school in the same district for 7 years. He has completed a Master's Degree in Education and has had no other structured principal preparation course. He has had several mentorship opportunities both as a mentor and being mentored and has an Executive Coaching certification from an accredited university.

The main office was easily found and I entered and asked to see the Principal. There were several students in the main office who were attending to a task with regards to a fundraising activity and the administrative assistant was very polite and respectful in welcoming me and asking me to wait. When Principal Clements arrived he ushered me down a long hallway into his office which was a neatly appointed, small and intimate room with a desk, chair and a knee-height table with comfortable chairs. I felt very relaxed in his presence and he was very charming and warm as we sat down for the interview.

Completion of the *Principal Sense of Efficacy Scale (PSES)* reflected a moderate sense of personal efficacy in that Principal Clements had a mean score of 6.89 on the full scale analysis with mean sub-scores of 6.33 in efficacy for management; 8.00 in efficacy for instructional leadership and 7.40 in efficacy for moral leadership. There was one question not answered on the moral leadership scale so thus his mean score was only for 5 of 6 questions included in that area. The scale is on a 9 point Likert Scale.

Throughout the interview my overall sense of Principal Clements was one of an articulate, well-read, straightforward, and somewhat spiritual man. I say spiritual due to his mention of Buddhist beliefs as well as his consistent thoughtful self-reflection and acknowledgment of a life path that was still being articulated as to purpose. He mentioned very

early in our conversation that he held himself highly responsible for things and I felt an initial

urgency to get started and not waste any time simply by the manner he exuded when I first

arrived. I felt dutiful in being time certain and articulate in my presentation so after briefly

introducing the study and having him fill in the *PSES (Principal Sense of Efficacy Scale)* we

delved into the questions.

Defining self-efficacy Principal Clements referred to the medical model of efficacy of

which he said he was familiar with, in the context of a treatment that works" and said that "self-

efficacy means do I have a sense that I have power over my environment to make a difference;

and to make a difference in a positive contributory way." He also elaborated to say that "self-

efficacy paints certain questions" and "leads him to consider the whole level of responsibility in

the context of self-efficacy."

> If I believe that I can have power to make some of the changes on this questionnaire
> for example; to intervene in some ways; then of course, in an extential way, once I
> have the ability to choose to intervene and the power to intervene, I also have some
> responsibility. And so there's very little that goes wrong in my job that even it may
> appear that I can distance myself from the error because I have so much ability to
> intervene, then when things go wrong, I am responsible. And I mean truly not in
> the cliché the buck stops here.

When speaking about teachers or support staff, Principal Clements expressed his responsibility

for their actions as when someone has been told

> you know you are doing this wrong and they still keep doing it wrong;
> it's very easy for us to slip into a "are they stupid or what?; but in the end, in my
> private revelry and reflection, I am responsible for it. There has to be a way to help
> them get better, because I have so much authority to intervene. Self-efficacy. That
> would be an example of the working model of my definition.

Answering the second question regarding his reflections/reactions after his completion of

the *PSES* Principal Clements initially said that the *PSES* is something he would like to read more

about and he was very quickly drawn to the very first questions that that were related to

"influencing other human beings" with regards to what extent he could facilitate, student learning and generate change in the school. He noted that the first question "to what extent can you facilitate student learning in your school" was an emphatic 9 on the scale for him when framed the answer as "can I?", but he quickly remarked that "whether I am able to do it is a totally different issue." He did believe he definitely had a responsibility to facilitate student learning in the school and had the tools to do that but his ability to actually do that is a different matter. I acknowledged his correct interpretation of the questionnaire as it is indeed his belief in his ability to do the task outlined on the *PSES* and not whether he can or cannot actually do it that is what self-efficacy is all about.

Principal Clements said that when it comes down to maintaining control of your daily schedule, where the managerial pieces impose themselves his self-efficacy diminishes.

> I become less powerful; now it can be external in that, the demands; but there are also pieces of my personality, pieces of the way I work, that I know aren't my strengths, so we get down to the "handle the paperwork required for the job" Today I've been away two days and I probably have two days of paperwork, and I'd rather talk to you about this. And, what I mean is that I have a low, wrong, I have a 5 out of 9 sense that I have the power to handle the paperwork, not because the paperwork is overwhelming, but because I would rather not do it; there are so many other priorities and I am not big on paperwork.

When reflecting on the *PSES* management related questions, Principal Clements shared that although his background is counselling and he's Buddhist "and so one would think I had a real personal self-efficacy around tools to deal with stress", he purports that "I do, but the application of them I seem pretty lazy about." He notes that the lack of self-efficacy in these managerial areas is what struck him as he filled out the *PSES*.

Another area that Principal Clements commented on in his reflection was the belief in the ability to "raise student achievement on standardized tests." The loss of control with the inability

to have input into the creation of standardized tests caused him to express that he was not sure that "he had a lot of belief in myself doing it." Principal Clements said that he believed that approximately 30-40% of his job involved and required being "on top of" paperwork, including responses to e-mails. He expressed that it was just part of the job but not "part of my personality I easily get."

Principal Clements was familiar with the *Professional Practice Competencies for School Leaders (PPCSL)* and is regularly supervised and evaluated using a document/model that parallels the competency document. The principles or competencies in the document do detail his professional roles and responsibilities, but he feels the most important aspect is "where you put the most weight which will establish him as a leader." This debate in the leadership of schools centering on "where do you put the time?" is where he believes the importance lies. Principal Clements went on to talk about what he perceives as the fundamental flaw with education is the lack of real deep change. He sees the transmission of culture as our job but also says that with the transmission of culture you would expect to see some changes in the way the system works. He sees laws and banks doing the same thing and they have changed and also he says that:

> More importantly I believe that school leaders are cowards, many of them, because they are promoted within a system that certain standards of behavior trump having a vision and living it. And so the visionary leader, in most cases, doesn't become a leader because they are hard to deal with, and secondly, many of the people who are promoted into leadership are not promoted for their vision, they are promoted for what you do, for being a good organizer, for being a physical education teacher that kids like, for having a Master's Degree….so you can see that the weight of my competency demand, is that every principal should, must, is obliged to, have a deep, resonate, resonating vision of what a school is about, and then to communicate and inculcate and sometimes demand that that vision has its expression in their leadership.

Principal Clements believes that the "visionary leadership part is profound" and that the leaders who have not read visionary books by reputable, research and solid practice based leaders are not

the most capable and competent leaders as he says that "there's a need for educational leaders to

have a deep philosophical appreciation of vision.

Principal Clements believes that the second competency of "Embodying Visionary

Leadership" is pivotal for effective leaders.

> That's how I respond to the competencies to my boss. Obviously, the others; instructional leadership as well the others flow from a vision. Instructional leadership, is our core business in the classroom, and to suggest that instructional leadership shouldn't be a part of a vision is to ignore, to some extent, what I believe our core business is. Around that we can talk about belonging and engagement, and ethical citizenry and entrepreneurial spirit, and yet our core business is the curriculum and the classroom…and so… instructional leadership…how do you communicate a vision without building relationships; how do you communicate a vision in an environment that isn't managed. So give me number 2, to do number 2 properly, the rest of them hang around it. That's my beliefs about the competencies.

When asking Principal Clements about the vision statement at the school and if he aligns

with that one, he commented that "I haven't read it." He has been at the school a year and a half

and said that the work of nurturing a vision takes time and is work that is built up on a

foundation of trust. "It's the work that is sometimes built on assertiveness and aggressiveness

and it's the work that's built on relationship, but it's the work that takes time in some

environments." Principal Clements did not see the school he was currently in as having its core

business as "instruction of the curriculum." There is a deep tradition of "whole child" and "world

community" and huge community philanthropy seemingly is at the heart of the school's purpose.

Reflecting on the "principal's vision" and the "principal's privilege, right, obligation to impose

that vision on their staff" may consume his thoughts for the remainders of his days at the school.

Question four asked Principal Clements to reflect on how he saw the *PSES*, the *Principal*

Sense of Efficacy Scale, relating to his professional practice. He spoke about how he has

highlighted the managerial tasks and that "where the managerial pieces impost themselves by self-efficacy diminishes; I become less powerful." "Maintaining control of his personal daily schedule" as well as "handling the paperwork required of the job" were the lowest (checked 5 out of 9 on the Likert scale) due to the fact that he knows his personality and his strengths and he is cognisant of choices he makes and the priorities he has. Principal Clements also noted that he did not believe that everyone had a good sense of the word "efficacy" and that before someone answered the PSES he would hope that they would have "more than a one-sentence thought about efficacy."

In the second part of the interview Principal Clements was asked to reflect on his management role and share with me his beliefs and feelings regarding the relationship of his self-efficacy beliefs and his professional practice regarding management. His immediate response was that "I am a good manager."

> I realize that management is tedious but until the ship is on course and the motors are running and people know that things, processes are predictable, processes are in place, and schools in this jurisdiction, we're in a very site-based environment so principals are dramatically responsible for money…so when I open my comments with "I am a good manager", that's your measure of self-efficacy.

Principal Clements spoke about how he is definitely a good manager, but not a collaborative one. "I believe in vision, so I would spend most of my time trying to inculcate a vision and instructionally lead in the context of that vision, but I know that I can't get to it without managing." His belief in his ability to manage, even though not noted by a response on the *PSES* is heard when he says

> I am respected for my ability to manage people, to be the boss…I am not a collaborative manager. I have solutions and I impose them. I listen, but collaboration, I think for the most part, at least in a big ship, you can only talk for so long and I think 40 of the 60 teachers want principals to make management decisions and by that I mean putting in processes that are identifiable and predictable for the working of the building.

Thus, Principal Clements chooses to place managerial tasks as less of a priority in his work, but definitely believes that he is very good at the managerial aspect of his work. When I reflected back to him the statement that, "you feel competent about doing it but it's just that you'd rather not", he responded with:

> Yeah, and that's what is reflected in the questionnaire. And I think that's a level that I don't know whether a questionnaire hashes out. If you were to ask the people around me; if you were to go out now and ask the employees that deal with me every day in the management role, which many of them in a high school are support people, they would look and say that that is a strength of his that he has brought to this school; a kind of different, delineated, directed management that makes people feel that they are heard but they area also managed…let's put systems in place that work.

When I asked Principal Clements where he thought the staff would place him on the scale in terms of, for instance, the question asking about "handling the paperwork of the job", he said that they would definitely place a 9 as a response. His reason for placing a "5" in a couple of boxes is that he knows he *can*, but he is not very confident that he *will*. Her said: "I can do it, but am I confident that I will do it?...it's a very personal, reflective thing."

Moving into the next question regarding instructional leadership, Principal Clements was asked to reflect on his instructional leadership role and share with me his beliefs and feelings with regards to the relationship of his self-efficacy beliefs and his professional practice. He very succinctly told me that:

> Instructional leadership is fundamental to any vision of schools. Our business is learning and learning is accomplished through some definition of instruction. So if our business is learning and I'm leading our business, I have to pay attention to what we call here instructional leadership.

Principal Clements feels that self-efficacy for him comes from a "knowledge issue and not a control issue. "

> So I feel like I'm able to work in the collaborative world of instructional leadership. I have experience in two of the curricular areas of the high school. I have taught for years in Social and English. I have spent my life, both experiencing, reading about and thinking about, the classroom relationship, and I can talk experientially and academically and philosophically. And I'm open to and highly collaborative about the discussion about instructional practice, but my vision modulates my openness. I have some beliefs about learning that are core to how my vision of how classrooms should look, therefore my self-efficacy is built on a lot of, let's call them, credibility factors, but what brings it down is the ability to work with people who don't believe like me and don't want the vision.

An example was given by Principal Clements with regards to brain research and learning. He asked "how could you teach adolescents and know nothing about the development of the adolescent brain?" He has a very firm belief that teachers must know what learning looks like in the brain; what happens to the brain that improves memory; and the differences between the male and female brain. "His vision of knowledge, instructional leadership, or instructing demands a professional knowledge of the process you're engaged in." And he emphasizes that people need to read and to not simply go to a one-day conference, and they need to doubt, question and read.

> There I'm lecturing about that simply because my vision of schools being inhabited by extremely knowledgeable people about the business they're doing comes up against an instructional leadership process where I'm often sitting in rooms, talking to people who either don't care, who maintain they don't have the time, or don't have the commitment.

Principal Clements believes that making a commitment to reading, and learning more about the brain research and learning, will make people's jobs much easier, and thus was seemingly agitated when speaking about this apparent lack of initiative to be fully involved in the profession. He therefore sees a "vision conflict" and questions the use of power in learning and in "the power structure that some educators believe is necessary to create learning."

> I think I'm right. The brain research, the gender research, relationship-building

> research, so many things form a vision of what learning in the classroom looks
> like and so many people in education appear, particularly in highs schools I think;
> appear oblivious to all that and myopic towards curriculum; communication of
> curriculum. So that's the wrestling I have with my own self-efficacy because at
> some point, because self-efficacy says you think you have the power to instructionally
> lead…I do! But at some point I feel like a horrible failure likely because I just want to
> bull shit! This is bull shit! This is just wrong what we do. And we keep doing it.

I felt his sense of frustration and understood how his vision has come up against the "way it has always been mentality" that may be found in schools due to the industrial model still being perpetuated and instructional leadership being based on past methodologies. Speaking about continuing the practice of early start times for adolescent boys whose brains do not work best at eight o'clock in the morning Principal Clements remarked that: "Now I understand, I have been around long enough to know that there are pragmatic variables that are very hard to move; but they're not cultural variables, they're not philosophical variables, they are usually management variables."

Principal Clements spoke about this instructional leadership piece as coming up against the "vision" piece as he sees his sense of self-efficacy changing with "the more you fail, the less self-efficacy you have; the less feeling of being powerful, able to make change, able to treat the condition."

> Because in medicine, when we say a drug has a degree of efficacy, all we're saying
> is that the drug can treat this condition. The level of efficacy; medicine doesn't use
> that; but the level of efficacy would to some extent be how well it treats the condition,
> well self-efficacy then; I know I can treat the condition of instructional leadership,
> but over time I begin to doubt, and what doubt does is reduce the level of self-efficacy.

He emphasized that "doubt is the enemy of self-efficacy" so being in a new principalship, if you are reflective principal, "doubt is always lurking there." He spoke about the traditional high school experience where some believe that children are not to be given chances as they want to "hold them accountable." He has found it somewhat difficult to espouse his vision when even the

concept of accountability has not been defined and researched. Principal Clements says he is

very open to "differing views that he is well willing to discuss" but not with someone who has

not read about accountability or has based their opinion on an anecdotal comment. He also spoke

about the phrase "well in the real world" and again was not impressed with entertaining a

discussion if the person has not studied the research. He did not elaborate on this aspect but

instead immediately said that "that's my discussion of efficacy and instructional leadership" and

asked for the next question.

The next question asked Principal Clements to reflect on his moral leadership role in the

school and share his beliefs and feelings with regards to the relationship of his self-efficacy

beliefs and his professional practice regarding moral leadership. His initial response after a

thirty-second pause was: Oh…that's a big one." When he was reflecting on the questions on the

PSES that related to moral leadership he mentioned that "I can do all this but I don't know

though, the word moral, doesn't quite get to it." Elaborating on what he had just said, Principal

Clements continued with "I suppose what you want to say is what is the moral directive? What is

the moral absolute that needs to be, that is part of your vision that drives your moral self-

efficacy? Stating his beliefs and values he shared that he did not believe in

> the abusive use of power-the coercive abuse of power in schools. That he did not
> believe that students should be made to cry. I don't believe that guilt should prevail.
> I think we should trust each other. Loyalty should play. I think we should consider
> The narrative of each other in nearly everything we do. What story are you living
> By and how can I provide empathy for your story? And how does your story affect
> Affect your behavior? So those are all moral issues…so I suppose when I look at
> The questionnaire's measures I can do all that. Yup! I can do all that.

Reflecting on the items in the questionnaire Principal Clements said he "could do all those with a

certain persona, but what are the real moral issues of a school that demand a belief that I can

make a difference." He had mentioned some such as trust, loyalty and honoring narratives, and

mentioned that he believed that every leader would probably have a different list. Principal

Clements was clear that "my self-efficacy is built on modelling those things…I don't do it every

day but I think I try to make my judgements as a leader based on some of the morality I just gave

you." He re-emphasized the importance of loyalty and how he believes is very loyal and strives

to model that value.

> I am loyal. And if you; that loyalty has to do with if you have worked here a long
> Time whether I like you or not isn't the point. You've given years of your life here,
> To this building, you deserve something for that. And you might be a lazy good for
> Nothing or you might be someone who's as rigid as hell and opposing my vision,
> But you deserve some loyalty.

The abusive use of power is also something that is not allowed to be expressed in his school. He

speaks of a "certain moral absolute around staff in the building" but with student's he says he is

just the opposite. "They're little children; they're growing; they're individuating; they're going

to make mistakes." He also revealed that "I haven't been in a life a very moral person" but that

his staff knows that he has some moral absolutes in terms of the culture of the school. Principal

Clements says that he holds people accountable when he hears them gossip or lie to each other or

to him. Building trust and caring for one another is very important to Principal Clements as he

wants to support his staff. Yet at point in the conversation he sighed and said that he really

doesn't really know how he feels about moral leadership as he reflected on the biblical writing of

"those among you who have not sinned can cast the first stone" and thus felt that "we're always

caught a bit." He paused for a few moments after that thought and then espoused with "Yeah, I

don't know…I don't like the morality of some of my principal colleagues…I don't like their

morality." He also spoke about the fact that perhaps they would question and not like his

morality as well. Inculcating the community standards was also mentioned as something he

would never do as he expressed that

> I will use the community standards to reflect on what I should do here but the
> community is a pretty punitive place and we are charged with the minds of little
> children and I don't think the punitive nature of the community is what we're
> about. We are not real life. We are in charge of, probably in terms of psychological
> processes, we are intrusted with the individuation of human beings and the process
> of individuation, at least in the Jungian sense, is happening between 14 and 20, and
> we hold it in our hands at junior high and high school, so we're not real life.

After stating that "so that's my lecture on morality" we progressed to the final question. When

asked about what supports Principal Clements saw as essential to him being an effective

principal in meeting his managerial, instructional and moral leadership roles and responsibilities

his first thought was that "the support needed most is a good friend in the business of being a

principal."

> When people use the word mentorship I want to get rid of the mentor part of
> that and use the word friendship. I need a good friend. So many of the relation-
> shops that support me are colleagues who are good friends and are good friends
> in the work place. ..we meet once a month and talk about our work.

Principal Clements also explained that he is stubborn and with his "competing vision piece" and

sometimes the "very best way to support Principal Clements is to get the hell out of his way;

trust that he'll do his job and get out of the way." He also noted that "if you are a superintendent

or a staff member that does not like intellectualism" then he is not going to get along with them.

He also revealed that he is a "man who usually works from a glass half empty perspective" so if

he's dealing with someone all "smiley and hopeful" it may be a problem. He appreciated when

district colleagues understood and appreciated that styles and personalities that differ from their

own can still be effective in their positions. Asking the question of himself of whether he feels

supported, he said that because he has a deep belief in his own responsibility for his life, that he

doesn't know how people would support him.

> I don't know how the district or the government would support me because
> I am often so appalled by the way they are. I…they don't get my vision; so if
> I work for a superintendent who sees me as taking every issue to some philo-

sophical, intellectual level and not pragmatic enough; not with my feet on the
ground; then I don't know how they would support me because I'm not changing.

This candid expression of sentiment from Principal Clements struck me as very courageous yet

stubborn and I appreciated his honesty as he spoke about who he is as a person and a leader. One

interesting statement regarding supports from others was that "I don't know how you can support

me because I'm not sure whether you have any ideas that are truly your own." However,

Principal Clements did say that "freedom to make financial choices; freedom to have

relationships that are trustworthy, and the freedom or the request to be appreciated even though

you may not fit into the mold" would be the things that he would say constitutes support to him.

In terms of how he gives support, he said that "support is shown in believing in people's ability

to do the right thing. And I do. I believe in people's ability to do the right thing." In terms of

support for the financial management of the building, Principal Clements says he feels supported

but that the support is different as "to some extent the external people are watchers and auditors;

they are the check and balance against me, so their support is usually corrective or silent." He

feels very secure in his abilities to manage the budget and thus says there are minimal times

when he needs any support in the financial management realm and is only contacted when visa

receipts may be missing.

Principal Clements espoused that "probably when you're looking at supporting principals

you should also be careful where you put them." He spoke about those with "deep vision" and

how it may not be good to place a principal

> whose vision is deeply rooted in instructional leadership and you put them
> in a school where instruction is secondary the whole child and you think that
> they will have the ability to inculcate and bring that vision about…I think that
> would not be supporting them very well."

On a final note Principal Clements spoke about the site based management in the school district and how he had the ability to have so much control over the funds allocated to his school and was able to make decisions on class size, staff, etc. He spoke of how there was so much support in terms of the "freedom of choice" that was afforded to the principals in the school district and thus "self-efficacy in that environment; you just have to believe that you can do it. You just have to."

Throughout the interview Principal Clements exuded an introspective, intellectualized, and fascinating persona that created a very intimate climate for the interview. I believed that he was being very open and honest and I felt honoured after the end of the interview questions when we were sitting and talking and he told me that he was "trying to claim his life back." He spoke about

> All I'm doing is trying to claim my life back. I've spent most of my life being, trying to please, and trying to please in a variety of facets and I think the one thing I've come to be proud of myself in the last three or four years, is claiming my life back.

I was impressed with his sense of commitment to the children and his belief in knowing the journey of child development and being well read with regards to research and practice. His sense of self-efficacy as reflected by the *PSES* was in the moderate range which was surprising to me initially as I found that my first impressions were a man with a very high level of self-efficacy. However, when he explained that he believed he "could do it" but was not confident that "he would do it", then I understood why the numbers were not higher on the Likert scale. He also noted that "he can do most things if he's challenged" as that is in his personality.

He reflected that he believed we are part of a profession that is profoundly flawed in that he was disappointed that education had not changed in the past 40 years. The pressure to conform and not to challenge and reach and question was also heard as something he wished had changed.

He also spoke about probably not being in his position for very much longer" if he wished to continue claiming who he is." He has been introspective with "the thought of being defined; continually defined by your work, where you've been, and not defined by something more spiritual or more sacred then that." As well he is thinking about where self-efficacy comes from and where does doubt and where does the habit of introspection, reflection come from" Introspection, he offered, is his "driving force."

Participant D: Principal Denton and Dungren High School

Dungren High School is an urban public school with a student population of 1170 and 55 teachers. Principal Denton is a 54 year old Caucasian female who has been a confirmed principal for 11 years. She has been at Dungren School for the past seven months and has been a principal at several schools in the same school district as well as has been at Central Office and with Alberta Education in consultant roles. She has completed a Master's Degree in Educational Policy Studies and has participated in her district's principal preparation course. She was involved in a mentorship relationship in her first year as principal and has subsequently mentored two colleagues who were first year principals.

I arrived at Dungren School on a Thursday afternoon at approximately 12:45 p.m. and there were many students in and around the school who I passed on my way into the office. Students and staff were very pleasant when I greeted them and I was treated with kindness and respect when I arrived at the front desk and identified myself to an Administrative Assistant. Principal Denton welcomed me into a very spacious office with large windows, lovely student artwork and a desk and adjoining work space that had ample room for a computer centre, printer,

books and paperwork. The desk was cluttered but did not seem unorganized, and I felt very relaxed and comfortable as we sat down for the interview.

Completion of the *Principal Sense of Efficacy Scale (PSES)* reflected a moderate sense of personal efficacy in that Principal Denton had a mean score of 6.83 on the full scale analysis with mean sub-scores of 6.00 in efficacy for management; 6.83 in efficacy for instructional leadership and 7.33 in efficacy for moral leadership. The scale is on a 9 point Likert Scale.

My initial sense regarding Principal Denton was one of a personable, positive and thoughtful woman who seemed a bit distracted at first but settled into our conversation after a few minutes of transition time. Her nervous, yet robust laugh was displayed early in our meeting and she truly emanated a true interest in my study. Throughout my detailing of the study and the overview of the interview she was very focused and displayed active listening skills with excellent eye contact, nodding and other body language that communicated her true involvement in our conversation. While filling out the *PSES* Principal Denton commented on the question regarding "handling the time demands of the job" and said that "it's one of the hardest things to do. " She also noted that maintaining control of your daily schedule is a difficult thing to do but that it varies day to day. She also shared that she's way better at coping with the stress then she used to be and has learned "not to fret about certain things" and "it's going to be what it's going to be and I'm just going to do the best job I can every day." Due to past events with regards to the health and mortality of her family Principal Denton said that "I am not going to waste too much of my life worrying about things I can't control." Enrolment was one particular issue that was noted and it was something that she was not going to worry about as she has in the past.

Defining self-efficacy Principal Denton get immediately said that it "probably means how much I believe I can act as a change agent right?…and how much control I have over things that happen in the school during the day and over the course of a year, right?" After giving her input she also said: "that's what I would think it is; is that what it is?" We laughed together over her question and I did not directly answer it but referred to the section of the principal information letter that I had given to her that outlined the concept of self-efficacy. She then noted that she has had conversations with her staff about children "not being like Pavlovian dogs" and how they have human agency and are not simply stimulus-response individuals but ones who think and make choices. She mentioned that "just because we put certain consequences in place that we are going to get certain things because that just doesn't happen." When asked if there was anything else to add, Principal Denton noted that the "flip side would be understanding what you can't change and being ok with that." Once again she used the word "fretting" in the context of her believing that if she was unable to change something, she was "not going to fret over it for the next six months". Principal Denton reflectively added that there was "always a little person that sits on her shoulder" that talks to her about "not being able to do that" so she has to have the conversations with herself to believe that she can.

Responding to the second question of her reaction after the completion of the *PSES*, Principal Denton remarked "probably that I have to figure out a way to maintain more control over my own day." She had rated that question a 5 coupled with a 5 scored for "handle the time demands of the job" and thus she mulled about her belief that she could maintain more control. Although she said she had maintained control of the schedule and demands in the past, she reflected regarding the importance of modelling and being consistent in word and deed and how that is difficult at times when working with struggling staff and students. Another reaction that

was mentioned was that "there is a reality in our job that there's certain things we have no control of like PAT's and Diploma exams." She would like to change the schedule for diploma examinations for example and have them written before the students go out at Christmas, but said "there was nothing I can do about that." Therefore "understanding and realizing that there are limitations of your job…that are well beyond our control". Immediately after this thought, Principal Denton did make a point of mentioning that

> That's one of the things that always surprises me in education is how many
> people don't understand that we have a lot of freedom to change rules and
> do what we want within a school. Big picture no we can't change any of the
> questions, no we change the time. However, we have lots of agency within
> that to structure our day and do whatever we want. And working with teachers
> to teach them that or convince them of that is interesting sometimes.

Scoring "maintaining control of your own daily schedule" with a 5 was mentioned again by Principal Denton as "sometimes it's really difficult to do that but other days I'm doing a great job of handling it." So her "5 score" was placed because "it sort of balances out to me in the middle." Also mentioned was her reasoning for answering 5 (to some degree) on the question regarding promoting the prevailing values of the community in your school. "The reason I put somewhat is because we have such a diverse community so I don't really know what the prevailing…that's a hard thing to do in this community because we have so many English Language Learners (ELL) and refuges. This was an area that she felt that "she was still wading through" as she was new in the school.

The only question that was answered with a top-ranked 9 on the Likert scale was with regards to handling effectively the discipline of students in the school. Principal Denton said that she is very comfortable and consistent with regards to discipline and frames her style within a "learning model." She emphasized that people "never walk out of the door mad" and that good

communication is foundational. Good communication was seen by Principal Denton as "the hardest thing to maintain" and that the "bigger the building the harder it is." The messages need to be clear, consistent, and repetitive, so that people will have the opportunity to hear and understand.

Principal Denton said that she is fairly familiar with the *PPCSL* document and that "every time she reads it she finds something in it." However, her response to how it has impacted her as a principal was answered with "not much actually." Continuing our discussion however, she noted that she has to do her Professional Growth Plan each year and it must align with the *PPCSL* and district priorities and said that "it's a nice tool to remind yourself of the areas you need to address." Principal Denton will also use the *PPCSL* to drive conversations regarding her current leadership staff and their professional practice as they are expected to understand and execute their roles and responsibilities as per the *PPCSL*. AS we spoke further Principal Denton did say that the *PPCSL* was a "standard that we're going to be held to so you should be familiar with it." As well, she reiterated that the standard does drive her professional development and guides her growth plan, and if she "ever needs to validate that I'm doing these things, I know where it is and I know how to look it up."

Fostering effective relationships and visionary leadership are two of the *PPCSL* competencies that Principal Denton referred to as the ones she is concentrating on when being new to a school. She also said that these were two competencies that were important each and every day. She saw the subsequent competencies as those that one would "move into after you've been in a school a year or so." Then, when reflecting on the competency of managing school operations and resources, she made a point of differentiating between managing and

leading and "how they are two different things." When asking her to elaborate on this thought

she said

> I'll just talk about our district and when choosing new principals
> I think you have to make sure they are not getting a good manager
> versus a good leader. I think there's difference; because you can
> look like a great manager if you have good business manager, even
> if you suck at managing. But to be a learning leader you have-there
> are very different qualities there; I mean you have to be able to foster
> relationships with the staff; and there are lots of things you can look
> at to see if people are doing that or not, rather than "did they balance
> their budget?"

Fostering effective, meaningful relationships was seen as the most important aspect of the job to

Principal Denton coupled with the instructional leadership. Managing the school operations and

resources was not an area that she considered essential as she mentioned that "we do have to

balance our budgets…but you can balance your budget by having a good business manager."

Hiring good people to do the critical roles and responsibilities in schools and to assist principals

in managing their finances and infrastructure is very important to Principal Denton. Highlighting

the budget or managerial part of the job is not the most and she sees the relational aspect of

knowing teachers and knowing students as the most important aspect. Referring to competencies

1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 (fostering effective relationships; embodying visionary leadership; leading a

learning community and providing instructional leadership) Principal Denton said that "if we

want to have superb results and great places for kids, that this is the stuff we need to look at."

Moving to the next question in the interview Principal Denton was asked about the *PSES*

and how she saw the *PSES (Principal sense of efficacy scale)* relating to her professional

practice. She perceived the scale as "a visual representation of efficacy" and that if she had many

answers on the lower end of the *PSES* that "it would probably tell me that I need to rethink my

professional practice." She also said that the scores that were "mostly in the middle" were due to

"being in a new school." Also influencing her scores was that she thought about the population she was dealing with here at the school (high ELL and high "at risk" population) and how difficult it was to "move them up on the standardized test." Changing the question to read "help them graduate from high school" would have had her place a 9 on the scale as she said she was very confident in finding a pathway to success for high school completion for each and every child. In her past school Principal Denton said they worked diligently and tirelessly to improve standardized test scores "but they didn't go up that much." In that school, as in this one, there were "many other things that changed such as an increase in appropriate behavior and decrease in suspensions" but "to move on standardized tests; we can make a difference but it is an incremental small difference and it takes a long, long time and lots of work to change."

It was interesting that Principal Denton said that a principal in a more affluent school community would perhaps place an 8 or 9 on the influencing standardized tests question which she felt was a "misunderstanding on their part because it's mostly about the big house and the standard of living of the families that come to them." Her assumption was that the socioeconomic status or social vulnerability would disallow large performance improvements. "To some degree we can make a difference, but lots of it they come to us with what they have." She therefore said that "that's why I answered that way because I'm trying to be truthful; because I don't really feel like I have a huge impact on them."

Principal Denton said that "her strong suit" lay in the questions relating to relationships with people on the *PSES*. Once again she noted "time demands" as being an area "where I'm bad because I allow things to encroach on my time…and then kids come and ask and I can never say no to them." Motioning to her work space, Principal Denton said that her time management is sometimes ineffective and "that is why my desk always looks like that… and I think that goes

back to my thing about are we looking at managers or are we looking at visionary leaders; because visionary leaders often have a messy desk." She continued to talk about visionary leaders as those who are in the hallway, talking with students and staff, working with families and thus they're not in their offices tending to the reports.

In the second part of the interview Principal Denton was asked to reflect on her management role and share with me her beliefs and feelings regarding the relationship of her self-efficacy beliefs and her professional practice regarding management. She said she "did not see herself as the best manager only because I see the more important work is instructional leadership and working with kids and staff." She also clarified that she is not questioning her ability to do those managerial jobs but it's just that it is not her favorite part of the job and she said it's "the first thing that I drop off the plate when the plate gets full." Ensuring that the other members of her leadership and support team have strengths in managing school operations and resources assists Principal Denton in the day-to-day operations of the school. So although she believes she has a fairly high sense of efficacy in the management role she disclosed that "it is not an area that I particularly like doing."

The last question on the *PSES* that asks about the ability to prioritize among competing demands of the job was highlighted by Principal Denton as one that she has "gotten way better at and has become a learned skill." She notes that she now collaborates more with others; asks for assistance from her assistant principals; and her experience as a principal and knowledge of the yearly calendar enables her to plan more effectively and have issues taken care of. An example was illustrated of finishing next year' Student Handbook by Spring Break instead of panicking during the last weeks of June. Principal Denton highlighted the difference between a first year principal and a seasoned one in how they become more adept in prioritizing the demands of the

job due to their knowledge and understandings of the position and the timelines/deadlines. From her experience she has also come to understand that certain things that are on timelines and deadlines can be deferred for a few days if they do not affect other schools and colleagues in the district. She is also aware that due to her past record of "getting everything in on time they're (central office) is going to give me a break on one or two things if we're swamped here for whatever reason."

Reflecting on her instructional leadership role and her feelings and beliefs with regards to the relationship of her self-efficacy beliefs and her professional practice regarding instructional leadership, Principal Denton responded that she believes" it's pretty high." She believes that you have to look at students on an individual basis and that each and every child is deserving of the best education possible. She spoke about the importance of how the teachers speak about the children and that they need to make sure that they do not talk about struggling children "as lesser than or something." Her views on inclusion mirror the district in supporting integration of special needs students into the regular classroom, and she does emphasize that she will support teachers throughout the process. She wondered aloud with regards to staff seemingly having little trust in administration with making sure integration is supports are in the classrooms. What "shocks her" is that, after her 11th year of working on integration in the schools, that teachers are still resistant and fearful of lack of supports. She spoke about her integrity in only placing students in situations that will see success for both the student and the teacher, and thus is hopeful that staff will learn to trust that the change will benefit all. Instructional leadership and her work serves to really motivate Principal Denton.

> This work really...it motivates me. It's self-generating. I don't
> know what you want to call it but it makes, this is what makes
> me excited…yeah…let's get moving here. I love to see change;

> I love to see new things; I love to see kids that are learning and watch kids do better and better and better because they, and this school is already fantastic at it…my job here is tweaking…and finding areas where we can make it even better than it already is; because they already do a fantastic job of facilitating and helping kids in this building.

Principal Denton shared her past issue of having trouble navigating tough conversations with teachers regarding desired changes in practice that would align with inclusive education mandates. She believes that one of the biggest lessons she has had in her career was her understanding that "it really doesn't matter what decision I make, somebody is not going to like it." She holds fast to making decisions based on what she thinks is right for kids and thus has let go of trying to please everyone.

The next question asked Principal Denton to reflect on her moral leadership role in the school and share her beliefs and feelings with regards to the relationship of her self-efficacy beliefs and her professional practice regarding moral leadership. The issue of graduation and the regulation of which students will be crossing the stage was something that Principal Denton spoke about as she said she was "struggling with it because morally I'd just let them all come." The problem was that in the past the students who had not paid their fees, had not been regular attenders, and had not completed a certain number of credits were disallowed from joining the commencement ceremony. Principal Denton said she had a "huge debate in her head" because this is the first time she has had to deal with a situation like this and it was weighing heavy on her mind. Due to the high school flexibility project and students being able to take longer for the completion of their courses (and perhaps extend even into the of summer), she pondered if "we should be using attendance as an indicator of whether you can cross the stage or not." Coming to a different school and learning the history behind the policies and procedures that are in place is something that Principal Denton knows is important to be very considerate of.

>Because there are lots of reasons they have all the rules and things
>that they are doing;they just didn't all of a sudden decide "let's just
>do this." So that's where I have to make sure that I find out what led
>them to these practices rather than just change things….because I think
>principals get themselves into big trouble when they change things
>the minute they walk in the door…I know what my beliefs are, so now
>I have to wait before I put them on someone else; I have to make sure
>that I fit them with someone else within the school here.

In speaking about her past principal position she did however note that she had to change a certain practice regarding discipline as it was a glaring problem with regards to how they suspended students without due process. She then clarified her feelings regarding a need to change policies and procedures in saying that "it is when the practices are clearly not benefitting kids that's when I think, I'm sorry, I'm going to have to change it right now…whereas here, they have good practices; it's a good school; they do a great job here." She explained that:

>Even though I'm morally struggling with some of the things I have to go back
>into my instructional or managerial and ask myself how much of this do I want
>to change; but I want to change it with consensus not because I'm going to tell
>people what to do. Right? Because I've learned that that doesn't work and we
> just get compliance then.

Having a shared vision was deemed important by Principal Denton and she "will work to have lots of conversations with stakeholders when making decisions that affect them." She did mention however, that sometimes there are decisions she makes without this consult when there is a money management issue on one side and it's better for kids and it's a better instructional method." The example she cited was when she had 38 students in regular classes and only 8 students in the Knowledge and Employability and thus had to integrate.

Principal Denton found that the moral and managerial leadership "can clash badly sometimes" as from a budget perspective there are certain things that she cannot allocate funds towards even though she would truly like to do so. She reiterated once again that "you just can't be a manager because the reason we've had some really good changes in education in the last 25

years is because we have some good visionary leadership." She espouses that "if we just had managers we'd have these nice little square boxes where kids just come and go." She also spoke about the *PSES* question regarding "promoting the prevailing values of the community in your school" and that she is

> struggling right now with some of the assessment stuff that's been in the news and like some of the research that tells us absolutely what we need to be doing with kids is clashing with community and community is winning; and it's just, I'm finding it really difficult; I'm finding it really difficult…and our government is not, will not stand up to these parents; like with math; this new math stuff; one parent has a kid that's not doing well so the whole thing gets tossed out?

Principal Denton also noted that many principals brought no zero practices into their building and there were no problems so she attributed the issues with the importance of being a good instructional and moral leader and working hard to maintain excellent relationships. She also spoke about the importance of "timing and understanding when to change things and when not to." Going to zeros at her past school was a "staff decision" and they felt empowered and involved with moving ahead with the assessment policy. Having a staff that feels intricately involved in the processes leading to school decisions was seen by Principal Denton as key to the success of any initiatives or policies being embraced by the school team.

The final question asked of Principal Denton was what supports she saw as essential to her being an effective principal in meeting her managerial, instructional and moral leadership responsibilities. Immediately she replied with: "You need to have colleagues that are accessible by either phone or going over and having conversations with them." Mentioning that her district is "really good for that" she outlined that there were groups of schools doing instructional leadership together; catchment group she called it; and that professional development was excellent due to the collaboration of many teams of teachers. She noted that "the catchment work

we are doing is just spectacular." "Teacher driven and teacher led" with support from district consultants, there was a large PD session at her school with 50 schools and 500 teachers and it was an incredible experience with various presentations highlighting focused issues that teachers wanted to see. Principal Denton saw the Catchment Professional Development Day as "better then teacher's convention" with a wealth of incredible sessions with information on diversity in the schools, anti-bullying, literacy and numeracy, technology in the classroom, etc. "A free flow of information between schools" enhances the programs at all sites and requests for support see elementary, junior high and senior high schools collaborating on many events and initiatives. Elementary and senior high students have been linked together in physical education activities and fundraising opportunities and there are other partnerships being forged with regards to strengthening the computer sciences program from grades 4-12. "Doors have been opened so that collaborative principal conversations between schools happen really easily."

University and Alberta Education support were also noted as being an enhancement for students in terms of a career pathways initiative. Alberta Education is also very involved at her school and within the catchment group with the provision of professional development in order to assist with communication and understanding surrounding the new documents regarding 21st century learning competencies. She also mentioned that within the catchment group there are individuals who have "taken over the consultant role and so there are people who have an allocation of time within the catchment to support assessment, literacy, etc." Principal Denton commented on how nice it was that it was no longer just her isolated in her building with the collegiality of the catchment group teachers and leadership teams. Sharing teacher expertise between schools and even having teachers from junior high come to their Open House to help with transitions was also seen as very supportive to her work in the principalship. The shift from

individual school programs to "our programs" with junior and senior high students working together was key to Principal Denton "not feeling so isolated anymore." The overall strength of the "catchment work" was seen by her as taking over from the previous "consultant model from central services" and she said she felt that it will be a "better model."

Support from central office was also viewed by Principal Denton as exemplary as she has an excellent assistant superintendent who always responds to her emails within a 24 hour period and whom she is comfortable approaching with any questions or issue. Timely and honest conversations and answers are given to her and she appreciates the same type of relationship with her superintendent. She also feels extremely well supported by her superintendent who responds "very quickly to her emails" and is relational and personable. District support services with regards to special needs students have been excellent, as well as assistance for high level discipline problems including expulsion issue. Principal Denton does find that

> regarding support, the area that is most difficult is some of our human resources issues. When you have a teacher, especially a teacher that needs; that doesn't do their job well; it is very difficult to work with them; to do that process with them …it's an enormous amount of work.

Reflecting further with regards to support for working with a teacher in a process of supervision and evaluation Principal Denton said that she "thinks our district has to look at that and find a different way of doing it because if we're going to do the job we have to do every day here and that?" The number of hours that the process takes with one teacher was discussed for a few minutes and it was noted that she would like to have additional support regarding instructional leadership and the process for supervision and evaluation. With regards to extended health and other issues with regards to teacher welfare, Principal Denton also commented on the supportive people in the department but also wished for a smoother process. Speaking about professional conduct, Principal Denton did mention that she is very firm and direct with staff in "lecturing

them regarding their professional relationships with their colleagues." She really feels that "we have a moral obligation as we've got people in front of kids that you wouldn't want in front of your own kid."

Principal Denton also spoke about the importance of working together with a team to create an excellent learning environment with respectful students and staff. As well, she saw the need of the support of the entire learning community to create a place where students had delineated discipline guidelines and were "not just suspended, suspended, suspended" without having a proactive plan for supporting students to be respectful, trustworthy people. As expressed earlier in the interview, she believes in an education model of discipline with logical consequences and people coming together to listen to each other and work towards a resolution of the issue with understanding and appreciation of circumstances and outcomes.

Throughout the interview Principal Denton was very personable and engaging and I was impressed with her commitment to her new school and her desire to work collaboratively to create an inclusive learning environment for every child. Newness to the current school was evident in the responses to questions as she was still discovering understandings behind some of the school's policies and procedures and she was very committed to working with staff to continue a climate of excellence that she believed they had been creating. The collaborative "catchment work" was seen as very supportive to her role and to the continuous improvement of the school and she seemed so very excited to be working with this team and these children in this place.

Participant E: Principal Ellis and Ekert High School

Ekert High School is an urban public school with a student population of 1100 and 52 teachers. Principal Ellis is a 58 year old Caucasian female who has been a confirmed principal for 11 ½ years. She has been at Ekert School for the past 3 ½ yeas and has been a principal at several schools in the same district. She has completed a Master's Degree in Secondary Education and has participated in her district's principal preparation course. She has benefitted from both being a mentor to others and being mentored as a first and second year principal.

Upon entering the school I was impressed by the large, bright, window lit foyer, which was filled with many students. The main office hosted clear signage and I I was invited to have a seat while the principal completed a meeting with a parent. Principal Ellis entered the office a few minutes later and welcomed me into her adjacent small office area which was appointed with a desk, table and chairs. We sat down at the small table and began our conversation where she quickly informed me that she had just returned from an overseas trip with students the night before and apologized for being quite jet lagged and tired. She declined my invitation to reschedule due to her fatigue as she said she would like to meet with me today and was looking forward to our conversation. I noticed her smile and greet students and staff as she walked into the office and I felt very comfortable in her presence with her soft spoken voice and gracious manner.

Completion of the *Principal Sense of Efficacy Scale (PSES)* reflected an above average sense of personal efficacy in that Principal Ellis had a mean score of 7.78 on the full scale analysis with mean sub-scores of 6.50 in efficacy for management; 8.33 in efficacy for

instructional leadership and 7.12 in efficacy for moral leadership. The scale is on a 9 point Likert Scale.

My initial sense regarding Principal Ellis was that of a personable, easy-going, professional, gracious woman who indeed presented as tired from her return from overseas the night before. I appreciated her willingness to meet with me and assist me with being a participant in this research. We spoke for a few moments regarding her recent school sponsored trip and she had an excellent time with the students and staff on their educational tour in China. Principal Ellis said that she did not have the opportunity to read on the topic of efficacy but she was very willing to be a participant and to relate her experiences and understandings. I went over the purpose for the study, showed her a copy of the "principal information letter", and had her sign the informed consent. Within the principal letter there was some preliminary information regarding the concept of self-efficacy and she appreciated having the time to read and reflect on its contents in our meeting.

I went through an overview of what our time together would look like and Principal Ellis completed the demographic form as well as the *PSES* in less than five minutes. She did not have many questions regarding both documents and we proceeded into the first question of asking her about what the term self-efficacy means to her. Her immediate response was that it was "the ability to stand up for what you believe and be confident in your ability to make decisions that in our case will have a positive impact on kids." When asking her if there was anything else to add to her definition she said "let's leave it at that and then I'll think about it."

When asking about her reaction after completing the *PSES (Principal Sense of Efficacy Scale)* she scanned the questions quickly again and responded with

what I'm really thinking about to be perfectly honest is how frustrating it
was for me just before I went away to China in terms of my ability to do
my job here and meet some demands I hadn't really thought about or
anticipated. We were asked to do this survey and it was a giant project …
and we were asked to look at some of the things that impact our ability to
do our job.

As Principal Ellis reflected upon the completion of that survey requested by the district and the

Alberta Teachers' Association she said

The irony was that I had done that and I was thinking at the time that really
it was a bit challenging to come up with some of the obstacles that make my
work difficult. So basically I hadn't thought that there were too many and
then I went through this (the survey) last month before I went away and like
there were just a bunch of things that came up from downtown all at the same
time an also here in the school…and it just reminded me that parts of the job
are really frustrating.

Infrastructure and expansion planning was one of the frustrations mentioned in that a re-

configuring of the school met with personal angst concerning what is in the best interest for

students. A strong commitment to children and an almost "protector" role was heard in her voice

of frustration.

That particular issue took a lot out of me, because, for me, when I get upset or
when I find stress a work; it's because, it's about justice type issues and so for
me it didn't feel like it was right for kids…I didn't feel it was right for kids and
I didn't think our building could support it.

Principal Ellis feels that "the belief is big because everything I do is based on what I think is

right for kids" so when she had this issue arise and felt it was "outside of her control" she was

frustrated and wanted to ensure that the process and outcome was a benefit for children.

Another of the frustrations she was feeling upon completing the *PSES* was working in

collaboration with partners with regards to inclusion issues. Mentioning how difficult it was to

advocating for families when there were several competing interests at the table and although

stakeholders were invested in solutions, she found it difficult to "contact different people from different departments and try to move the work forward and try to get answers." "Getting into the classrooms and doing your other stuff" was a challenge while navigating this issue. Principal Ellis said she found those type of issues hard and said that "the rest of it I don't find hard to be honest."

> Like the questions on this survey *(PSES)* about all of these things…if you have good people who care about kids around you, then everything you're doing is a team approach; and yes, you're an instrumental art of everything that's going on and your vision is very important to what's happening. I mean I really do believe that the principal is a very important part of having a successful school. And so, you know if you respect the talents of the people around you, and you have the same philosophy about kids, then this part isn't that, honestly, it's a lot of work, but it's not that hard.

At times balancing the demands of the principalship and what is happening in the school with requirements from central office may be challenging.

> I find that part hard sometimes because I find it hard when we have something we believe is a good initiative from downtown and to have the amount of time that is needed to do the change initiative when we have short timelines for other reasons so I always find that hard but I generally just put it to the side and try to manage what's happening in the school with what the requirements are from downtown for whatever the initiative it; but in that way, from consulting with the other people on the team; like the leaders; seems to be the best and most straight-forward way to do something that meets the expectations downtown but is appropriate for what other things are happening in the school. And that's tricky.

Principal Ellis commented on the balancing of demands and said that "we get quite good at it because we try to read what's happening in the classrooms and building." In knowing the culture of the school and knowing what is best for the students and staff in her learning Principal Ellis believes demands of school and district can be balanced.

Raising student achievement scores on standardized tests was addressed by Principal Ellis by saying that she believes "we have a lot of influence over what happens with that." She

called it a "big initiative" that you can have a big impact on with "good systems being in place", doing "ongoing work with assessment and making sure we are looking at the data and trying to improve practice." A 5 on the *PSES* on this question was a reflection of her belief in the enormity of the initiative or task. With regards to her ability to "handle the demands of the job" she says: "time demands are hard. I don't think that I am ever not "on"…to be honest even on weekends I'm thinking about school." Highlighting the influence of social media, Principal Ellis also mentioned that parents e-mail her at all times now and do expect that there is an answer, even on the weekends.

Principal Ellis said that she was fairly familiar with the *PPCSL* because she said "we have to do our annual processional growth plan on it." Setting the goals in the fall and then reflecting on them in the later part of the year serves as the professional growth plan document and does help with her reflective practices. She also said that the document is a "pretty good one and makes sense" and it does speak to the various aspects of the position. When reflecting on how the *PPCSL* document has affected her life as a principal she reflected upon "looking at it during the high school retreat" and also having her assistant principals reflect on it in their work and the goals for their annual professional growth plans. There were no other responses for this question other than Principal Ellis speaking to the importance of the document with her goal setting and for the reflection and goals of her leadership staff.

When responding to the question of how the *PSES* relates to her professional practice Principal Ellis said that she was not familiar with the scale but that "it seemed easy to complete and had good categories." She did not seem to want to elaborate further regarding her feelings and I did not push for a further response.

In the second part of the interview Principal Ellis was asked to reflect on her management role and share with me her beliefs and feelings regarding the relationship of her self-efficacy beliefs and her professional practice regarding management. Initially Principal Ellis asked if "we can use beliefs instead of efficacy?" and continued then to speak about how

> Beliefs are all-pervasive and do impact everything you do. So I do think it's very hard to separate out the management piece, because how you manage things has to do with what kind of person you are and the relationships you build; I think its all-pervasive.

Speaking further Principal Ellis reflected on her current school day and how she had many teachers come and see her throughout the day with many different kinds of issues. Their disclosures ranged from struggles with classroom management to sharing grief about a shattered marriage. In both cases teachers wanted to assure Principal Ellis that their work would not be jeopardized but support was needed. Having a foundation of trust in the relationship she has with teachers, so that they may feel able to honestly speak with regards to their practice and areas of need, was important to Principal Ellis. Her belief is that "part of management is making sure that teachers are fulfilling their roles as teachers and doing good lesson preparation" and thus she sees management and teacher mentorship as going hand in hand. In terms of other managerial issues

> almost anything that I'm doing that's operational, I usually am trying to mentor or guide, or teach other people…I'm bringing along with me how to do whatever those responsibilities are. So it's very much how I operate so I do very little in isolation really.

Principal Ellis highlighted a process they did with all staff at the school last year with regards to budget cutbacks where they journeyed through "a very challenging series of weeks" in looking at the financial reality of the school and having to cut 7% from their budget. The end goal was to secure the positions of all continuous contract staff and deciding where the budget would be

trimmed. The entire staff worked as a team and under the guidance of the leadership team (department heads, assistant principals and principal) made decisions for where the cuts would be made and thus where some may have to sacrifice for the good of the whole. Principal Ellis said that "we ended up I think coming out of it stronger" and she gave the example to illustrate how her beliefs drive her decisions. Her belief to protect her staff for the betterment of her students was the most important thing.

> Lots of schools went through a bad period where they had lots of staff at high schools who were being declared surplus and we didn't have to go through that …we made other decisions. We decided it was ok to have larger classes. We cut out an assistant principal position. We cut out a couple of leadership positions.

Reflecting on her instructional leadership role and her feelings and beliefs with regards to the relationship of her self-efficacy beliefs and her professional practice regarding instructional leadership, Principal Ellis responded by saying that "I think that instructional leadership is all the time." She went on to say that she feels very good with regards to the teacher self-directed professional development that has occurred at the school based around 5 principles and the "exploration of instructional areas directly relevant to improving student achievement." She is proud of the work she has done with the staff on the school-wide assessment policy and backward by design curricular development and is also excited about the new practice of staff reflective journals that staff are sharing with her. Journaling back and forth with teachers to "use that as a way to talk about their practice" has been a rewarding initiative. Principal Ellis says that in her instructional leadership role she is "pretty confident as a principal to be honest" and spoke about the importance of being with teachers in her instructional leadership role and also trying to "give the department heads a lot more of the instructional leadership responsibilities." This distributed leadership seemed to be a key element in her management style.

The next question asked Principal Ellis to reflect on her moral leadership role in the school and share her beliefs and feelings with regards to the relationship of her self-efficacy beliefs and her professional practice regarding moral leadership. Immediately Principal Ellis responded with: "to me that's the biggest piece."

> And I think that's why I'm quite confident in the principalship because that's not really an area of question for me ever. And so if you have a pretty solid moral compass and you kind of know why you're here; or if you know why you personally are doing the work, then you stay focused on that all the time so you're not really getting into areas of self-doubt. ..I don't really have a problem with that area because I have a pretty clear moral compass in terms of what I think is right… I do think that's the basis for everything.

Principal Ellis also believes that "you have to call people when they step off the path." She recently had an issue regarding a "teacher who crossed the line" in terms of disclosing too much personal information in class and being unprofessional. A time consuming process in terms of working with a teacher in difficulty but Principal Ellis recognizes the importance of protecting the children and supporting parental concerns. She reflected on the difficulty of dealing with teachers and parents when there are problems, but she says that "as hard as it is we have to deal with the conflict that comes up."

A restorative justice approach to discipline is also utilized in the school and Principal Ellis hires those who are student centered and align with their established practices. Being in a newly established school site, Principal Ellis said that "the ability to hand-pick the teachers was critical" so that staff with like-minded philosophy could come together to work as a team.

The final question asked Principal Ellis what supports she saw as essential to her being an effective principal in meeting her managerial, instructional and moral leadership roles and responsibilities. An immediate response was the appreciated support from the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent. Principal Ellis noted the quick response from central office with

regards to any of her queries and how she could "phone them on their cell phones" if she needed to. Any initiatives that she has asked Central Office to support have also been approved and she feels "extremely supported" at all times. Principal Ellis also spoke about the support she receives from the district inclusive learning team who are in her building to support teachers with teaching strategies and resources for the special needs students. The central office human resources department have also been very supportive and she mentioned that human resources plus the other departments she has worked with in central office have been honest and trustworthy as well.

Principal Ellis also mentioned the immense support she receives from her husband and family as well as the support received from the group of principals she works with in her geographic region of the city. She finds the regular meetings and informal gatherings and communication to be invaluable in her work. As well, she finds that the friendships she has with other colleagues inside and outside of her district, support her through their active listening and advice on various aspects of her leadership. Finally Principal Ellis mentioned that community partnerships were a big support for her and the school especially with regards to vulnerable students who are at risk for harming other students through bullying and other abusive actions. Having community recreation partnerships, addiction counsellors, and other Alberta Health Services resources, also supports the work inside and outside of the classroom.

Throughout the interview Principal Ellis was noticeably tired but was still engaged and eager to answer all the questions posed to her. I was impressed with her deep belief in the worth of each and every child and of her pursuit of the engagement and involvement of all staff in many of the major decisions in her school. Evident in our conversation was her belief in inclusion and in acknowledging the voices of the parents in their children's education and special

needs supports. Her belief in the importance of relationships and working collaboratively was evident throughout the interview and she has felt great support from central office in her time as a principal.

Participant F: Principal Fallow and Freeborn High School

Freeborn School is an urban public high school with a student population of 2400 students and 115 teachers. Principal Fallow is a 54 year old Caucasian female who has been a confirmed principal for 17 years. She has been at Freeborn School for the past 7 ½ years and has been a principal at 4 different schools in the same school district. She has completed a Bachelor of Arts Degree and a Bachelor of Education after degree and has participated in her school district's principal preparation course. She has done extensive mentoring at the district, city, provincial and international level and was also coached as a beginning principal and has utilized the expertise of a personal leadership coach in order to continue her professional development and growth.

It was a crisp spring morning as I approached the main doors of Freeborn School from the overcrowded parking lot. The front entrance and main floor hallway was busy with activity with both students and adults moving throughout the corridor. The entrance was brightly lit and the main office was immediately across from the main door; a pleasant surprise upon entry as I was anticipating a maze to find my way in the vastness of the landscape of the large building. As I entered the main office I immediately was greeted by both the administrative assistant and Principal Fallow and was escorted back into her small but comfortable office that housed a desk, chair, couch and small table. Her warm, gracious welcome served to have me relaxed and comfortable at the onset of our conversation.

Completion of the Principal *Sense of Efficacy Scale (PSES)* reflected a high sense of personal efficacy in that Principal Fallow had a mean score of 8.28 on the full scale analysis with mean sub-scores of 7.33 in efficacy for management; 8.67 in efficacy for instructional leadership and 8.67 in efficacy for moral leadership. The scale is on a 9 point Likert Scale.

My initial sense regarding Principal Fallow was that of a confident, charismatic, professional woman, and I anticipated a very interesting and illuminating interview. I was aware of her significant background and experience in the principalship and was eager to listen to her insights regarding her thoughts regarding the relationship of her self-efficacy beliefs to her professional practice. I reflected on how apparently comfortable she was in her office and her surroundings and she displayed an easy, relaxed demeanor. I spoke with her about the interview process and we talked through the demographic form as well as the Principal Introduction Letter. While completing the demographic form we spoke about the extensiveness of the Principal Education Development Course that Principal Fallow was involved with and how "rigorous" the entire eight month journey was with an assignment per week. In reference to her binder that was developed over that training period she said that

> I've gone to sort of look a couple of times around building leadership programs just in different consulting things I've done and that was the most inclusive, intensive training I could have done. I knew every single person in the district that I needed to know like centrally and the key person who would have been attached to them that would have been an expert in the field. It was really, really well done.

This intensive training served to have Principal Fallow feel very supported in her role as a new principal and also connected her to an enormous circle of human and other resources for her use. Also mentioned after completing the demographic form was that Principal Fallow had

experienced a number of mentorship experiences involving executive coaching and international

consulting.

Principal Fallow completed the *PSES* in under three minutes and when I indicated that I

thought that people may wish to take 18-20 minutes to complete it; she responded with "I do

everything quickly though." She also referred to the *PPCSL (Professional Practice*

Competencies for School Leaders) as the "walk on water" document as it speaks to the "notion

that none of us are perfect." When reflecting on what the term self-efficacy means to her,

Principal Fallow said

> It means, for me, it's that correlation between being effective and the ability I
> have to allow myself to be effective. So what am I doing to connect to the goals
> that I have and for something that would have effect. So efficacy of a teacher is
> how they feel as they look at their practice in creating something towards student
> achievement. So there's got to be links there. It's not just an overall feeling of doing
> something well but it's got to be linked to something that's concrete. So for me how
> much ability do I have to be effective as an instructional leader in the school?
> That would be with students, staff, parents, community, the district as a whole;
> you know, what's my ability to be, you know, effective?

After completing the *PSES (Principal Sense of Efficacy Scale),* Principal Fallow's reaction
was that

> I really feel that we've got a lot of permission in this job to do the right things.
> I'm not somebody that feels that there are barriers to doing what's right. I'm
> sometimes seen as a little bit rogue that way I think probably because, it's not
> that I don't adhere to the rules, it's just that I see lots of space to create and move
> things where they need to be to support students; and I see very clear pathways
> to doing that. I see very doable things that we can do with staff that creates
> culture, that supports all students, and that really brings community into being in
> line with those goals…I'm very hung up on what is and the possibilities.

Her belief is that "there is a lot of space to do the right things" and says that "people don't

necessarily take the permission they have in this job quite often to do what needs to be done."

She attributes that to her belief that people are "good rule followers" and may not have the

confidence needed to really know how to get to the goals they have envisioned. She accredits

her immense experience, many great mentors, and growing up in a family that clearly modelled confidence and goal setting as reasons why she is "blessed."

> The only things that frustrate me are sometimes when you get into the minutia; you know the operational pieces that you can't shift and don't make sense to me; don't allow us to have flow; and some of the paperwork stuff that I think is really not necessarily supporting the central goal, so I feel frustrated by it. So I say to a small extent that that gets in the way of being an instructional leader.

The two frustrations of the operational policies and procedures and the paperwork were illuminated when Principal Fallow completed the *PSES* with scores of 5 given for the question stems associated. She also felt very strongly with regards to each of us having "the ability in the world to make things happen, as long as we are very, very clear about what it is and why." Her "track record" of being in four different schools as a principal has been a rich and rewarding one. They have all "required very different skill sets" and she has learned so much about relationships and bringing students, teachers, parents and community together in realizing the same mission and goals. Principal Fallow speaks about one school as a place where she felt the parents and her "were raising our kids together." In struggling with similar issues when her children were of the same age as the children in the school, she learned a lot about herself and her teaching and learning and how there needed, in terms of parent and teachers, that "we needed to shift thinking on both sides." Finding that space in the middle of polarized thought where both can meet and to "do what's right for kids as its not one size fits all" was seen as a huge learning in her career. Moving to another very difficult school where safety was the predominant issue at the time, "there was a huge sense of urgency" to create a culture of security, care and respect. From these and other experiences Principal Fallow expressed her confidence in being able to handle many different situations and issues.

Reflecting on the seven-year length of time she has spent in her current school, Principal Fallow said that she has made a commitment to stay after learning more about the Finland Education Model. She said that "we view change very differently in our cultures and we view change in North America and in our jurisdiction as something that's a badge of honour." In Finland they "go into a school and hey stay in the school and create a family…and their view of change is that if you were moving somewhere every four years – that would be completely suspect." She commented on how this view of "sticking it out for longer" in order to create and maintain the "family" atmosphere, was one she believed in. She also noted that she doesn't "believe there is a strong succession plan…I don't have confidence in that yet." With the many initiatives and upcoming projects for the school and their community partners, Principal Fallow wishes to stay a bit longer to see things through and ensure there is a leader coming in who can sustain the progress. She also says that the culture in the school district is that "bigger is better" and she does not see that as the case and says rather that "bigger is just different…and easier in lots of ways…not in all ways, but lots of ways." One of the ways it is seemingly easier is that there are more support systems in place and more school personnel to assist with all aspects of the managerial role. So the "bigger is better" and "change is good" are two of the themes that Principal Fallow sees "running through her district."

With regards to her familiarity with the *PPCSL (Professional Practice Competencies for School Leaders)* and how it has affected her life as a principal, Principal Fallow said that she is familiar with the document and "certainly she has been working with it for quite some time and our growth plans are centered around it." She is impressed by the consultative manner with which the *PPCSL* was created and edited, but she is also cognisant of it not being "something that drives my practice." Referring to it as the "walk on water document", Principal Fallow says

that "no one in their right mind could meet all of them" referring to the seven outlined

competencies.

> I am committed to these competencies but that doesn't necessarily mean that I am
> equally working in all seven areas. I have other people that work on various parts
> of them and that's part of distributed leadership and team. I think there are areas
> that I do a great job and there's areas that I don't. So I build people on my team
> that are going to support that.

Principal Fallow also believes it is important to have "commitment, not compliance", and

although she is "completely on board in terms of the cornerstone values of her district and is

about equity" and is a "district player", she does not believe that she should be made to "fit three

competencies into her growth plan if it doesn't fit for her." To be a "true growth plan" Principal

Fallow believes that she needs to choose her own goals that may or may not be from three

different competency areas. Her experience and self-reflection was noted in her saying that "I

don't think that somebody should be dictating what I will be working towards" and she referred

to the PPCSL as a "one size fits all document" that needs to have flexibility for each leader. The

PPCSL definitely makes sense for her and she is "committed to the competencies" but she does

not see them as particularly as the drivers for her.

> You know these first five competencies are the ones that I feel I
> live every day but I'm not going to set goals in them. This is what
> I do, this is my job. The next one managing school operations and
> resources; yeah, I have a really good read on what the budget is and
> I know what is happening in my school but I don't do minutia about
> it; I have people that do that. And the last piece where we're looking
> at the societal context and understand in that I think that is where I
> have really grown in the past two years and that is where I have developed
> voice. And that's where I really had to stretch myself and it's been exciting
> to stretch myself there. And that would be around issues in the Ministry,
> issues within the province, issues internationally, looking at the profession,
> looking at our professional association; and this has been an area where
> I might have had ideas before but I wasn't really doing much worth there
> but I think I'm starting to push myself in that area. I am an advocate for
> public education and I am an advocate for schools and kids. So this is an

area where I feel that I am really invested.

Principal Fallow spoke of her commitment to her profession and to teachers and the importance of "affecting the conversation" by "pushing the envelope" all the time and really being creative and showcasing the initiatives in the school. Showing people "what it looks like" by ensuring the community and beyond see the creative programming that has been developed and illuminating great teaching and learning. She talked about how she wanted to be "in front of the conversations" by having staff think out of the box and take the lead so she could ultimately highlight their practices and thus influence policy and improvement in student achievement. Having evidence of great things happening in the school will serve to move the conversation at district and government levels to influence practice and enhance the importance of the teaching profession.

With regards to how Principal Fallow sees the *PSES* relating to her professional practice she noted that "I think it is a really good match for me." She said that "this makes sense to me because it talks about "permission to do the right things." Principal Fallow talks about "work-life integration" as opposed to "work-life balance." She believes that we can "bring the pieces together that fit but we need to be really healthy in how we do it." Referring to "to what extent can you facilitate student learning in your school" Principal Fallow believes that everyone is able to facilitate student learning in a school as "everybody has permission to be their own best self here and do what's right by kids, and if they need supports for that then or course we are going to support them." The "to what extent can you?" stem of the question is seemingly translated by Principal Fallow as "what permission do you give yourself to." As well, when reflecting on the question on the *PSES* with regards to "handling the time demands of the job", she said she wonders how the people answering lower on the *PSES* scale are using their time and what

144

particular tasks are they doing. She said she has "watched people measure how effective principals are by how long they stayed at their school and how burdened they were by the work" but she questions their effectiveness as well as does not agree with equating length of time at school with job effectiveness. Principal Fallow has been a single mom since she became a principal and she gave herself permission to do the right thing in being with her family. She tells her staff that "the day I look after someone else's kids better than my own is the day I am not in this job" and that is you "measure me by the time I get to school or leave school, you might not see the whole picture." To her staff in her school she says:

> You have permission to go and do things in your kids' kindergarten class. You have permission to do things that are right by your families. You have permission to look at your life and realize that you need to be healthy before you can be healthy in a classroom.

Principal Fallow also remarked that after giving staff permission that some have been shocked that "it's ok to put my life at par with my job." She also said that she will support and cover classes if staff need to legitimately be somewhere else "because if I can't take care of my own kids and if I can't be an effective mom, then what am I modelling for anybody else out there." She has discovered that some of her colleagues "do not feel the same freedom and that same permission to make those decisions about what is important in their jobs." Principal Fallow also does no spend a lot of time on minutia and she works very quickly. She is simply worried about "getting the work done" and she is more worried about "what's happening in the classrooms with kids."

Principal Fallow sees teachers and administrators as not giving themselves enough permission and also them not having enough confidence in themselves to take that opportunity to grant themselves permission. Illustrating with assessment as an example, she highlighted her extensive work in assessment practices and in adult learning as a consultant and principal.

Throughout the "assessment journey" as she called it, she was comfortable leading colleagues

and always understood that one size definitely did not fit all. She supported people to "build

meaning as they went along" and to "do things in bite sized pieces until they felt comfortable

with what fits and is congruent for them." She sees huge problems when leaders rely on others to

do lead assessment work as the "walls break down and we move too quickly or perhaps there's

not the depth that needs to be there as people start to make meaning of things."

> So I really feel strongly that it's those two pieces: it's about permission to and
> confidence in; and its jus not about confidence it has to be grounded in something.
> It's got to be confidence because you've got the ability…unfortunately in our
> district one of the things that we really used to value was the notion of being a
> consultant, working with adult learners; understanding that was an integral
> piece of being a principal; and as we devalued that position and didn't see it as
> a stepping stone to the principalship, we lost a huge part of what was coming
> out as the product of a principal. And I feel very strongly that if you cannot be
> someone that can lead adult learning, you shouldn't be in the job.

Time and experience are thus seen as very valuable to Principal Fallow as she views a leader as

someone who would have a depth of experience and background knowledge before they would

embark on ultimately instilling that knowledge and understanding to others in the learning

community.

With thoughts about "to what extent can you raise achievement on standardized tests",

Principal Fallow said that she doesn't "trust those tests right now" which was reflected in the 7

out of 9 score that she indicated on the *PSES*. She used to have huge trust and be a strong

advocate for the diploma examinations and the provincial accountability system but says that

"has been somewhat eroded now."

Into the second portion of the interview, Principal Fallow was asked to reflect on her

management role and share her beliefs and feelings with regards to the relationship of her self-

efficacy beliefs and her professional practice. After her asking me to "unpack that a little bit" we

looked over the *PSES* and those questions that related to efficacy for management and she responded with "that would be my lowest area."

> Yeah, it's interesting. I just finished working on a national study that was looking at principalship and principal feelings about where they are right now and the supports they'll need three to five years out and then five to ten years out. And I would say that the two areas that repeatedly came back is this mare of management and sort of the job load. And the second area is student's mental health.

Principal Fallow spoke of the huge issues that people indicated regarding the mental health of their students and the feelings of lack of support and inability to handle all the intricate situations. She then returned back to speak more about the managerial piece and said that

> I feel frustrated at times but it is very, very seldom; you know it really isn't often that I think "Oh my God" this is getting away from what I need to do my job. Minor things like growth plan. But really I can do it. It's not a big deal it just isn't the most relevant thing that I do. And I don't really think it has the best impact. So it's more about dealing those pieces that I don't think really get to what my goal is which is making sure that kids are reaching potential and kids re taken care of while they are with us and that teachers are supported in doing that. So that no one falls through the cracks. So really that is my motivation. So anything that is extraneous to that I'm not thoroughly thrilled about. I don't find it that sexy.

Principal Fallow said however, that she is very comfortable with the managerial role, and says "it doesn't really get in the way of me doing what I need to do." She does her managerial tasks quickly and just gets it done and gets it out of the way. In her words she "I do it quickly, I move it off…it's not a barrier for me. It's not a block for me. I find other people to do it." She also believes in distributed leadership and this will "find other people to do it" if she needs support in a task. "Trust, support, collaboration and not giving it too much energy in just doing what absolutely has to be done" are what Principal Fallow cites as critical for her. The "managerial minutia" does not serve to "derail her off the goals of the job" and she notes that some of her colleagues may "use that as an excuse to not do the right things…people that say

147

that they can't do that because I have all this paperwork, budget, managerial stuff." She refers to

the move back to more centralized services as a mistake as control has been lessened.

> And the relationships are all over the place; so give it all to me so that I can make it contextually work for the school and I'll find a way to make it happen. Like put more on that plate rather than take a bunch off where we don't have control over it. That decentralized model to me is the way to go.

Principal Fallow also believes in speaking the truth and ensuring that the documents, budgets,

etc., that principals are working on are true, living reflections of reality and the work. She

believes that "if the work becomes too directional and dictated then its compliance and it's not

commitment."

Reflecting upon her beliefs and feelings regarding the relationship of her self- efficacy

beliefs to the instructional leadership role Principal Fallow said that "for me, this is where my

real core is." She explained that:

> It is around the leadership piece and what my role as a principals. And it really permeates every aspect of the school. It's about leadership in classrooms and leadership with families and leadership with teachers and leadership in the community. And it's not about me being able to do it alone. It is really about building-my job is to build leaders and everybody has the ability to be a leader. In the decisions that they make, in their classrooms every day, in how they work with students and how they work with families- everyone has the ability to be a leader.

Principal Fallow believes that "everybody went into the job wanting to do the right thing" and

thus

> We need to allow people to learn with grace and we need to allow people to learn while they save face in their jobs. And we do not have the magic bullet for that. But I do believe that there is, that I've developed over the years a very strong curriculum for what that looks like; and I believe there is a curriculum that goes along with how you work with staff to build confidence, understanding, efficacy in their professions, professionalism. A culture where every kid matters. A culture where we can work with absolutely every kid and a culture where we do not segregate around who we work with as professionals or as what kids we will work with. As these are all our kids.

Principal Fallow has therefore created tools over the years which she utilizes in the professional development and on-going supervision and collaboration with staff. An example of "giving bite-sized pieces that everybody has to do" is seen with the initiative where every teacher in her school is responsible for two students' Individual Program Plans (IPP's). The initiative was formulated when, upon coming into the school, Principal Fallow realized that "nobody actually knew what an IPP was; nobody knew what accommodations were; nobody knew what the needs of the kids were sitting in their classrooms and those codes meant nothing." Her belief is that if

> you know what the needs are for two kids then you would have some appetite to learn that for other kids in your class. If you just had to be responsible for working with two learning plans then you might understand that there are learning plans for more people in the school. If it wasn't just the burden of one person to do those IPP's and you just complied by just filling in the blanks, you might actually take on some energy around what kids actually have as a story and what they come with.

Principal Fallow further explained how learning to partner with families with "unpacking what their goals are for their children" will assist teachers in understanding that family and school values may differ and that all goals need to be valued and honoured. "Inclusion becomes an option" as teachers see inclusion happening in the academic classrooms when social goals are also the desirable outcome for many. The task of two IPP's per teacher is "unpacked into small doable pieces" over a three year period and the professional learning and collaboration is rich as learning is unravelled. Staff meetings are rarely of the managerial type rather "everything is about professional learning and everything is crafted around distributed learning and even how we meet is carefully thought through."

> So every time we meet I have trained my faculty council to be instructional leaders and they each have a small group that they have chosen, that are cross-curricular that they work with on a weekly basis and there's four or five people on that team…Every week is a different formation for what it looks like but what it allows is for us to cross cultivate, cross learn and talk from varying aspects of

where we are in our craft; view through a variety of lenses and really move the conversation forward. So it happens on multiple layers but it is very, very carefully crafted.

Her meticulously planned professional development for instructional leadership has her twenty five faculty council members working with a "drafted team of three to four teachers" who are chosen based on their perceived ability to strengthen their impact in the classroom. There are short, targeted times for meetings and they are always centered on learning in the school. With regards to her faculty council who are trained in instructional leadership she says

> So they learn throughout time, because they have to talk about what the impact is that they're having on those teams? Where are the conversations? How are they structuring walk-throughs? How are they structuring their IPP times? So its mini little conversations that are happening on a variety of levels and they get to pick who they work with and its really, really fascinating to see whom they pick.

She hears her staff speak to others about the inclusivity of the school and how teachers collaborate on IPP's and other initiatives, but says that "

> they don't understand that we make it look easy; we make it doable; its everybody trying something at the same level and we're all in it together and we all come at it from a variety of different ways and we all respond to it in the way that fits our practice; but we're all moving forward."

The instructional leadership piece is seen by Principal Fallow as key in moving forward and the administrative team and faculty council are mentors who model processes and practices to enhance professional learning.

> And that instructional leadership is misunderstood in a lot of ways; it's about building culture; it's about building teacher leaders; it's about inside out leadership; it's about distributed leadership; it's about "I am here to serve you and what do you need to support kids?" And if there's one thing that everybody in the school will say about me is that I believe in kids. And the one thing they know is that they will not get supported if they are not willing to support a kid; they know that that's where they've crossed the line.

> Principal Fallow believes her teacher instructional leadership job and the role of her

administrative team, including the trained faculty council, is to "make sure that everything we're

asking them to do that we've got tons of support to make them successful." She also leads all of

the faculty council professional training every two weeks as well as all other professional

development sessions so that she makes sure that she is facilitating where the conversations are

going and ensuring congruence with her goals. In her role as "leading adult learners" Principal

Fallow says that "really understanding the cultural piece and the instructional leadership piece"

assists in "hosting the hard conversations." She believes that "teachers are doing their very best

and they might not know another way and we need to help them." She speaks of teaching as

being a "team sport" and that teachers are "demanding that it be a team sport." Collaboration is

critical as well as "permission to do what they need to do in their jobs."

> Sharing beliefs and feelings regarding the relationship between her self-efficacy beliefs

and professional practice regarding moral leadership Principal Fallow began by saying that

> my moral leadership comes really comes from a place of my personal back-
> ground and fighting for what's right and my parents leaving their home country
> over very specific political reasons to bring their family to a safe place; and
> choosing a country and a province where there were certain aspects that were
> going to really support that belief system. So for me that moral leadership is
> around equity.

She believes that "diversity is a strength for us" and therefore she

> really celebrates diversity and really fight for equity because it's about kids
> having access to success. It's about kids having access to everything they
> need to be successful and that's everything from the very best teacher in the
> classroom to resources they need to have their voice be heard in an authentic
> manner…and my moral leadership is around a really strong public education
> system that will support that. And my fight, on an ongoing basis, is to support
> that every single kid in our district has access to an excellent education. And I
> think the system is ass-backward. I think it supports a socioeconomic demographic
> that is elitist and I fight for that to be changed all the time. I believe we need to
> have a stronger voice in that.

> Speaking of her quest for equity Principal Fallow outlined how she purposefully "shifted

the demographic" of a past school "because she believed in the equity of everybody having the

ability to access that school" and how she also knew it would "shift the urgency around teaching and learning." The school had an abundance of resources, both financial and human, but they had not welcomed all students to the school and there was a culture of complacency to do what had always been done which was stifling full potential. The "very different population" that was welcomed was all inclusive in terms of diversity of background and learning needs and it "forced the staff to stretch themselves and to look at things in a different way." The process illustrated to Principal Fallow that it was not that the teachers did not want to improve practice but that they hadn't had to, and that creating a sense of urgency in the opening of doors to all students, saw "everybody supporting and being committed." All feeder schools were invited into the learning community and it served to have "magic happen" where "everybody getting on the same page and everybody supporting all kids and everybody being committed."

Principal Fallow's belief in equity was also noted as she outlined how she envisioned creating a "west end campus" where she said "we would let kids access the things they need; let's move around teachers to support what that looks like; let's give the kids total flexibility about what they access and why." She believes so adamantly with regards to having programming that meets the needs of every single student and wishes for that same ideal to be instilled in, and lived by, all the leadership people at her district. At a recent meeting she attended educators were saying that there was a need for "high end programs like AP and IB in order to attract the good kids into schools" and Principal Fallow said that "on so many levels that breaks my heart because all kids are good kids." She therefore believes that moral leadership means treating all kids with dignity and respect and ensuring that all students have access to high quality programming and excellent teaching. She also mentioned that the school "has a mental health program" in order to assist any students who may need support and guidance. This service

extends to the junior high feeder schools so that her high school staff can get to know the kids early, before they come into grade ten, so they can "do the best possible job with them." The success indicators for Principal Fallow are the inclusivity of the learning environment and not simply the achievement results in subject areas.

She asks:

> Did we have more children graduate? Is my FNMI (First Nations, Metis and Inuit) group hugely successful? Are the ELL (English language learners) that are coming to us feeling more supported? Are we dealing with health issues? Are we looking at all kids?

The achievement results may not be improving but there are also more students writing examinations which speak to the inclusive and risk-taking atmosphere of the school learning environment.

> So the moral leadership piece for me is very, very clear, and it's around equity and it's about a strong public education system to support that. And dollars to follow that. You know I have been fighting for a long time for dollars to follow kids and support what their needs are.

There is also inequity with the amount of money allocated for educating students according to Principal Fallow as socioeconomic vulnerability varies from site to site and she says that "it's ludicrous to me that we give the same amount of money because it doesn't take the same amount to educate them." She also says that "we need to support financially the needs of kids and move money around to support what schools need in order to be successful." She feels very deeply about it being "absolutely imperative that we find a way to support equity in our system." Principal Fallow also feels very confident in the abilities of her Superintendent to foster equity in the district.

The final question for Principal Fallow was asking what supports she sees as essential to her being an effective principal in meeting her managerial, instructional, and moral leadership

roles and responsibilities. Her first response was that "it helps when you feel alignment to the senior administration and that you're moving in the same direction." She said that "she feels huge support from the superintendent and I feel huge support from the system around the work that we are doing." As well, the network created in the district and across school jurisdictions has also served to have Principal Fallow feel very supportive as she outlined that there was great collaborative sharing. A High School redesign was cited as being "very helpful to be able to move out of our jurisdiction" and discuss issues and find solutions to support all students. As well, working with other countries has enriched her practice in garnering the support and resources of other systems. Collaboration has also always been a support for Principal Fallow as well as she has always had a coach and critical friends who give her unfiltered, uncontaminated feedback which she sees as "essential to this job."

> I think people know that I'm not afraid to hear the hard stuff. I kind of
> welcome some of the hard stuff; it makes it more interesting for me to
> know where the rough patches are that I hadn't anticipated, and then I
> can work on those.

Referring to the "amazing year end activity" where the staff reflected on their year and the two high points and two low points and talk about how they affected them both professionally and personally, Principal Fallow found that to be very "rich reflective tool for her practice." She also found that the honesty of their narratives illuminated the belief that they had in themselves to make an impact. She also said that:

> Another thing was how honest they were willing to be with me. They knew I
> was going to read them all and how honest they were willing to be was just such
> a gift and I realize that there was a huge amount of trust…they felt a huge amount
> of permission to take a risk and that it doesn't need to look a certain way. So I felt
> that was just really empowering for me as a leader to realize that we had gotten
> that. I mean I knew we were doing innovative things but to hear it really come
> back so strongly from them.

The feeling of having the support of her staff was heard as she spoke about how she feels they are "working from a grass roots place and really connecting to the things we need to solve together." Principal Fallow also mentioned that when there are more organic approaches to meetings that she finds more joy is brought to the work and some real power and commitment to the tasks. She says that

> If it's orchestrated it doesn't seem to have the same energy to it. It doesn't feel as authentic. Perhaps we're not as invested in it which is what teachers will say too. So when we make decisions about what they will do its very different then when we empower them to make decisions and have flexibility to choose things to do.

She also enjoys the support of "doing things in the company of friends" and finds her experience amidst her staff and with collaborative groups of committed individuals to be "beautiful spaces" for her.

Principal Fallow also feels "great support from the Ministry and from the ATA (Alberta Teachers' Association)" and she is often asked to "come and talk about what is happening in the school." Saying that "it is always rewarding but I don't know if I always say the things they want to hear", Principal Fallow enjoys the connection to the professional practice competency seven of "understanding and responding to the larger societal context." She does know "what she is grounded in" and illuminates her integrity in serving the needs of students.

> Honestly, if you're doing the right things in your school and you really believe in what those things are, and you're really grounded in that and its around kids, then honestly who's ever going to be able to come in and say too much about anything. Obviously…if the work that you're doing in your school is really around supporting kids, who can really get too far wrong on that front? And it's not just supporting kids to do that thing, its supporting kids to be successful and that looks different for different kids.

Having friends in the system that understand is also hugely important for Principal Fallow and she also says that "trust…trust is huge", and to know that what you have shared with a colleague

is "not going anywhere." Being able to converse with a critical friend and ask their opinion on decisions and next steps so that you "have a place where we trust." Also noted was the importance of planning ahead for the year to ensure that goals are set and challenges are anticipated. Principal Fallow espoused that it is important to "acknowledge the journey and what the path is and also that the journey is really never done." Speaking of times of transition, she also said that it's important to know

> Which hills you are going to die on first? Like what are the things…how are
> Your core moral beliefs going to come through in that instructional leadership
> early on. Some things you are not going to be able to live with for a whole year.

Principal Fallow was passionate and reflective throughout the interview and concluded by saying this about her position:

> I love it though. To me it's the best job ever. I can't imaging not doing this;
> that's why I don't apply for things downtown. I love being in school. I love
> being with kids. I love being with teachers. I just feel like there's so much
> that we can do.

After telling me about a student who had risen to be a leader after a very difficult path, Principal Fallow was emphatic about not giving up on kids. The student had given an impassioned speech to educators saying:

> Yeah, just don't give up on us. It's hard. We know that we're not always easy
> and we're not always in the right place. We don't always have the tools, but
> just don't give up on us.

Principal Fallow says that we need to also welcome in each and every child and give them a pen and anything else that they need. Real life is not about kicking people out of meetings if they are not prepared, but welcoming people in. "That's real life. It's an invitation. It's an expectation. It's not just that you are let off the hook."

Throughout the interview Principal Fallow exhibited a confidence and passion regarding her ability to work with staff, students and parents to have positive and productive experience in her school. At all times in the interview I felt that she was meaningfully invested in the lives of her students and that she was working to do anything within her power to champion equity and success. Her optimism and passion for her job and for the students was consistently felt in all her words and noted in her expressions and body language. Her "out of the box thinking" in finding space to learn and grow served to have me feeling that the students and other stakeholders in this school were so very fortunate to have her as their principal.

Summary

This chapter highlighted the six individual interviews in this collective case study. Written in a format where each case was presented in the framework of the eight question interview, my goal was to have readers ascertain a good overall picture of each individual and their understandings regarding their personal sense of self-efficacy and their professional practice with regards to their managerial, instructional and moral leadership roles. Knowledge of each principal's personal definition of self-efficacy as well as their knowledge of the *PPCSL (Professional Practice Competencies for School Leaders)* and their discussion of supports necessary for their practice, will serve to create a foundation for the Chapter 5 which details the findings of this study.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS

The overarching research question for this study was: "How do secondary school principals understand the relationship between beliefs of self-efficacy and their professional practice?" This chapter is organized in four sections. The first section presents findings of a cross-case analysis of the six cases which follows the sequencing of the eight interview questions; the second section will focus on the findings with regards to the demographic information collected; the third section of this chapter will serve to outline findings based on the completion of the *Principal Sense of Efficacy Scale (PSES);* and the fourth section will outline the overarching themes that emerged from the data. Although this is not a quantitative study the PSES did provide complimentary information and thus only basic comparisons will be illustrated in section two and no statistical analysis will be done.

Findings by interview question

What does the term self-efficacy mean to you?

Each of the six participants used the words "the belief in my ability to" when they were defining what the term self-efficacy meant to them. Confidence was also a word that was used by Principal Ellis and implied and utilized by others in their responses to other questions. The secondary piece to that initial conversation strand was that all participants then identified words such as "power", "control", "impact", "effect", and "create", which were used to express their perceptions of being able to use human agency to affect a decision or outcome and to make change. In all instances I felt that the participants believed they had the ability, within the hierarchical structure of their school district, to personally make decisions, utilize resources and

construct environments that were aligned with their vision of what an excellent learning environment should look like, sound like and feel like. Principal Andrews spoke of the amount of "latitude" that he felt he had in the school and his feeling of "very few things are done to us.;" Principal Baker spoke of the "realm of influence or control to do things and make things happen;" Principal Clements spoke of the responsibility he felt within the context of self-efficacy in saying that "I am responsible as I have so much authority to intervene."; and the other three participants echoed these sentiments within their responses. All participants spoke of being in "control" or having the "power to" make things happen and to be a change agent for improvement. Principal Fallow also remarked on the importance of the correlation between "being effective and the ability I have to allow myself to be effective," as well as the linking of belief in ability to do something concrete. I also sensed or gleaned in dialogue with other participants that they perceived self-efficacy as context-specific and thus reflected on the 18 items in the *PSES* as quite distinct tasks or items. There was also a distinct tone of action and effect within the participant responses to the first question as the ability to move forward with vision of thought and idea was evident in all interviews.

Principal Baker expressed a hypothesis when he mentioned that "self-efficacy increases with training and experience" and that he has the ability to anticipate issues and experiences through extensive knowledge of the school year calendar, "ebbs and flows and rhythms of the school", and "knowing what things look like." As well, Principal Baker noted that creating and nurturing a high sense of collective efficacy with staff "assists with his own high sense of self-efficacy." Principal Clements also expressed his personal definition of self-efficacy by stating that "self-efficacy means do I have a sense that I have power over my environment to make a difference?" and that it "leads him to consider the whole level of responsibility in the context of

self-efficacy." This sense of being responsible, truly responsible was highly valued by Principal Clements and he further commented that "if I have the power to make changes and to intervene in some way, then I also have responsibility." This great sense of responsibility was not mentioned by the other participants in their response to this question and I did find that it served to introduce me to this participant's beliefs and values and I was somewhat impressed by this sense of ownership for his actions.

Principal Denton also mentioned that self-efficacy meant "being ok with what you cannot change" and also being "ok with the little person that sits on your shoulder that says "you can't do this"." I did not receive the reflection from other participants that they could not change certain aspects of their environment but rather they had an enormous ability to effect change in every area. However, the self-doubt that creeps into the picture was an aspect mentioned by other participants as interfering with, and being the enemy of, self-efficacy.

Findings from this question asking what the term self-efficacy meant to the participants illuminated the words such as power, control, confidence, belief, responsibility, ability, impact and effectiveness. The ability to change something; impact decisions and outcomes; make things happen; and be a change agent were all heard as participants spoke about self-efficacy and the meaning they attached to the concept. Principal Baker noted a personal hypothesis that self-efficacy increases with training and experience and Principal Fallow espoused a belief in self-efficacy as being the "correlation between being effective and the ability I have to allow myself to be effective." As well, she believed in self-efficacy having to be linked to something concrete, thus context or situation specific. The confidence I heard expressed by the participants did seem stronger in the interviews of Principal Baker and Fallow as compared to the other participants. Due to their years of experience, 15 and 17 respectively, they had been afforded the luxury of

several different positions of leadership and four years or more at their current location, and both commented on their "excellent track records". This experience in their district and within the current school context did indeed seem to instill a higher sense of self-efficacy as compared to the other participants. Nye (2008) had found this factor of years of teaching and administrative experience to be statistically significant in his study although Aderhold (2005) and Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2004, 2005) found no relationship.

What is your reaction after completing the PSES survey?

The reactions expressed after the completion of the *PSES (Principal Sense of Efficacy Scale)* varied among the participants. This question was a basic inquiry with regards to feedback on the survey itself and participant initial thoughts about their levels of self-efficacy as identified in the PSES. Both Principal Baker and Principal Fallow exuded the highest confidence in their interviews, and, as stated before, seemed to be more comfortable in their roles due to their years of being involved in the principalship and the length of time at their current schools. Principal Baker spoke about the "huge control that a principal has" and his belief that they set the tone and direction for the entire school. He expressed his belief in his own "great intelligence and ability" and that due to the trust and confidence he felt from supervisors and stakeholders that he had great "control, confidence and competence." He believes that he has "the background, history and skills to deal with anything that comes up" and he also said that he "has an incredible ability to influence things and that nothing is happening *to* him…he is not a victim of circumstance or anything."

Principal Fallow spoke about the "perceived permission she had to do the right things and that she felt a lot of space was given to create." Her focus was on the possibilities and with "lots

of experience and good mentors" she did not feel confined and felt that she had "great control over things." She expressed her clear and resonate confidence in having "no barriers in the way for doing what is right by kids."

Both participants seemed very comfortable in their roles and both noted the huge amount of control they felt they had as principal. A sense of determination and capability was evidenced in their voice and tone and responses and Principal Baker also commented on his "perseverance and capability" in all aspects of his job. Principal Baker also noted that after the completing the scale he did feel very "powerful" as he noted that "all things happen because of your control." I was very interested in Principal Fallow's comment that "we all have the ability to make things happen as long as we are clear on the goals," as goal setting and situation specificity is very much integral in the concept of self-efficacy. The only frustration that Principal Fallow mentioned was that she was "frustrated sometimes by minutia" but also cautioned that it was few and far between that she had this feeling.

Other participants did not exude the confidence to the extent that was evidenced by Principal's Baker and Fallow. Principal Andrews pondered why he wasn't doing more to affect outcomes if he had so much ability and power to do so. He reflected on the fact that he had "a lot to say in what happens and it was scary to have so much power." He did not seem overwhelmed or at issue with these thoughts, but rather was very reflective after completing the scale. Principal Clements was thoughtful in reflection regarding wanting to read more about the scale as well as being "drawn to the questions on the scale relating to influencing other human beings." He also mentioned again about the responsibility and tools to effect change and was very aware of his power to influence and control.

Principal Denton said she "needed to maintain more control over her day" but said she "believes she can make change happen" as she has done it before in several schools. She identified "inexperience at her current location" and "communication" as being the issues identified after completing the *PSES* and that she had "no problems handling discipline." A low sense of self-efficacy was perceived in these responses. As well, Principal Denton mentioned that "the reality of the job is that there are some things you have no control over" which was not a sentiment expressed at any time by the other participants. This feeling may have been mostly tied to the diploma examinations which she felt had "limitations beyond our control." I say this because in her follow-up comments she expressed that "we have a lot of freedom to change the rules and what we do in a school…lots of agency with existing policies and procedures." Principal Denton did spend some time working at the provincial level in education so perhaps she was expressing some background knowledge and frustration.

Principal Ellis reflected on her "frustration over the demands from central office" before she had departed on a school sanctioned overseas trip and was passionate when saying that she "becomes very upset when it is relate to justice issues." For her "being right for kids" is critical. Principal Ellis also did not speak about her sole abilities but talked about "treating people well" and "respecting the collective talent of the staff."

Four participants noted that there were issues of "home-work balance" and that they found it stressful to handle all the managerial demands of the job. Short deadlines or emerging issues took much of their time and Principal Andrews noted "lots of decisions" as well as Principal Ellis commented on the "demands of the parents." Principal Ellis also noted that it was difficult to "get into classrooms on a regular basis" when there were so many issues with central office requests, parent questions and concerns, and other emergent issues. It was also mentioned

that parents are utilizing social media to seek connection with her at all times; even on the weekends.

Having control over the daily schedule was mentioned by all participants as sometimes being difficult although Principal Baker said that he simply "anticipates that the day will have its interruptions and issues" and he is very comfortable with that and that "he chooses to feel in control and not be reactionary." Principal Clements unabashedly noted that "in terms of the managerial pieces his efficacy diminishes" and he is "less powerful in this domain." He mentioned his greater interest in "people and their ideas" and that he simply finds the paperwork and other managerial tasks as lower in terms of his self-efficacy because he "can do the tasks" but he "would rather not." Principal Ellis noted that the "job was not hard overall" but that there are time demands especially when short deadlines are set by central office. She mentioned that "there are good initiatives but more time is needed to do justice to effective implementation." Her experience was noted when she said that she "blends the expectations of initiatives from central office with her school's culture and programs" as she has a "good read of what's best for the culture of the building" and stakeholders interests. Principal Ellis further mentioned that "some of the questions on the *PSES* are big initiatives" so she has "influence over them but they are very time consuming." She expressed the feeling of being "always on" as quite difficult and the work-life balance was again mentioned.

Relationships were seen as critical amongst all participants in that it pervaded all aspects of their work. I found that all the offices I visited were very warm and inviting and Principal Andrews especially wanted to create a "relational environment that allowed for good communication and conversations." He said that he "liked to be disarming with a non-stuffy office as the position carries enough weight already." Principal Baker remarked in our

conversation that "if it isn't about relationships then what is it about"?; Principal Clements commented on how he was interested in people and ideas; Principal Denton expressed her desire to improve communication and work closely with her team; Principal Ellis remarked on her desire to treat families well and advocate for them; and Principal Fallow spoke of "raising our children together" and believing in each and every child. Relationships seemed of utmost importance to them in their lives and their schools and it was evident in their responses that they were cognisant of the need to create and nurture authentic relationships with staff, students, parents, and other stakeholders in their principal roles.

Throughout the conversation regarding the participants' reaction to the *PSES* I felt a great sense of each person's values and beliefs. Each participant seemed to have a clear picture of what teaching and learning should look like, feel like and sound like, and I was beginning to piece together their visions as we moved forward into more interview questions. This question opened the door somewhat to their reflections and introspections and their reactions to the *PSES* brought me to a deeper understanding of their self-efficacy as indicated by their scores and their further sharing of insights around their responses.

Findings from this question regarding participants' reactions after completing the *PSES* saw two of the six participants, Principal's Baker and Fallow, exude great confidence and belief in their abilities to effect change and have control over their schools. These two participants had the most experience in the principalship and in their current locations. Their scores on the *PSES* were also comparatively higher than the other four participants. I sensed from both participants that they did not feel confined by any policies and procedures and both had, as expressed by Principal Fallow, a "lot of permission to do the right things" and there was a "lot of space to create." They were both also driven to realize goals and this perseverance and determination was

evident in their detailing of their work and the initiatives they had undertaken. Principal Fallow did say that she has "all the ability to make things happen as long as we are clear on the goals" and Principal Baker used the words confidence, competence, perseverance and capability in describing his ability to "make things happen because of your influence."

All participants seemed to believe in their power to influence or control although they were less confident in the area of managerial tasks. The issue of balancing life at work and home seemed to be on the minds of some of the participants but once again Principal's Baker and Fallow seemed to embrace Principal Fallow's idea of work-life integration and that the two are very manageable. Keeping family time sacred seems to have been a winning solution for Principal Fallow. Most participants would rather not spend the time on the paperwork associated with the position but be in their classrooms, hallways, labs, gymnasiums and fields with students and teachers. Instructional and moral leadership did take precedence with these participants over managerial leadership. As in all interviews and when discussing every question, participants were cognisant of the importance of relationships and knew that they had to pay attention to creating and maintaining these with all stakeholders.

How familiar are you with the PPCSL (Professional Practice Competencies for School Leaders and how has the document affected your life as a principal?

All of the participants said that they were "fairly familiar" or "familiar" with the document. I was surprised that all but one of the participants did not reference the document in terms of their professional standards of practice that they adhere to. Rather, the responses I received were seemingly more about viewing the document as a good overview of their duties and one that they used to prepare their professional growth plans for their immediate supervisors.

Principal Denton did mentioned that "it's a standard that we're all going to be held to so you should be familiar with it" although she said as well that "if I ever need to validate that I'm doing these things, I know where it is; I know where to look it up." Principal Denton said that the *PPCSL* had not impacted her much actually" and thus it was seen as a document that was not integral to her practice but that was a professional standard that would be important especially for the completion of her professional growth plans. Principal Baker encapsulated this when he said that the *PPCSL* "doesn't tell me what I'm supposed to do but has its hinge points or connect-back-to-points for the work that I do." A bit of a conundrum for me was that the participants saw the *PPCSL* as outlining their professional practice but it somehow still sat outside of their perceived work instead of being a standard of practice for them. Principal Baker commented that the "document is not threatening" and that he was "confident in all areas of the *PPCSL*" which was not mentioned as succinctly by any other participant.

All of the participants also felt that they utilized the skills and strengths of their leadership staff (Assistant Principals, Curriculum Coordinators, Department Heads) to assist them in meeting all the competencies outlined in the document. The *PPCSL* is a "walk on water" document as described by Principal Fallow in that "no one in their right mind could meet all of the competencies," thus a distributed team approach to meeting all aspects of the PPCSL seems to be rational one. However, Principal did note that "she is committed to the competencies" and that "like this is what I do…this is my job." Other participants also mentioned that the document or the competencies is/are "an excellent document that covers what the position is all about" (Principal Andrews); "No surprises in expectations for a principal" (Principal Baker); "see them as valid in terms of representing the job" and that "all the principles (competencies) do is to lay out what I do" (Principal Clements); and that "I guess that it's just making sure that as a leader

you are meeting all these competencies…" (Principal Denton). Principal Ellis simply mentioned that it was a "pretty good document" and did not elaborate any further.

It seemed to be a belief of all participants that the seven competencies required a distributed leadership conceptual framework to meet all of the competencies. Participants felt that "leadership practices take shape in the interaction of leaders, followers and their situation (Spillane, 2007, p. 8) and that "the distributed perspective acknowledges that the work of leading and managing schools involves multiple individuals." (Spillane, 2007, p.7). Principal Andrews espoused his belief of "not being a dictator leader" and "feeling comfortable using the strengths of the other people and having a team effort." Trusting in his staff and honoring their ability to make decisions seemingly afforded Principal Andrew a core value that together is better and that believing in people will make them better. He noted that it was the interaction of many, some without formal designations, are in fact leading and managing the school. Principal Baker also noted that "relationships are what it is all about" and he also stated his belief in trusting his staff and supporting them to build confidence and competence. Principal Clements spoke extensively about vision when I interviewed him and although I will speak to his vision more in subsequent paragraphs, he also spoke of his belief that "you cannot build vision without building relationships" so he too understood the power of team. Principal Denton also talked about the "importance of fostering relationships with the staff" and Principal Fallow consistently spoke about her leadership team and the many roles that they play within the school. I sensed her great confidence and trust in her leadership and teaching team but also felt that there was great accountability and she was monitoring process and product on an ongoing basis. Principal Denton also mentioned that she would be utilizing the *PPCSL* at a more heightened level with her leadership team in the following school year.

All participants spoke about their use of the *PPCSL* as a guideline for their professional growth plan noting that they were to choose two to three competencies and create a plan for the year that would work to see growth in those areas. All of the participants mentioned that they would be creating a professional growth plan for their supervisors in the fall and that the superintendent or assistant superintendent would be reviewing the document with them throughout the year and asking for a final reflection in June. Comments such as "I speak with the superintendent on an ongoing basis regarding the competencies" (Principal Andrews); "I have conversations with my assistant superintendent regarding the competencies targeted in my professional growth plan" (Principal Baker); "our district's guideline parallels this PPCSL in the supervisory and evaluation model" (Principal Clements); "it drives my professional development and growth plan" (Principal Denton); "I choose two competencies to concentrate on in my growth plan" (Principal Ellis); illustrate the direct tie from the competencies to the Professional Growth Plans.

I was especially interested in Principal Fallow's response to this question when she noted that "I find it ludicrous to have to answer to two to three competencies in the growth plan as you're just going to have a document where I comply." She expressed that sentiment due to the fact that she said she was committed to the competencies but did not feel that she was equally working on all seven and that she didn't think that "someone should be dictating what she should be working towards." Stating also that "I mean they're not the drivers for me but they obviously make sense" and that "the first five are the ones that I live everyday so I'm not going to set goals in them" illustrated to me that she is referring to the paperwork and not really the competencies. Principal Fallow had stated earlier that "paperwork has little meaning to what I really do", and thus I believe she understands and appreciates the competencies and how they are aspects of the

princpalship and her professional practice guideline or standard, but she also wants to have an authentic process in place when setting her professional and personal goals. Principal Fallow wishes to have permission to set her goals within whichever competency or competency's that she wishes. When listening to Principal Fallow I had the belief that she is meeting all of the competencies in the *PPCSL* and that her wish to frame her professional growth plan in a way that is meaningful to her, was something I would indeed honor and respect.

Principal Denton spoke about experience in terms of the writing of the Professional Growth Plan and noted that it "depends on experience and where you are in terms of which competencies you will concentrate on in your growth plan." This is echoed in Principal Fallow's thoughts as she spoke about the relevancy of the linking of the competencies to the professional growth plans. She noted that she would like to focus her efforts for personal and professional improvement on the professional practice competency number seven which is "understanding and responding to the larger societal context." She speaks to her growth in the past two years with regards to "developing voice" and "wanting to affect the conversation" in being an advocate for public education and for kids. "She wants to push the envelope all the time and model innovation in a school so people notice" and be "ahead of it, be in front of it" in terms of school improvement. She states very clearly that she "is really committed to teachers and to the profession" and is very interested in "issues in the province, in the ministry, internationally, professionally."

Principal Clements believes that "every leader should have a deep, resonate, resonating vision of what a school is about and then communicate and inculcate and sometimes demand that vision have expression in their leadership." He also believes that there is a need for educational leaders to have a deep philosophical appreciation of vision and that the second competency of

"embodying visionary leadership" should be the competency "from which all others flow." He further espouses very passionately that he believes "some school leaders are cowards because certain behaviors of compliance have trumped having a vision and living it." His other belief of "not being promoted for tour vision but for what you do" is also echoed by Principal Fallow when she says that "we are good rule followers." He work to build shared vision is time consuming so Principal Clements has only been in the school for a short time and knows that he will need to continue that work. He says also that "we transmit culture because that it our job" but that "there is a lack of real deep change in education" because of this. He feels that "sometimes the visionary leader doesn't become a principal because they are hard to deal with" and challenge the status quo and look for meaningful change. I would have liked to continue this stem of our conversation but we moved on after his comments. I found some truth for me in his words as I believe there is a need to utilize the research we have in education to seek meaningful change for the betterment of children and their futures. However, the problem for me is solidifying, encapsulating and communicating a vision that is truly in the best interests of all children as there are still so many conflicting ideals regarding the "best vision" for our educational systems.

Another interesting finding when asking this question was when Principal Denton spoke about her beliefs about managing and leading. She said that it was important to "make sure that schools are getting a good leader as opposed to a good manager" as there are "different qualities for being a learning leader as opposed to being a manager." She was passionate about ensuring that a principal "must know the kids and the teachers" and that "balancing the budget is not the most important thing-you can get someone to help you do that." Her belief that "managing and leading are two different things" formed the basis for her vision as the most important part of the

job for her is "relationships and instructional leadership." A central argument in Spillane and Diamond (2007) is that much of the leadership literature talks about what leaders do in more generalized terms but that

> Knowing what leaders do is one thing, but a rich understanding of how, why, and when they do it, is essential if research is to contribute to improving the day-to-day practice of leading and managing schools. An in-depth analysis of the practice of leadership and management, not just the practice of leaders, merits the attention of scholars. (p. 5)

While reflecting on this part of our conversation it is interesting to me that the high school experience may be much different as they have a business manager and many other people to assist with the budget process. At a small elementary, such as the one where I am principal, it is the administrative assistant and me who oversee all the managerial aspects of the building. I am inclined then to believe that although managing and leading may be defined in different ways that a combination of the two is essential for the smooth operation of a school. I do agree however, that we must have people in the principalship who are relationship oriented and are able to effectively work with all stakeholders. Being a trusted and respected leader is central to my beliefs for the effectiveness of the principal and thus it is again in the definition of manager and leader where the debate may lay.

Summarizing the findings for this question began with the realization that the *PPCSL* document did not hold the same meaning for the participants as it did for me. I assumed incorrectly that the participants would tell me that it was a document that would form the standard for their professional practice and they anticipated being held accountable for each of the competencies. Instead they spoke about the *PPCSL* as if it was simply a guideline that spoke to their roles and responsibilities and that they wrote their Professional Growth Plans with integration of goals stated for two or three of the competencies. The PPCSL has not yet been

released as approved policy from Alberta Education so I do understand that it is not a provincial requirement and thus not yet integral to the practice of Alberta school leaders. The participants referred to the *PPCSL* as more of a collective standard or guideline where distributed leadership ensured the meeting and exceeding of all competencies notes in the document. The sentiment of ensuring commitment versus compliance was heard from several participants in wishing to determine their own goals and to have their Professional Growth Plan as a meaningful document that would have collaborative input and support from supervisors.

Lastly, I appreciated when Principal Clements spoke of vision and that "every leader should have a deep, resonate, resonating vision of what a school is about" as I felt that all participants had a vision of their school and the competency of "embodying visionary leadership" was one that seemed to be embraced by all as pivotal in their roles. As well, the "fostering of effective relationships" which is the first of the competencies, was also always pervading all aspects of discussion as noted above.

How do you see the PSES relating to your professional practice?

Responses to this question varied amongst the participants with two participants having very brief answers. Principal Ellis said that "to be honest I'm not familiar with it but it seemed easy to complete…questions and categories seemed reasonable." This response was fairly short and there was no elaboration but my interpretation was that she was simply framing the *PSES* as a survey document and answered without interpreting the question as asking to elaborate more on each question stem and its relevance to her practice. Principal Clements also had a brief answer in that he commented on some of his answers and how the "paperwork and management" was not something he chose to spend his time on and also said that "before you do a questionnaire like that and then talk about it in the context of self-efficacy, you need to have a

little more than a one-sentence thought about efficacy." He also noted that he thinks "he has given me the reason for his scoring" and that "the dilemma of that scale and most scales, is in the definition of the word efficacy." Principal Clements, as Principal Ellis, did answer this question in relatively the same manner as they both spoke more about the actual scale and not about how the PSES related to their professional practice.

Principal Andrews had a deeper reflection regarding the PSES and its relation to his professional practice in that he once again commented on his ability to impact in saying "why don't I influence more if I am all powerful in these areas?" He then continued by reflecting on achievement results and the impact a math initiative had made in his school and how "empowering others" led to making a significant improvement for children. He then centered his continuing comments regarding the relationship with staff and students and his belief in trusting staff. I appreciated the way he said that "if there were mistakes they talk about them" and then he says he just "adds more trust and moves on." His adding of trust suggested that he valued the people, their individual strengths, and wished to support them to address any areas of concern with belief and understanding. Principal Andrews also spoke about empowering staff to have change proliferate through them into the classroom and how the parents and community stakeholders are enjoying the "way they are headed" at the school so they are honoring the foundational principles of the provincial high school redesign but are "picking and choosing what we think the best things are out of it so we can move the school forward and honour the stakeholders that chose our school last year for the school that it is." He embraced the thought of "why fundamentally change something that is working?" which is reflective of his calm, quiet, humble demeanor and the sense I felt of a man who wishes to do a good job and maintain good relations with his stakeholders.

Principal Baker immediately mentioned that "if I had an hour to go through this I would be reflective and asking "in what way"?" I found his outlook to be very positive and his sense of efficacy very high and thus I sensed his eagerness to work on his professional practice and always strive to do as much as he could do. He did ponder whether the "size of the school hinders the amount of impact" that he has, as well as mentioning that he "could probably push a little more." In size he was commenting on the large number of staff and students and that he was feeling a sense of inability to do everything he would wish to do to effect improvement. The *PSES* was something he said "would allow me to frame some of the things that I do" and as he scanned the *PSES* document he then began to speak further about different aspects of his professional practice. Within our time on this question Principal Baker exuded confidence with regards to having "no control of the daily schedule but not feeling out of control with it"; "absolutely no clue what will happen tomorrow or even today, but that won't derail my day"; "wanting to mobilize and get things done"; "have no insecurities and can maintain control so don't mind if staff come in unannounced…I have an open door policy"; "works to develop and enhance the collective efficacy of staff". Inherent in his answers were a trust for his staff and a belief in his abilities to serve their needs and the needs of every student in the school. He believes that teachers are doing their very best and need his support and guidance to continue to do so. He spoke about the conscious choice to not have subject-specific department heads and how the teachers will attend meetings that are of relevance to their work or are areas they wish to support with their time and/or talents. Also evident in our conversation was the belief in the strength of relationship and maintaining good connections and communication. He believes that he has created a "magnificent model of people working together."

Principal Denton's response after my posing of this question was that "the *PSES* is a "visual representation of efficacy" and that "if I had a whole bunch on the left of the scale that would probably tell me that I need to rethink my professional practice." She also noted that there were some responses on the *PSES* that hovered around the midpoint of the scale and that "it is because I am in a new school." She remarked as well with regard to the question about "raising student achievement on standardized tests" with saying that she had placed a 5 as a response due to "the population that she works with." A vast number of English Language Learners and high risk students led her to say that it was "difficult to move them up on standardized tests." She noted that there were improvements in behaviors but that it took "a long, long time to see changes in achievement." She cited social vulnerability as being a factor in whether kids succeed. She said that if I asked her, with respect to her students, "about helping them graduate from high school then she would have a higher sense of efficacy." I found that although I sensed a mindset of inability to effect change she also felt a higher sense of confidence in being able to support the full journey of the child and not simply their outcomes on standardized tests. Principal Denton also spoke to the questions on the *PSES* that were about relationships and she said that she marked those quite high because she is "usually pretty good at that." Time demands, however, were a self-identified area of difficulty for Principal Denton, and she openly commented on how "that is where I am bad and I allow things to encroach on my time…when kids come to my door I never say no to them." She continued to say that "that's why my desk is messy" as her belief is that "visionary leaders have messy desks." She spoke about this belief being due to her always being in hallways and classrooms and talking with kids and teachers. I do not share this same belief with Principal Denton as I believe I have been in the offices of many visionary leaders, and from my perspective, they do not have messy desks as she had

espoused. However, perhaps this would be a good quantitative study to embark upon to see "to what extent do those principals defined as visionary leaders have messy desks?"

Principal Fallow answered this question by prefacing her comments regarding the *PSES* relation to professional practice with "I think that it is a pretty good match for me." She spoke about work life integration and that "we can bring the pieces together but we need to be really healthy in how we do it." Looking at the very first question on the *PSES* Principal Fallow asked "why wouldn't they be able to do that?" She believes that "everyone has permission to be their best self and to do what's right for kids." She speaks about giving supports to teachers when they need support and that "as I look at this efficacy piece it's around what permission do you have to do the things that you are trained to do that is right by kids?" I appreciate the way Principal Fallow speaks of "confidence in and permission to" and I agree with her sentiments regarding the ability we have to create our goals through clear intention and purpose. I also appreciate her reflection regarding the "demands of the job" in that she commented on her belief that "sometimes we feel really important as principals because we are so busy…but it should not be measured on how long we stay at our school." She said that she was a single mom when entering her principalships and if people judged her on the hours she arrived and departed from school, then they "might not see the whole picture" as she gave herself permission to take care of her own children and protect their time together. She was very passionate in saying that "the day I look after someone else's kids better than my own is the day that I am not in this job." I really agree with her promise to be available for her children and believe that it benefits not only her own family but the families that she is modelling for. She tells her staff that they have permission to "go to their child's kindergarten class and to do things that are right by your families" and I believe that it sends the correct message to parents, staff and stakeholders as relationships are the

most important thing in this world…especially those of your family. She did refer to the lack of this same attitude of permission with her colleagues when she said that "I am going to tell you that most of my colleagues are not feeling that same freedom and that same permission to make those decisions about what is important in their jobs." She further expanded on her feelings by saying that "deadlines don't mean the same thing to me as they mean to others and I also work very quickly…and I don't spend a lot of time on minutia." This ability to prioritize and to quickly sort through and complete the tasks at hand assists her in doing the work she believes is critical which is "advocating for student voice" and "working with the adult learners in the building to lead the learning." Her belief is that "if you can't lead the adult learning then you shouldn't be in the job." She is adamant that the principal needs to be seen as someone who has the "knowledge, confidence and credibility" and once again spoke about the two pieces of "confidence in and permission to."

Of the four participants who answered this question in some depth, I found that all of them spoke about the importance of relationships with all stakeholders but especially their staff. They talked about being available for their staff and in trusting them to do their work well. All seem to be invested in distributed leadership and in empowering their staff to feel ownership for their own and their student's learning. They also all spoke of an "open door policy" for staff and students although Principal Fallow never really talked about this aspect. Of these same four participants all were quite positive and exuded a high sense of efficacy with the exception of Principal Denton who seemed to be a bit disheartened with regards to the ability to raise student achievement scores due to a very low socioeconomic population with high English as a second language and at risk behaviors and aptitudes. I felt that she was also a bit overwhelmed perhaps

with the time demands and paperwork that the job entails but in her defense she had been moved recently into this current principalship.

Would you please reflect on your management role and share with me your beliefs and feelings with regards to the relationship of your self-efficacy beliefs and your professional practice regarding management?

Across all participants the managerial role reflected the lowest score on the *PSES* as compared with the areas of instructional and moral leadership. It surprised me somewhat that the participants' sense of self-efficacy was not higher in this area but I understand how some have interpreted the *PSES* in saying that they can do the management piece but are not wanting to spend time on the completion of paperwork and the other demands of the managerial tasks. Principal Andrews spoke of feeling less efficacious when dealing with the management of the high school budget and "would like to get better at the management piece" but did not elaborate any more about other areas that are challenging for him. With the exception of Principals Baker, Clements and Fallow, the other participants expressed a quiet confidence in their ability to fulfill their managerial leadership role and noted that it was not their favorite part of their job. Principal Clements immediately responded to my question by saying that he "was a good manager" and that "he handles money well" although he does believe that staff would see him as non-collaborative and having a "different, delineated, directed management style." He says that he would "spend most of his time on vision but knows he can't get to it without managing." He believes that he is "respected in his ability to be the boss" and that "40 of 60 teachers just want you to make decisions." His role as he sees it is to "put in processes that are identifiable and predictable for the working of the building" and to "make people feel that they are heard but also managed." I found it puzzling that the score that emanated from the 6 questions related to the

managerial role was so low (6.33 out of 9.00), but then Principal Clements did say that he was confident in his ability to do the tasks, but it was whether or not he "would follow through and do them" that was the issue. When I asked him what he believed his staff would score for him on the PSES, he said "a 9."

The highest score on the *PSES* was noted with Principal Baker's PSES and he quickly responded to this question by saying that management is the easiest part of his job due to his preparedness in his experience and background knowledge. He expressed his confidence in saying that he had such a strong sense of his position and he "really just has confidence in the fact that it's just going to "roll out"." He finds that "management of the building, finances, resources, the personnel, the scheduling, just comes so easily" and "the management things, even though they are phenomenally complex, seem very easy with experience and the expertise of the team around him." It was his years of experience that he continually referred to as being the reason for his competence and comfort in the managerial role as he said he "can anticipate what might come up…and sees very clear timelines in his head" and thus is prepared for all that comes his way. This "solid track record" which both he and Principal Fallow spoke of, seems to afford them a much higher sense of self-efficacy and belief in their abilities to persevere in the face of any adversities.

Principal Fallow did score higher in this area then the other four participants with 7.33 out of 9. Although self-identifying this as "her lowest area" and citing it as a "frustration at times" she was adamant that" it did not get in the way of her dong her job." It's not a barrier for her and she says that "management tasks are done quickly an then she moves off of them." Anything that is extraneous to her motivating goal, which is kids and supporting them to reach their potential, she is "not thoroughly thrilled about" and will find others to support her to do the

management tasks if need be. She also has a solid network of support for the minutia of management in that she talks with family and colleagues and has a reciprocal support for the creation and editing of required documents for submission to central office. She says that she "doesn't let anything get her off task" and finds that a lot of her colleagues blame the managerial or paperwork but says that she is "bias and thinks people use that as an excuse to not do the right things." She would rather have a totally decentralized model where she says you should "give it all to me so I can make it contextually work for my school." Her view of the budget process is also that they have "become too directional and dictated and really it's not commitment, its compliance."

Similar to Principal Clements, Principal Denton said that she has a fairly high sense of self-efficacy in management but does not particularly like doing it. She doesn't see herself as the best manager because she sees "the more important work as instructional leadership and working with kids and teachers." She finds herself learning to better prioritize in order to get her through the management tasks as well as using distributed leadership to find complementary strengths and skills that can support her. She points to her "messy desk" and says that it "looks that way because management duties "drop off the plate when the plate gets full." Similar to Principal's Baker and Fallow, Principal Denton speaks to her experience in the role and background knowledge of the district calendar as assisting her "in being more relaxed about deadlines." She gives herself permission to have flexibility on central office deadlines if the deferment is "not going to affect others in a negative way."

Principal Ellis asked to use the word "beliefs" instead of self-efficacy when giving her initial response to this question and I simply allowed her to process in any way she chose. She scored the lowest on the scale amongst participants in the managerial role area (6.00) due to her

score of 5 in the extent that she can "handle the demands of the job" and 6's in "maintaining control of her daily schedule" and "shape the operational policies and procedures that are necessary to manage a school." Although her score was moderate on the scale, she did not seem to exude a lack of self-confidence or self-efficacy during our conversation perhaps due to her speaking more to collective efficacy and collaboration. She espoused her personal feeling that

> Beliefs are all pervasive and do impact everything you do and it's hard to separate the management piece out. How you manage things has to do with what kind of person you are and the relationships that you build.

Principal Ellis interpreted the managerial role as "in part making sure that teachers are fulfilling their roles as teachers and doing a good job of lesson preparation." She also said that "when doing managerial things she is always mentoring others in doing the job" so she can "bring them along" to learn whatever needs to be learned. A collaborative process was also enacted last year when the budget excesses needed to be trimmed and protection of continuous teaching staff was sought. She mentioned that the staff "ended up coming out of the collaborative process a stronger team" and they "chose to do decisions in a joint or collaborative manner so that no one would have to be declared surplus." Her belief is that it "brought everyone together" as they collectively decided to have larger class sizes, remove an assistant principal position and other leadership designations. I am wondering if the process was valued as much by her staff as she surmised or whether they would have liked a more decisive, directive manner of leadership as Principal Clements believes his staff applauds. Once again, as echoed by all participants, Principal Clements says to "make sure that relationships are first."

Findings from this question see that the experience and background knowledge of the participants is key with regards to feeling a greater sense of self-efficacy in the managerial role and that distributed leadership supports principals in handling all the demands and stress of the

position. Confidence as expressed by the participants increases with the familiarity of the calendar of school document and procedural deadlines and a deep understanding and knowledge of the particular school context. Predictability assists the leaders in identifying required areas of focus and decreases stress. Participants ask for assistance in the area of budget from school based accountants or business managers and although allocation of money may be an issue, all participants seem to feel quite efficacious in terms of managing their finances. Paperwork is seen as a "must do" with participants understanding that they need to prioritize and stress may be lessened with giving themselves permission to move deadlines if they are not absolute. Two of six participants would like to get better at the management piece and collaboration with colleagues was noted as helpful when dealing with managerial tasks and issues.

Would you please reflect on your instructional leadership role and share with me your beliefs and feelings with regards to the relationship of your self-efficacy beliefs and your professional practice regarding instructional leadership?

Self-efficacy as related to instructional leadership was illuminated as the highest scores amongst the participants in this study in contrast to the managerial and moral leadership areas. Highlighted in the answers of participants was the inclusion of instructional leadership as pivotal in their vision of creating great learning environments. With the exception of Principal Andrews who did not explicitly name instructional leadership as central to his vision but implied same through his words and actions, all the participants were very clear in stating their feelings regarding the importance of this part of their professional practice. Principal Baker exuded confidence as he talked about his "very strong feelings about teaching and learning and how classrooms should look" as well as his knowledge of the "right way to set up a learning environment"; Principal Clements boldly stated that "instructional leadership is fundamental to any vision of schools"; Principal Denton was committed to focusing on kids and supporting

teachers with strategies to ensure that inclusion is a reality; Principal Ellis related that "instructional leadership is all the time"; and Principal Fallow passionately spoke about instructional leadership "being where her real core is."

Principal Andrews, although not speaking directly to the importance of instructional leadership in his practice, did talk about not being a "micromanager or a bully" and said that he had a "highly skilled team so I just stay out of their way and let them be the instructional leaders that they are." He used an adjunct term to instructional leadership in saying that he was "focusing on facilitating leadership for the past two years" and believed in the collective efficacy of his staff and their ability to do their jobs well. I sensed a much softer attitude towards his role as an instructional leader in that it he spoke about his belief in the collective efficacy of his team and relying on his staff to do their work. I felt that Principal Andrews was actually standing back and as he said in his own words he is "new to the school and thus has to trust what has happened, as it stood the test of time so far, and that all has been ok." He mentioned that the school has a "reputation for having highly regarded instructional practices" and that his "department heads just have to maintain the high standard when new people come on board." He also commented that "we're lucky that way" referring to having parents and community who are content with the teaching and learning in the school. As I reflect on our conversation I would have liked to ask him more about his instructional leadership role and how that would look, sound and feel to me. During the completion and reflection on the *PSES* I believed that he had a high sense of self-efficacy yet it was not totally reflected in his tone and responses. The atmosphere created by his leadership style sounded to me to be very supportive, non-judgmental and non-intrusive. His trust for his staff was high and there had been no complaints from parents or community thus instilling a confidence within him that all was well.

Principal's Denton scored quite low in terms of sense of self efficacy on the PSES in instructional leadership (6.83) yet said in her opening comments to the question that "I think I'm pretty high because I've been at two other schools where we managed to change people's beliefs and thoughts regarding education and how you look at kids and learning." This "changing of people's beliefs" referred to people looking at the child and not just the curriculum and pushing for inclusion in every classroom. The moderate self-efficacy score was due to her questioning of the influence over raising student achievement on standardized tests (score of 5) as well as having her other five responses as mostly 7's with one 8 for "motivating teachers." She spoke about the changes she had already affected with regards to the Knowledge and Employability (K & E) students in the school as she had caused a "big stir by pushing inclusion into the classrooms and having K & E students integrated." She says she understands the angst that is felt by staff during a change such as this but also said that she will "guarantee to support teachers throughout the process of integration of students." She stated her confidence in "tackling these issues" and says that the "work of organizing for instruction and differentiating for kids is work that excites her." She differs from Principal Andrews instructional leadership style of non-obtrusive and more "hands off" in that she says she has "no trouble speaking with teachers in difficult conversations" and says that she "knows that it doesn't matter what decisions she makes as not everybody is going to like them", and "she's not going to make everybody happy because that doesn't work." I did not sense a tone of anger or offense in her voice, only a calm sense of knowing what she believes her capabilities are in a team environment. She did note that there were "only a handful of teachers who are struggling" and that she "sees the school as already doing a good job and she is just tweaking and finding areas where she can make the school even better than it already is." I was still surprised that her instructional leadership self-efficacy in this

area was not higher as she seemed to feel confident in her role yet was hesitant in placing her marks on the PSES in the "a great deal" category. However, I also must remember that she is interpreting the PSES in her individual way and it as well does not represent all aspects of the instructional leadership role. As well, she had recently been placed in this principalship and is still becoming acclimatized.

Principal Ellis who said that she was involved in instructional leadership "all the time" zeroed in on their teacher-directed professional development that is centered around five principles that the school is working on. She said she is working to "get people to explore instructional areas that are directly related to improving student achievement" and they have done "lots of work with Understanding by Design (UBD) as well as assessments practices." She shared with me that she is "pretty confident as a principal" and "believes in her ability to lead teachers." Principal Ellis did not spend much time on this question but was very confident in her abilities as an instructional leader and five of the six scores on the PSES relating to her instructional leadership role were selected as "a great deal" or 9 out of 9 with the exception of the extent that she felt she could "raise student achievement on standardized tests." This, as noted by Principal Denton was due to a decreased faith in the tests themselves and the ability to improve scores with at risk and struggling learners and reflect same on examinations. Her work with her staff on the assessment policy and teacher practices does highlight her work to improve the success of children under her care.

Principal Clements immediately said that "instructional leadership is fundamental to any vision of schools." The passion was evidenced in his voice as he said

> Our business is learning and learning is accomplished through some definition
> of instruction. So if our business is learning and I'm leading our business, I have
> to pay attention to what we call here instructional leadership. Where does efficacy
> come from? Again, for me, it comes from…it's not a control issue it is a knowledge

issue.

His comfort in his instructional leadership role comes from teaching and experiencing two curricular areas of the high school – English and Social Studies – and "he has spent his life, both experiencing, reading about, and thinking about, the classroom relationship" and is confident in talking about his experiences "experientially, academically and philosophically." He is adamant that teachers need to "study their craft" and that they "should be involved with professional reading regarding brain, gender and relationship research." He asks educators to "doubt, question and read."

Principal Clements continued to speak about how he "has beliefs about education that are core to his vision" and that he has a "clear vision on what a classroom should look like." He doesn't believe in the "power structure in which some educators think is necessary to create learning" and values the child and their age and developmental stage. He believes in "giving children chances" and challenges what educators know about accountability as "freedom and choice" are pivotal when speaking of accountability and at times educators do not give these critical rights to children. He also argues against using the statement "teaching them for life in the real world" as he does not feel that "we should make decisions based on the "real world" as it isn't the way it is." The most powerful statement that I found emanating at this point in our conversation was that he said he "believes that instructional leadership comes up against communicating the vision that you have." He explained:

> So many things form a vision of what learning in the classroom looks like and
> so many people in education appear particularly in high schools I think, appear
> oblivious to all of that; and myopic towards curriculum, communication of cur-
> riculum. So that's wrestling I have with my own efficacy because at some point I,
> because self-efficacy says you think you have the power to instructionally lead, I
> do! But at some point I feel like a horrible failure because I just want to scream
> B.S.! this is just B.S. This is just wrong what we do! And we keep doing it. We
> absolutely know boy's brains don't work best at 8:00 in the morning…Now I

understand; I have been around long enough to know that there are pragmatic variables that are hard to move; but they're not cultural variables, they're not philosophical variables, they are usually management ones.

He was so passionate in voicing the above noted feelings and I was drawn in to the conversation even further as he adamantly spoke of his vision and how his work in his instructional leadership role came up against that vision. He used the level of efficacy as in a medicine reference in saying how a drug is able to "treat a condition" and thus he said that "I know that I can treat the condition of instructional leadership but over time I begin to doubt, and what doubt does is reduce the level of self-efficacy." He spoke of "doubt as being the enemy of self-efficacy" in that "the more doubt, the more your self-efficacy and your belief that you can make an impact, is questioned." I felt at the time that I could have continued our conversation for hours but then he said "there's my discussion of efficacy and instructional' leadership and what's the next question."

This strong sense of instructional leadership being a core value of the participant was also heard in interviews with Principal Baker and Principal Fallow. Principal Baker's first response to my question was that he "had very strong feelings about teaching and learning and how classrooms should look" and "wants a school full of educational coaches; those who are not judges, but coaches. He wants kids at his school to feel like the "adults are standing by their side" and that "it is not about the teacher and the task being against them; but about the teacher and the kid against the task." I could definitely see his vision as he spoke and I imagined the classroom, staff room and hallways when this attitude prevailed. The single rule for the code of conduct for students was to "behave appropriately to the learning environment and you can't interfere with the learning of others" and they are "working to eliminate the idea of failure" with differentiation of learning tasks for students and flexible scheduling for moving across streams

and time deadlines. Completion of courses is what is important in this school and students "are kept in their original learning groups but are taught according to their needs" in order to proceed to the next level. He says his teachers are "the kind of staff that says "why" instead of "why not" and a group efficacy has been created in the school because the staff have the support, backing, encouragement from the designated leaders." I felt the same strong sense of vision and commitment from Principal Clements but the vision of the classroom was detailed much more vividly for me when I spoke with Principal Baker. One surprise I had was when I asked Principal Baker about supervision in the classroom to ensure that teachers are meeting their "*Teacher Quality Standards (TQS)*" in the absence of subject specific department heads, he did not articulate how he addresses teachers in difficulty or regular supervision. He did mention that "you know as a school administrator the amount of information you have about what goes on in the classrooms even if you have never stepped into them", and seemed to believe that having a cadre of "educational coaches" who have a very supportive relationship with kids, would result in there not being any teachers in difficulty that he would have to work with. He said that his "general idea is that kids at this school have to feel that adults are at their side" and thus perhaps he does not see the same need for a model of supervision and evaluation in his building in this "coaching" style of teaching. I certainly appreciate his model of teacher leadership where he says that "teachers feel empowered and self-efficacious because they come up with the solutions to their problems and area supported to do the best work with kids possible." This trust for teachers was noted in my conversation with Principal Andrews as well.

Principal Fallow had the highest sense of instructional leadership efficacy as reflected in the *PSES* (8.67) and as interpreted by me after the completion and transcription of all interviews. This was the area of her practice that she called "her real core" and she said that it "permeated

every aspect of the school." I felt that she had taken instructional leadership to a very high level when she explained how she has "created a very strong curriculum on how to develop teachers" and that "there is a curriculum for how you build confidence, understanding, efficacy in the profession, professionalism and a culture where every kid matters."

> My job is to build leaders and everybody has the ability to be a leader- in the decisions they make, in their classroom every day, in how they deal with students and families. Everybody went into this job wanting to do the right thing. What has happened is that not all of them have been taken along a path of learning. You need to allow people to learn with grace and we need to allow people to learn while they save face in their job.

Her confidence seemed unbounded as she detailed her work with an example of Individual Program Plan (IPP) development with each teacher on staff and how they each chose two students to learn about the process in order to "give bite sized pieces that everyone has to do." The IPP development served to give teachers an appetite to learn more about other kids in their classes and then, as Principal Fallow expressed, "inclusion then becomes an option." I was very impressed with how she outlined that "professional learning is very scripted and crafted around distributed learning and even the meetings are carefully thought through." She has trained her faculty council to be instructional leaders and they each choose 4 or 5 people to be on their cross-curricular team to talk about teaching and learning. Principal Fallow wants to have 1 in 4 people on the staff to be trained as instructional leaders and to meet with their team to "cross-cultivate, learn and talk." They speak with each other about how they are structuring their walk-throughs, their IPP's, etc., and she has "everybody trying something at the same time in bite sized pieces." She says that "teachers are doing their very best and they might not know another way so we have to help them." Principal Fallow believes that "a principal's job is to ensure that teachers have tons of support to make them successful" and she believes that "leading adult learning is critical and understanding the cultural and the instructional leadership pieces."

190

Principal Fallow believes that "teaching is no longer an individual sport, it is a team sport" and that teachers are demanding it to be a team sport. She found that teacher buy in to the instructional leadership model is high as teachers want opportunities to collaborate and they want support to do their jobs. All professional development sessions are led or shall we say choreographed by Principal Fallow and it was vividly apparent to me that the sessions are congruent with her vision of a student-centered school. This intricately and purposefully structured professional development spoke to a very high sense of self-efficacy in Principal Fallow as she has clear and context specific goals that she is driven to complete.

Findings from this question illuminated a strong sense of the importance of this aspect of the participants' professional practice. Those principals with a clear vision and a detailed plan to work with staff towards articulated goals, seemed to exude a deep sense of confidence and self-efficacy in their belief in their abilities to achieve those goals. All participants understood the importance of the teacher in the classroom and how they must support their role in order to improve success for all students. Distributed leadership once again emerged as an important aspect of the effective leadership of a school with a team approach bringing together the multiple skills of leadership and general staff. The interaction of leaders, followers and their situation saw a distributed perspective in the leadership practice. (Spillane,2007, p.8).

A sense of collective efficacy was seen by all participants as important in creating a school where students thrived and it was interesting to note that the participants who were interviewed all share a non-punitive view of the classroom and want students to feel included, empowered and successful. It was also evident that principal's acknowledged the importance of knowing the child and not simply imparting the curriculum as there are social goals as well as academic. It was also noted that across all participants the ones with the most experience in the position of

principal scored the highest on the scale of the PSES and also emanated a greater sense of confidence in their responses to interview questions.

Would you please reflect on your moral leadership role within your school and share with me your beliefs and feelings with regards to the relationship of your self-efficacy beliefs and your professional practice regarding moral leadership?

This question raised some interesting conversation with the participants and the responses were very thoughtful and introspective. In my discussions with three of the six participants the development and nurturing of trust seemed to be a preeminent value and was mentioned explicitly. Principal Andrews said that he built trust by "always having the best interests of people in mind"; Principal Baker said to make sure to "walk your talk and speak your truth" in order to build trust and faith, and have, as he does "integrity as his core value." And Principal Clements expressed the importance of "building trust and really caring for each other." Two participants, Principal's Andrews and Ellis, spoke about having a "strong moral compass" with Principal Andrew saying that you "need the moral compass whenever you are doing something", and Principal Ellis being adamant in using her moral compass to know "why she is here and why she is doing the work." Principal Andrews also espoused to be "gracious to all" and said that "I take no joy in doing things that are counterproductive to an individual." He spoke about assisting struggling teachers as much as possible and not giving them a poor teaching schedule that would create great stress for them. This statement substantiated my insights from the last question where Principal Andrew seemed to be a supportive and non-confrontational instructional leader trusting in people and utilizing supportive constructive criticism and helpful solutions when they had difficulties.

Principal Ellis felt that the moral leadership aspect of her role was the "biggest piece" and finds that it's a very stable aspect of her principalship. She explained:

> And I think that's why I'm quite confident in the principalship is because that's not really an area of question for me ever. And so if you have a pretty solid moral compass and you know kind of why you are here, or believe you know why you are here, or you believe you know why you are personally doing the work, then you stay focused on that all the time so you're not really getting into the areas of self-doubt. So I really don't do that. I'm not saying that I don't like everyone to like me; I do; its that you know, I'm a people pleaser in that sense. But I don't really have a problem with that area because I have a pretty clear moral compass in terms of what I think is right. Like I do think that's at the basis of everything.

"Calling people when they step or get off the path" or "when a teacher has crossed the line in terms of behavior" is definitely a part of the position that is not easy to journey through but Principal Ellis believes that we "have to deal with the conflict as it comes up." She did stipulate that "we need to call people on things in a dignified, relational and professional manner." She also uses the "restorative justice approach" with discipline and has found it very effective due to the process of discovering how actions affected another person through sharing of the trauma and ultimately healing the wounds through seeking understanding. Promoting the values of the community was also mentioned by Principal Ellis as she said that "the community wanted to see in practice that you took into consideration the values that they wanted instilled in a new school" and it was challenging trying to communicate with them as hers is not a traditional, long-established school. She feels her excellent hand-picked staff are to be credited with the success they have attained in terms of community support as they worked extremely hard to establish a new school culture from the ground up.

Principal Baker and I conversed for just over 10 minutes with regards to this question and he centered his comments on the poster of "integrity" that he received when leaving his first

principalship as it "meant the world to him because they said he modelled trust and faith." He spoke about "speaking his truth" and having others do the same, and having integrity in his staff meetings and dealings with staff, students, parents and other stakeholders. He also prides himself in "being true to his beliefs and commitments" and models same in his school by teaching and coaching. He states his belief that "it is very difficult for teachers to not trust me when I'm out in the middle of August on the football field, or every night at rugby practices, and I am also teaching." He feels that one of the things that would erode the collective efficacy is "if you are saying one thing and doing another." The "speaking of your truth" was a very core value of Principal Baker. He says that the "integrity model is what we're all about; the things we do; the things we say; the way we deal with kids", and he correlates the model with the small number of student suspensions from school. He also credits inclusion of all special needs students as well as supportive, flexible teachers with only having one expulsion from the school.

Principal Clements believed he could do all the questions highlighted in *the Principal Sense of Efficacy Scale (PSES)* in the moral leadership category but didn't feel that the "word moral quite got to it." He did not understand how the "promotion of the prevailing values of the community in the school could be moral really" and thought that "perhaps the *PSES* is really getting to perhaps speaking about a moral directive…what the moral absolute needs to be?...What drives your moral self-efficacy?" I was fascinated as he spoke about not "inculcating the community standards" as he said "I'll be damned if I am ever going to do that." His protectiveness for children emerged when he continued with "the community is a pretty punitive place and we're charged with the minds of little children…the punitive nature of the community is not what we're about…we are not real life." I appreciated his view and reflected on how we tend to have enormous expectations for behavior on children who are still, as Principal Clements

stated "individuating and they are going to do things wrong." He said he had a "certain moral absolute for staff in the building" that he did not accept them veering from, but that with the students he is opposite; as they are "just children." As heard in the interviews with the other participants, the belief in the child and the desire to serve their needs by providing them with what they need learn and thrive was so foundational to Principal Clements. Principal's Baker, Denton and Fallow also held this same passionate belief in the importance of programming to meet all their needs.

Principal Clements spoke about what drives his moral self-efficacy by firstly stating that he does not believe in the abusive, coercive use of power. He, as I sensed from every other participant, did not believe that a punitive model should be used, and he emphatically stated that he did not "believe that students should be made to cry." This care and concern for the dignity and respect of the individual was felt by the researcher in my conversations with all of the participants, but Principal's Clements and Fallow clearly articulated that every child is worthy and every child's story is important." Principal Clements was also adamant when he stated that "I think we should trust each other; loyalty should play; and I think we should consider the narrative of each other in everything we do." Consider the narrative of each other…such an important message so that we listen, we connect, and we seek to understand.

During the course of our interview I was surprised when Principal Clements said "I don't really know about moral leadership really" and continued with stating that he "didn't like the morality of some of my principal colleagues…the thought that they would lead me?" He said that he "didn't like their morality" but in turn they would probably question his. I pondered the disclosure of this sentiment and found myself feeling very thankful for the trust he seemingly felt with me. He mentioned that they feel that their "morality is simply in a dedication to their work"

and that they do not treat people with trust and caring. I also appreciated his deep sense of respect in being entrusted with the "individuation of human beings that happens between 14 and 20" and how he says "we hold it in our hands at junior and senior high and so we are not real life." During and after this conversation I reflected on the enormous sense of responsibility to not misuse our power and in being empathetic for the story each person tells and is living. As well, Principal Clements spoke about "what are the real moral issues of a school that demand a belief that I can make a difference" and that his "self-efficacy there is built on modelling those things." "Those things" were: Not believing in the coercive use of power, not making children cry, not playing on guilt, trusting one another and loyalty. He said he "makes his judgements as a leader based on" the list in the preceding sentence and gave the example of "loyalty to his employees." I was very interested in his thoughts regarding loyalty as he said that he was very loyal and if an employee has been with a school for a long time it is important to respect and appreciate their loyalty as "they deserve something for that." He spoke about how someone giving 35 years of their life to a building deserved to be given loyalty and said that "whether or not I like you is not the point." I found that the dignity he afforded people was very authentic and although I believed that he would be adamant in not accepting people veering from the "certain moral absolute around the staff in the building", I sensed a man who was very caring towards his fellow human beings. His toolbox of philosophy of knowledge and practice was also duly noted from his dialogue and insight in terms of his background and training in counselling.

Principal Fallow disclosed that her

> moral leadership comes from a place of her personal background and fighting
> for what's right and parents leaving their homeland over very specific political
> reasons to bring their family to a safe place…so for me that moral leadership
> is around equity.

She, as with Principal Clements, believes in the importance of each person's story and how they have come to be where they are. Principal Fallow passionately spoke of equity which I heard echoed in the voices of Principal's Baker, Clements and Denton as they conversed with me. Principal Fallow asks us to "celebrate diversity and inclusion" as does Principal's Baker and Denton, and to have kids be able to have the very best teachers and resources regardless of their background or socioeconomic status. Principal Fallow states that "moral leadership is around a strong public education system that supports access for every single student to a quality education." Equity in access was illustrated by Principal Fallow in her experience of schools with selective enrolment and how she opened up the boundaries to allow "all kids to have their programming needs met." The moral imperative to have all student's succeed including First Nations, Metis and Inuit, English Language Leaners, special needs and health issues is the driving force for Principal Fallow and she tirelessly advocates for equity and for "dollars to follow kids and support what their needs are." Principal Fallow also spoke about how instructional and moral leadership "were married" when boundaries were opened and inclusion was embraced as teachers were guided to be shown what was possible and how to stretch out of their comfort zones to differentiate for the needs of every child.

When I was interviewing Principal Fallow I felt her incredible strength of moral purpose with leadership being around equity and her solid belief that "children need their voices to be heard in an authentic manner." I reflected in her office, as I am doing right now, on how determined and driven she sounded and how adamant she was on being able to create and sustain a strong equitable public education system. I felt that her resolve, drive, and high sense of efficacy for moral leadership to abolish the "backward system that supports a socioeconomic demographic that is elitist" would indeed complete the task. Nearing the end of the dialogue

197

involving this question in the interview I was also impressed with Principal Fallow's vision of colleagues all working together to move money where it was needed in the district to support our children. Also, I wholeheartedly agreed with her tenet that "we all need to be responsible for all the results" of the students in our district.

Principal Denton spoke about this idea of a clash of "management and moral" when relating the attendance policy of the school with regards to the disallowing of the "crossing of the stage" or commencement in their grade 12 year if fees have not been paid and attendance is poor. She says her "self-efficacy really drops" when she is "struggling with a moral issue" such as this as she would "want all kids to come." Working within the parameters of school specific policies and procedures has been challenging during her few months at the school as she "needs to find out how practices came to be and the reasons they had rules for what they are doing" as she is feeling morally compelled to change things. Another example of a "moral issue" that she had a conundrum with was when she had become principal in her last school and they were "suspending without due process." This lack of an appropriate and just discipline process was difficult for her to accept and she related how she had to change this practice immediately due to the moral imperative she felt. She said that "when practices at schools are no clearly benefitting the kids then she has to act." Although working quickly to change some policies that she felt were not in the best interested of the students, Principal Denton also talked about "needing to be careful before putting your beliefs on someone else" and that you have to work as a team in a school to make things run smoothly and thus "change without consensus is not good as well." She says that you have to "have good timing and have staff on board so that they have ownership in decision and implementation." I believe there will be times when total consensus is not achieved on a staff but I would challenge that commitment would be the important factor.

Commitment to common goals or a common vision would be key with the ownership occurring as it solidifies. Principal Fallow spoke about commitment as opposed to compliance as critical for professionals and I agree that it needs to be present in order for authenticity of practice to be evident.

Findings from this question illuminated a strong sense of the importance of moral leadership as an integral aspect of the participant's professional practice. The importance of building and sustaining authentic relationships built on trust and integrity was heard in conversation with all participants and each spoke about or acknowledged the importance of respecting the dignity and voice of each person. There was evidence of the "clash" of the managerial and moral aspects of the principalship with policies, procedures and fiscal restraint or procedures getting in the way of doing what was best for the students. A "moral compass" or having a great sense of self and personal understanding of moral beliefs and attitude was noted as of great importance in the conversations, and modelling those beliefs in daily practice identified as essential. The coupling of moral and instructional leadership and having a staff who embraced inclusion and differentiating for the needs of each and every child was seen as foundational to most participants. Equity was also a value that was a goal for the majority of the participants with Principal Fallow especially voicing her moral imperative of "having a strong public education system that supports access for every single student to a quality education." In all participant interviews creating and maintaining relationships was heard or implied. Trust, respect, dignity, integrity, faith, loyalty, justice, belief, and honor were all qualities espoused as critical by the participants as they described quality relationships between them and stakeholders. Principal's Baker and Fallow displayed the highest score in terms of managerial efficacy on the PSES scale and their comments resonate with this high level of self-efficacy.

A question that I had as I listened to the participants and subsequently wrote this analysis is: If you are calling others out when they make you feel uncomfortable and you are feeling that your moral compass is being compromised, how do you know that your moral compass is correct? How do you know that you are truly doing what is best for the children? I am still contemplating this question as I believe that most people know what constitutes just and good and right, but due to the lack of conscious and the injustice caused to people in this world, and even in some of the confrontations I have had in my personal and professional life…I doubt sometimes. I have encountered those who deem to do "what is right" and are truly causing harm to those in their wake. Based on the views of these principals in this study, I would hope that it is goal to select, recruit and place trustworthy and genuinely moral and respectful leaders. I would also hope that principals have high in beliefs of self-efficacy and are purposeful in their pursuit of doing what is best for each and every child.

What supports do you see as essential to you being an effective principal in meeting your managerial, instructional leadership and moral leadership roles and responsibilities (competencies)?

There were many similarities across the six case studies in terms of the supports that the participants saw as essential in meeting their managerial, instructional and moral leadership roles and responsibilities. All participants mentioned the excellent support and assistance from their current superintendent and assistant superintendents and the staff services from their central offices. The relationships they had created and maintained were seen as critical to their confidence and competence in their roles. Principal Andrews reflected on the importance of a statement made to him by the superintendent that hired him when he said "if you aren't successful in this principalship it's because I haven't given you enough support." Principal Andrews called it "the statement of the century" and vividly recalled the meeting when it was

said and had always felt that the mantra of "we are in this together" was present in his work. He

uses the same premise of supporting to ensure success with his teachers when he tells his new

teacher hires that "if you're not successful, we picked you; it's our mistake; we have to make it

work for you." He emphasized that with the site based decision making, he hires his teachers,

and thus he makes sure supports are in place to ensure success for people who join the school

staff. I appreciated the way he framed the advice and assistance from his superintendent as

"supportive guidance" and not a "condescending directive." Principal Baker said that "self-

efficacy can be chiseled away by a poor supervisor" and that he "wants the supervisor to support

him and not just the decision." Principal Baker wanted his supervisors to have authentic listening

and to ask "probing questions that would help clarify reasons for a decision instead of just

cutting down the vision." He wants to feel that the supervisor has confidence in him and is giving

him "support but pressure." He is very impressed with the support given by the current

superintendent and feels that he is very concerned about the principals under his charge.

Principal Baker spoke about a meeting with his superintendent and how he felt when he was

summoned to his office for a conversation.

> The central key point for me Principal Baker is that you're ok. The central
> key point is how are you doing? I said fantastic, and I said I'm actually doing
> better because you just said that. So as much confidence that surround me
> in my work, had just been enhanced by that statement. I can take on the
> world now.

This statement illustrates the source of self-efficacy in social persuasion where there is a

profound effect in the faith expressed by others regarding capability. Principal Denton also felt

incredibly supported by her supervisors and said that they were "supportive and available" and,

as noted by several other participants, she felt that she could ask any question of her assistant

superintendent and did not feel uncomfortable at all. Principal Ellis noted that she had a series of

excellent supervisors in the past years and she could call them on her cell phone and they would be there to support her. Principal Fallow feels "great alignment with the senior administration" and feels that she is "moving in the same direction" as the district mission and purpose. She also noted that "honestly, if you're doing the right things in your school, and you really believe in those things, and you're really grounded in that it's about kids; then honestly who's ever going to be able to come in and say too much about anything." She believes that she is doing the right things by and for kids and thus has always felt supported by the senior administration and others in central office roles in the district. The importance of relationships was echoed throughout the interviews and this emergent theme seemingly encompassed all others.

Principal Clements claiming introspective and analytical thinking said that "because of my belief in my own responsibility for my own life, I don't know how people would support me." I quietly smiled when he said that probably the best way to support him was to "get the hell out of his way and trust that he'll do his job." As I reported in the case study dialogue with him, Principal Clements doesn't really know how the school district or the government would support him because at times he says he is "appalled by the way they are." He says he is fortunate the superintendent "took a chance on him" as he knows he tends to take "every issue to some philosophical intellectual level" and is not pragmatic. When attending provincial education sessions he challenges that "I don't know how they can support me, because I'm not sure whether you have any ideas that are original and are your own." Principal Clements does, however, speak about supports that are essential such as "relationships with two or three principals in the district that are authentic" where he can talk with them and glean advice as well as money supports from central office. He also spoke about the "freedom" he wanted to be afforded in terms of financial choices, ability to have trustworthy friendships, and to be

appreciated even if you do not fit the mold. I heard, in Principal Clements voice, the desire to be accepted for whom he is and the intellectualism and vision that he holds sacred. He asks for people to "appreciate and understand the different personalities of leaders and they can still be good leaders even if you don't like their style." He challenges the industrial model of education that still exists and some of the practices that are not student-centered and researched based, and therefore speaks in very skeptical tones with regards to how the supports would be given to him when his philosophical outlook differs from others to a great degree.

All of the participants sought the support of colleagues to sustain them in their role. Relationships are again cited by all participants as so vital in life and they feel that the friends and colleagues they have chosen to advise and assist them are essential to their practice. Principal Clements says that "the support most needed is a good friend in the business of being a principal" and he wants to get rid of mentorship and put "friendship." He also reiterates the sentiments of the others when he wishes for "relationships with one or two principals in the district that are authentic." This time with friends and/or colleagues serves to be a sounding board and a time of reflection and seeking advice, and it was very important to all of the participants I interviewed. The element of trust with this colleague or friend was also mentioned by several of the participants as essential to their support. Principal Fallow mentioned that she has always had a personal coach as well as critical friends that have given her "unfiltered, uncontaminated feedback" which she has found extremely valuable. She also mentioned that at times one may be in the place of "support versus discomfort" when being challenged on issues or having conversations regarding high level decisions or directions. Principal Baker reiterated this sentiment as mentioned earlier by using the words "support and pressure." Having another set or two of eyes and ears during a staff or faculty council meeting as well as during walkthroughs,

etc., enabled Principal Fallow to be a continuous learner in reflecting on and improving her practice.

All participants mentioned the involvement in a group as essential for support in their practice. Some participants referred to this as a "network" or "catchment group" and they found that the teacher and principal led professional development and collaboration was an asset to their districts. Collaboration across the divisional boundaries of elementary, junior and senior high schools was also mentioned as a welcomed asset. The work in catchment groups with regards to equity of funds was also noted by Principal's Baker, Denton and Fallow in that schools were assisting each other with equipment, supplies and staff across the four learning divisions to ensure that the learning needs of children were being met. This collegial caring for one another was deemed by the researcher as humanitarian and very just and moral "taking care of all our children" kept running through my mind as I interviewed and listened to responses regarding sharing of time and talents amongst the schools. "Collaboration and conversation across school boundaries, jurisdictions and countries" has also served to have Principal Fallow feel very connected and supported and she also spoke about the "need to create some more grass roots collaboration that feels organic."

Central office supports in terms of people in the areas of human resources, accounting, health recovery, discipline assistance, and other services, were also mentioned as providing essential supports to principals. It was further espoused by Principal Denton that although district supports are excellent and the people in the departments are good, there are "not enough people staffed in the positions of support" and that there needs to be a re-design of some of the processes to ensure timely response to issues and intervention assistance. I am cognizant of the demands on the central office staff in terms of supports to principals and schools and I certainly

understand some of the frustrations that occur due to a lack of personnel to deal with the many issues that occur.

Other supports mentioned were those for mental illness, budget and organizational support and special needs students such as The Family Centre; Alberta Education, The Alberta Teachers' Association; Special Needs services; Anti-bullying organizations; AISI (Alberta Initiative for School Improvement) funding; library an Literacy foundations; and fitness facilities.

Also, only one participant said that her husband and family were an essential support.

Findings suggested overall that participants were in need of some essential supports in order to fulfill the managerial, instructional and moral roles in their professional practice. During all the interviews, the supports mainly took the form of people and not resources. The importance of relationships when interviewing participants was very evident and I constantly reflected on the importance of connections with other supportive, empowering human beings as being foundational to the essential supports recognized. All participants identified the support of their supervisors (Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, central office senior administration) as being essential but wanted "supportive guidance and pressure" to empower them to feel confident in their decisions and in handling the stress and issues of the position. A trusted friend or colleague to use as a sounding board for advice and assistance was also recognized as an essential support which may also come in the form of a personal coach or critical friend. Central Services personnel were seen as excellent reference points for the participants with a caution of the limited numbers of available staff and ineffectiveness of some processes.

Collaboration with other principals in the same school district was seen as being a very supportive process and the conversations and actual monetary assistance across the learning

divisions proved to support many have-not-schools who needed the support of the larger and more financially adept high schools. Professional Development as a school district was also viewed as very supportive in that staff and other resources are shared to ensure that teachers have the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes to do their work to an exemplary degree. Additional supports from community and district services served to enable participants to access information and assistance when required to interpret or solve issues or make decisions. Once again the people in the positions were highlighted as giving excellent service but perhaps being overwhelmed with the number of referrals they received.

I was surprised that the support of parents and staff was not mentioned as being essential in the work of the participants. I had assumed that the participants would highlight the support they had on their parent council teams, with their events at the school, etc., but there was only one participant that mentioned parent involvement. Principal Baker spoke about thanking parents with a coffee and treat on Valentine's Day as they dropped off their son/daughter in the parking lot. He mentioned that they were "raising kids together" so he wanted to make sure to thank them for their support. I can only surmise that the participants did not feel that having parental support was essential to their work but only was value-added. I also thought that participants would have spoken about the support of their faculty council, assistant principals, staff as being essential to their practice, but that again was not the case. That "grass roots support" would seem to be essential to a highly functioning and highly efficacious school where all stakeholders felt a sense of ownership, pride and accomplishment with the success of themselves and the children.

Findings with regards to the demographic information collected and the relationships identified will the next section in this chapter regarding this study's findings.

Findings based on demographic information

Cross case analysis based on collected demographic information does not seem to illuminate any findings that would seem to illustrate a pattern especially due to small sample size. However, the two participants with the longest service as a principal coupled with strong background in training and varied site experience, did emerge as having a higher sense of self-efficacy on the *PSES* as well as during their interviews. Below is Table 5.1 of demographic information reproduced here for ease of reference as I present the findings across case studies.

Table 5.1 Demographic Information

	Principal Andrews Ambrose School	Principal Baker Brockton School	Principal Clements Caswell School	Principal Denton Dungren School	Principal Ellis Ekert School	Principal Fallow Freeborn School
Gender	M	M	M	F	F	F
Age	56	61	66	54	58	54
Ethnicity	Caucasian	Caucasian	Caucasian	Caucasian	Caucasian	Caucasian
Years as principal	7	15	8	11	11.5	17
Highest degree	BPE/Ed after degree and courses	BSC, BEd, Masters course	MEd	MEd – Policy studies	MEd- Secondary studies	BA with BEd after degree
Type of school	Public	Public	Public	Public	Public	Public
School Type	Suburban	Urban	Suburban	Urban	Urban	Urban
#students	950	1040	1187	1170	1100	2400
# teachers	45	45	62	55	52	115
Gr. Level	10-12	10-12	10-12	10-12	10-12	10-12
Prep course	University credit short admin course- 8 years ago	LED and PED	No	PED	PED/1st year principal grp.	PED/ Intensive class
Mentors/ mentored	Yes/medium	Yes-/High	Yes/High/coaching certification	Yes /small	Yes/ medium	Yes/ extensive

207

As I had mentioned earlier in this dissertation, gender has often indicated mixed results as Smith et. al., (2005) reported that females reported higher self-efficacy for instructional leadership than males yet Lyons (1994), Tschannen-Moren and Gareis (2004) and Aderhold (2005), found no relationship between principal self-efficacy and gender. With regards to the scores on the PSES and my impressions as I interviewed the participants, I do not believe that there were any major relationships or patterns that emerged with regards to gender. Overall score for males for the PSES was 7.71 and females was 7.63 and conversations did not seem to me to differentiate males and females with regards to their self-efficacy beliefs as they related to their professional practice. With regards to age of participants, Santamaria (2008) found that the principal's age was the strongest negative predictor of a principals' sense of self-efficacy. In my sample the eldest male, Principal Caswell did have the lowest self-efficacy scores overall but due to the small sample size I cannot make any generalizations regarding this, especially when another male only five years his junior had one of the highest beliefs of self-efficacy. All participants were Caucasian even though two reported to be "mutt" and "anglo-saxon" thus no comparisons can be made regarding this aspect of the demographic.

With regards to years of teaching/principal experience there has been mixed results in the research with Aderhold (2005), Tschannen-Moren and Gareis (2004) finding no statistically significant relationship while Lyons (1994) actually found that more experienced principals had lower self-efficacy. I found in my small study that the two principals with the most experience of 15 and 17 years did have the highest level of self-efficacy as expressed in the interview and on the *PSES*. The "excellent track record" which they both spoke of, and the knowledge of the background operational, managerial and instructional aspects of the high school experience, enabled them to be able to anticipate the deadlines and calendar activities and to particularly

understand their managerial roles and responsibilities. As well, they spoke about the "ebb and flow" of the school and it was evident in our conversations that being at their sites longer than four years had also contributed to their sense of confidence in being able to handle any issue that came their way. Being involved in many processes including staffing, supervision and evaluation, budget planning and allocation, etc., allowed them to have an understanding of the tasks and thus they felt that they were not surprised by anything. As well, they were very deliberate in having a distributed leadership focus with assistant principals and department heads assisting them in their roles.

Most participants had some training or education after their basic education or teaching degree and there did not seem to be any relationship here between highest degree attained and self-efficacy beliefs. I did not speak with the participants in great depth with regards to their education and training and thus there may be more relationships revealed with regards to self-efficacy and education/training if I had looked at courses comprising their degrees and other in-services and sessions during their careers. It seemed that overall years of experience were a more important factor for them.

It would also be very difficult to draw any conclusions based on the number of students and teachers. Findings from Smith, Guarino, Strom and Adams (2006) suggested that principal efficacy beliefs tended to increase with the complexity of the job and the size of the school and that the majority of the principals felt very confident in their abilities to facilitate an effective learning environment. I found that the participant in the largest school, Principal Fallow from Freeborn School, did indeed have a very high sense of self-efficacy and was the principal of a school that is twice as large as the next four schools in the study. I therefore see a relationship

existing here in that particular case but cannot draw any generalizations from looking to the other schools and their populations.

Principals Baker and Fallow, who had the highest sense of self-efficacy both as illustrated by the *PSES* and as indicated to the researcher in their interviews, had the most background in a course or courses targeting principal's roles and responsibilities. Principal Fallow who I perceived as having the highest sense of self-efficacy was involved in a very intensive principal preparation program that entailed several months of targeted study and assignments as well as introductions to all of the critical support people at her central office. She found the training to be incredibly beneficial and still refers to her binders collated from that experience. Her exposure to the central office staff responsible for all areas involved in the principalship (human resources, student assessment, staff relations, etc.) proved invaluable in her practice and she said that she felt so "connected in the district" and could reach out and speak to a knowledgeable professional about any issue that she faced. Being allowed to contact others for advice and discussion enabled her to believe in her capabilities to tackle any task within a supportive community. Principal Baker also felt very much supported in his role and it was the social persuasion of others expressing confidence in his capabilities as well as mastery experiences that he said boosted his self-efficacy. All participants expressed a feeling of support from their superintendent and noted that words of encouragement and care from their direct supervisor or superintendent were extremely meaningful to them.

Finally, there did seem to be a relationship between supportive mentoring that occurred with the participants and their level of self-efficacy beliefs. Principal's Baker and Fallow had the highest scores on the *PSES* and were deemed to be highest in levels of efficacy by the researcher, and they have each had extensive mentorship opportunities for their own personal and

professional development as well as they have mentored many others. The contextual variables of campus and school district level support were found to have a relationship with self-efficacy as those participants who felt most connected with supervisors, mentors, critical friends, etc., seemed to exhibit a higher level of self-efficacy in their interviews with me and on the PSES. This relationship of the factors of campus and district support was highlighted in the past as correlating significantly with high self-efficacy (as was found by Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2005).

In the next section, findings based on the *Principal Sense of Efficacy Scale (PSES)* will be presented.

Findings Based on the Principal Sense of Efficacy Scale (PSES)

Although this study is not of a quantitative nature, I deemed it useful to place this small section in this chapter as the *PSES* was utilized as complimentary in this study and in essence was the "focus" or "anticipatory set" for the interview questions. The *PSES* allowed participants to answer questions related to their self-efficacy beliefs in their estimation of the capacity or ability they have the effect outcomes in the areas of management, instructional and moral leadership that were represented in the 18 questions. All participants completed the survey in less than 5 minutes and I believe, in all cases, that it served to focus their attention on the construct of self-efficacy and overview some of the aspects of their professional practice. This *PSES* tool along with the *Professional Practice Competencies for School Leaders (PPCSL)* were instruments that were complimentary and informative in this study. Brief findings will be related with regards to notes taken during the participants completion of the PSES as well as a general overview of the scores will be given. There will be no statistical analysis of any of these findings

as this is definitely not a quantitative study and only basic comparisons and contrasts will be

mentioned.

The results of the PSES in terms of mean scores for the overall sense of efficacy and

efficacy for management, instructional and moral leadership are displayed in table 5.2.

Table 5.2 Principal Sense of Efficacy Scale (PSES) Scores for Participants

	Principal Andrews	Principal Baker	Principal Clements	Principal Denton	Principal Ellis	Principal Fallow
PSES overall	7.5	8.44	6.89	6.83	7.78	8.28
PSES Management	6.83	8.33	6.33	6.00	6.50	7.3
PSES Instructional Leadership	8.17	8.5	8.00	6.83	8.33	8.67
PSES Moral Leadership	7.50	8.5	7.4 *one answer blank	7.33	7.12	8.67

During the completion of the *PSES* I was initially surprised by how quickly the

participants completed the 18-item survey. All participants completed the survey in less than five

minutes when I had initially anticipated allocating ten to fifteen minutes to read through the page

and identify their answers. Upon reflection however, I can see where five minutes would be

enough time as the sentence stems are small and self-explanatory. There were no clarifying

questions asked with the exception of Principal Ellis asking if she should fill in the circles or use

check marks, and all participants seemed very comfortable in replying to the survey. There were

a few comments from participants as they filled out the questionnaire with Principal Andrews

joking that he didn't know how many he would have right or wrong; Principal Baker reiterating

that the survey is done "right now in the moment in his current experience"; and Principal

Denton talking through a couple of responses by saying that "handle the demands of the

job…that's one of the hardest things to do; and "take control of your own schedule"…I feel like

putting that down near the lower end today." I did have one participant, Principal Clements, who

did not indicate his opinion with regards to: "In your current role as a principal, to what extent

can you promote a positive image of your school with the media." I am not certain at the time whether he purposefully skipped over that question or he simply missed it. I did send a follow up email message asking if he would please send me his opinion on that question, but I did not hear back from him. Later, when reflecting on the question in the interview he had mentioned that he did not believe that it should be a "moral leadership question" as was indicated in the scoring of the scale, but I did not notice his lack of opinion/answer on the actual PSES at the time of the conversation. This was definitely an oversight on my part.

Two participants, Principal Baker and Principal Fallow, had the highest totals with regards to their overall scores on the *PSES* as well as the subscales of self-efficacy for managerial, instructional and moral leadership. These two participants presented very similarly in their high sense of self-efficacy and their belief and confidence in their capabilities. The optimism and commitment that they share was very evident in their answers on the PSES and in their interviews and there was a definite theme of their years of experience instilling a huge confidence in being able to tackle all aspects of their professional practice roles and responsibilities. The *PSES* was completed in less than two minutes for both participants and I sensed no insecurities or self-doubts when they were answering the PSES or my interview questions.

With regards to overall belief of self-efficacy Principals Clements and Denton had the lowest scores which I also perceived in the course of their interviews and in subsequent analysis of transcripts through subsequent audio recording playback. These two participants mirrored each other's scores quite closely with the exception of the instructional leadership area where Principal Clements exhibited a much higher sense of efficacy. Both participants were newly placed in their schools and seemed to be more "glass half empty" in their presentation with more

issues expressed that have negatively affected them and their experiences in the principal's office. Although Principal Clements expressed great responsibility for his actions and for outcomes and seemed more optimistic in his ability to reach and teach all children, he did doubt the education system and its rigid structure and was quite cynical in the belief that any real deep change could occur. Principal Denton seemed to share this more doubtful outlook on the possibility of improvement and change although she expressed that it was just "happening so slowly" when we know what could be done to improve the system based on research and best practices. Both Principal Clements and Principal Denton speak of a belief that principals must be "visionary leaders" and instructional and moral leadership are in the forefront with building relationships as critical.

Principals Andrews and Ellis had very similar scores in all categories and I also perceived them to have relatively high senses of self-efficacy in their interviews. These two participants were very similar as well in their presentation to me of a quiet, thoughtful demeanor and humble sense of graciousness. As I reflect back on the interviews, I see that they mirrored each other quite well in terms of the tone of the conversation and the way I felt when I was in their presence. Both of these participants are quite similar with regards to their belief in the importance of instructional and distributed leadership and both exude a quiet confidence with respect to their self-efficacy beliefs. They both seem to "lead from behind" where they empower others to take charge and create a supportive framework that does not have them as the "leader in the limelight" but rather the leader who mentors others and trusts in their abilities to add to the collective of the team commitment. Principal Andrews summarized this finding when he said that: "I have a skilled team so I just stay out of their way."

The most interesting finding that the reader has already probably surmised is that there was a clustering of the six participants into three groups of two: (a) Principals Clements and Denton – lowest self-efficacy scores on the *PSES* and a sense of self-doubt, questioning of established practices and outcomes, and less inability to change certain things; (b) Principals Andrews and Ellis – medium self-efficacy scores on the *PSES* with quiet, humble demeanors and high belief in their instructional leadership abilities with the use of their team for targeted, distributed leadership that supported them in their role; and (c) Principals Baker and Fallow-highest self-efficacy scores on the *PSES* and a sense of confidence, capability, and vision to ensure that all students succeed.

As identified by Bandura (1998) and Gist and Mitchell (1992) the high sense of self-efficacy noted in this study does seem to have a significant impact on his or her level of aspiration or goal-setting, effort, adaptability and persistence. Less self-doubt and a willingness to not settle for less than the best solution was very evident in the conversations with Principal's Baker and Fallow. As stated by Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2005) Principals' Baker and Fallow also spoke of staying calm and focused in difficult situations and regulating their personal expectations to correspond to conditions. As was detailed in the work of Lyons and Murphy (1994) it was also seen that participants in this study with a lower sense of self-efficacy also seemed to perceive less of an ability to control their environment. From the interviews of the participants in this study it is noted, as identified by Leithwood (2008) and McCormick (2001, that a key or essential characteristic of leadership self-efficacy is self-confidence. This self-confidence was very evident in my conversations with Principals Baker and Fallow and with other principal participants when addressing questions where their sense of self-efficacy was comparatively higher than in other areas.

Following the analysis in the first three sections, there were themes that emerged from the data. The next and final section of this chapter will centre on the discussion of these themes.

Finding Based on Emergent Themes

While reflecting upon my research question of "how do secondary school principals understand the relationship of their beliefs of self-efficacy and their professional practice?" I continually read through the transcripts, personal notes and case study participant profiles to look for the emerging themes from my research study. I am definitely a visual learner and thus I diagrammatically sketched the construct of self-efficacy and its sources and efficacy-activated processes so that I could then make some connections to what I had heard from participants in their lived experiences. As I reflected on the words of Cresswell (2009) I knew that I could draw some meaning "from a comparison of the findings with information gleaned from the literature or theories." (p. 189). Figure 5.1 has been derived from the study of the construct of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997) and was created to assist me in visualizing the construct and then connecting back to the case study participant profiles as well as the cross-case analysis to identify emerging themes in the data. Sources of self-efficacy: (a) mastery experiences; (b) vicarious experiences; (c) social persuasion; and (d) psychological/affective states; along with the processes through which efficacy beliefs produce their effects (efficacy activated processes) are represented.

Figure 5.1 The Construct of Self-efficacy and its sources and activated processes

Sources of self-efficacy	Self-Efficacy	Efficacy Activated Processes
Mastery experiences- successes build up confidence Vicarious Experiences- seeing others succeed Social Persuasion- others express faith in capabilities Psychological/affective states- positive interpretations of stress & tension	The belief in one's capacities to organize and execute the course of action required to produce given attainments Cognitive construct that is task and context specific	<u>Cognitive Processes</u> – positive forethought in goal setting; higher goal challenge and firmer commitment; visualize successful scenarios with little self-doubt; increased skills to resolve issues; face tasks with resolve and optimism; use good analytical thinking. <u>Motivational Processes</u> – Bring projected future into present forethought; motivation is cognitively generated-goals set with action plans. Determines goals people set, how much effort they expend, how long they persevere and resilience to failure. <u>Affective Processes</u>-Personal control over thought, action and effect; control own stressors; reduce anxiousness in taxing & threatening activities; control disturbing thoughts. <u>Selection processes</u> – shaping courses of lives by influencing the types of activities & environments people choose to get into or produce.

As I contemplated the words, phrases, statements and thoughts that emerged, I reflected back to the construct of self-efficacy and my research question as I decided on which themes were presenting themselves after my interviews and reflections. According to Bandura (1997) self-efficacy beliefs influence people's course of action, their efforts into tasks, their perseverance, their resilience to adversity, their self-talk and thought patterns, levels of stress and depression that they experience, and the level of accomplishment they realize. Reflecting on this statement as well as knowing the other information as represented in Figure 5.1, four overarching themes were apparent in regards to the relationship of principal beliefs of self-efficacy and their

professional practice: (a) Clarity of vision; (b) Strong focus on student achievement; (c) Dedication to instructional leadership; and (d) Experience Matters: Confidence and competence from experience in the position.

Throughout the interviews and the subsequent transcription and analysis, the four themes emerged as well as the overriding theme of "relationship." Every participant identified the importance of relationships with their colleagues, their supervisors, their teachers, and the children in the perceived effectiveness of their work.

Relationships

Superseding and immersed in all themes and identified in all participant interviews was the foundational skill and understanding of relationship. Regardless of what question or issue was discussed in the interviews, all of the participants talked about the importance of relationships. The importance of forming, enhancing and sustaining relationship with the people in the school community was seen by participants and the researcher as being essential in order to have the ideal environmental conditions for the other themes to exist. When the relationships are perceived as healthy, positive and empowering, there is no doubt in my mind that the school is a healthier and more productive and effective place to be. One participant expressed his belief in the value of relationships by saying "well if it isn't about relationships, what is it all about?" (Baker interview, 2014). It was echoed in every other participant interview that relationships with all stakeholders were important and the ability to manage these relationships with dignity, respect and understanding was critical to maintaining and sustaining trust. Managerial, instructional and moral leadership was seen by all participants to need relationship at the heart to ensure that s student centered school was filled with effective communication, respectful interactions and collaborative study, dignified codes of conduct and discipline, differentiated and

inclusive instructional practices, distributed leadership, and at all times stakeholder support. Honesty, integrity, faith and trust, were mentioned by participants as the building blocks of effective relationships and they strove to model same in their professional practice.

Utilizing background knowledge in the sources of self-efficacy, efficacy-activated processes and results from previous studies with regards to self-efficacy and the principalship. I will now look further into the four themes.

Clarity of Vision

Participants who scored high in the *PSES* and spoke with self-confidence and a perceived high sense of self-efficacy held a clear purpose or vision. Chemers, Watson and May (2000); Paglis and Green (2002); Dimmock and Hattie, (1996), Woolfolk and Hoy, (2005) have determined that efficacious principals are most likely to inspire a common sense of purpose amongst staff, have developed an orderly and positive school climate, have centered the context on student achievement, and have given flexibility and trust to the teachers in the classroom. As stated by Bandura (1986) and reiterated by Gist & Mitchell (1992): "A principal's perceived self-efficacy beliefs have a significant effect on his or her level of aspiration or goal-setting, effort, adaptability and persistence." Wood and Bandura (1989) found that perceived self-efficacy has been found to influence analytic strategies, direction-setting, and subsequent organizational performance of managers. "A vision of self as a leader entails one's beliefs about the leadership role, how one should act, things one should and should not do, and one's code of ethics." (Robbins & Alvy, 2003, p. 4). Further to this Robbins and Alvy (2003) note that a shared vision

is also important in "forming a collective vision that everyone can buy into." (p. 5). Starratt also speaks to collective vision.

> The development of a collective vision of where the school should be going is fundamental to the work of an educational administrator.This kind of activity involves both process and content. Developinga collective vision involves sharing ideas, clarifying and understanding the various points of view reflected in the community as well as the beliefs and assumptions underneath these points of view, negotiating differences, and building a consensus. Developing a collective vision also involves the content of that vision. Administrators do not possess the total content of this vision- no one does – but they should be willing to lay out their own attempt at articulating the content of a vision. (Starratt, 2003, p. 55)

Mission and vision statements are certainly not new to schools and education. Generally mission speaks to the establishment of the organization's purpose and vision instills in an organization a sense of direction. "A critical aspect of leadership is helping a group develop shared understandings about the organization (the district, the school) and its activities and goals that can undergird a sense of purpose or vision." (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2008, p. 507). Bandura (1997) also noted that:

> There is some evidence that the vision conveyed by leaders does not affect the performances of others directly. Rather, it enhances productivity to the extent that it inspires others to adopt the challenging goals embodied in the vision and strengthens their sense of efficacy to realize them (Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1996). Providing concrete strategies for how to implement the vision further aids group accomplishments. (p. 461)

Principal Fallow expressed a very clear mission with "creating a strong public education system that supports access for every single student to a quality education." Believing in instructional leadership as something that is "core" and "permeates every aspect of the school", she identified the professional development process that she has mapped out in order to build "confidence, understanding, efficacy in the profession, professionalism, and a culture where every kid matters." Through purposeful staff development in "bite sized pieces that everyone can do", she cited one example of each teacher working with two Individual Program Plans so that they could

understand the unique needs of each and every student in their classroom through guided

learning for the two IPP's. Another portion of her overall vision was the guidance, by her

personally trained instructional leaders (1 leader to every 4 staff) through meticulously planned

and scheduled instructional development in order to realize the academic and social goals of the

students.

Principal Fallow's vision emerged throughout our interview and its foundation was in her

core values and beliefs. Some of these cornerstone values and beliefs that she related to me were:

- "There needs to be a strong public education system that supports access for every single student to a quality education (equity)."
- "Children need their voices to be heard in an authentic manner…every child is worthy."
- "Everyone has permission to be their best self and to do what's right for kids."
- "Leadership is about equity, diversity and inclusion."
- "Teaching is a team sport with distributed leadership and collaboration being essential to the team."
- "Trust is foundational to relationships."
- "Everyone wants to do the right things but need coaching, support and trust on the pathway to learning."
- "It's about commitment and not compliance."

As Robbins and Alvy (2004) state:

> In schools where all organizational members genuinely share a vision, the
> vision serves as a compass, lending direction to organizational member's
> behavior. When the vision is the principal's, but is not embraced by organi-
> zational members, individuals may go through the motions or act on should
> rather than as a result of deep commitment. (pp. 3-4)

As stated many times by Principal Fallow herself, if there is only compliance and not

commitment there is not a genuine ownership in the process, decision, etc., and thus the school

will not be embracing the journey together. My sense, as I stated earlier, is that the above-noted

belief and value statements, heard from Principal Fallow, would not be openly debated by others.

Her vision as she stated as "Creating a strong public education system that supports equity and access for every single student to a quality education."

The school philosophy as noted on their web page is:

> We are serious about student success and are committed to providing a positive learning environment that will foster and support high academic expectations and excellence in student achievement, behaviour and service. We believe that success is best achieved in an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust and encourage a partnership among students, staff, parents and community members to support academic learning, demonstrated citizenship skills and student responsibility.

There is also great emphasis on inclusion and differentiated instruction as noted one the same page as the philosophy statement.

> Differentiated instruction applies an approach to teaching and learning that provides students with multiple options for absorbing information and making sense of ideas. The model of differentiated instruction requires teachers to be flexible in their approach to teaching and adjusting the curriculum and presentation of information to learners. Classroom teaching is a blend of whole class, group and individual instruction. Differentiated Instruction is a teaching theory based on the premise that instructional approaches should vary and be adapted in relation to individual and diverse students in classrooms.

As with the personal vision statement of Principal Fallow, the student –centeredness and creation of a welcoming, inclusive environment respectful of diversity and founded in the principle of equity is noted.

Principal Baker, who also scored high on the *PSES* and who I found to be very self-efficacious in his interview, also spoke about his core beliefs and values with regards to children, learning and the principalship:

- "The principal sets tone and direction and impacts outcomes…all things happen because of your influence."
- "I want kids to know that teachers are standing by their sides…its kids and teachers against the task…a whole staff of educational coaches, not judges."
- "Integrity is the core value…model trust and faith…speak your truth."
- "everything is about relationships…giving trust and confidence is so important."
- "Behave appropriately and don't interfere with the learning of others."
- "Value student and teacher voice."

Principal Baker also commented many times regarding the importance of collaboration and of distributed leadership. He has a model that is devoid of subject-specific department heads and has a few leaders in the roles of "inclusive learning," "professional development," etc. His belief is in the collective efficacy of his staff as they work to ensure success for all students. Within his vision is also that "student's progress through competency; it is a flexible teaching model; and that failures are essentially eliminated." Principal Baker's vision as perceived by the researcher would be: Creating a school with exemplary practices in teaching and learning where adults are supporting students as educational coaches dedicated to continuous progress and realization of student goals. There is not a vision statement in the school per se but there is a mission statement that reads as follows:

> Brockton high school provides a tradition of achievement within an inspiring and dynamic environment, which sponsors student spirit, leadership, and a commitment to excellence.

The strong "clarity of vision" espoused by the participants and felt by the researcher seems to be closely related to a high sense of efficacy. Participants other than Principals Baker and Fallow did seem to have a sense of vision but did not articulate it to nearly the strength and passion that was heard, seen and felt from these two participants. It is also interesting to note that there were no mission or vision statements posted on any of the other school websites that I visited with the exception of three words of vision on the Dungren High School site which simply were: Learning; Collaboration; Results. This clear expression of personal vision by Principal's Fallow and Baker coupled with the website articulation of some sort of philosophy or mission, served to have me reflect on how these may relate to each other as the other school websites were either sketchy or devoid of any indication of overall mission, purpose or vision for the school. As well, the personal vision or mission statements of Principal's Andrews, Clements,

Denton and Ellis were not stated but only certain beliefs and values were espoused. This was simply an observation and an interesting finding and is certainly not to be generalized in any way.

Principal's Andrews and Ellis, who had fairly high *PSES* scores (overall 7.5 and 7.78 respectively) did speak with regards to their vision but it did not seem to permeate all aspects of the interview. Principal Andrews espoused his belief in that establishing and maintaining effective relationships as well as giving and modelling trust to "empower teachers and students." He had great belief and highly valued the strengths of his staff and their ability to make decisions to support students. He said he "fosters collective efficacy, believes in distributed leadership and honours the past." Being "gracious to all" and trusting others and having their best interests in mind, were also sentiments of belief expressed. Great value was placed in people and their contributions and Principal Andrews believes in kids and supports his staff as he believes, as did a superintendent in his career, that if teachers are not successful then he has failed. Principal Andrews did not sound at all confrontational to me and I believe that his conversations with others would always take a dignified, respectful, quiet, respectful tone. I do not perceive that he may be comfortable with any "fierce or confrontational" that may occur with regards to unprofessionalism, etc. It was my understanding that Principal Andrews believed that the staff were very strong and that parents and community were very happy with the school and how it was being managed, etc., so he was wishing to maintain this supportive relationship and would continue with established practices. He was also fairly new to this school and wanted to continue to "keep the status quo."

Principal Ellis whose score was very similar to Principal Andrews on all aspects of the *PSES* touched on her vision in the very first response of the interview when she said that self-

efficacy was: "the ability to stand up for what you believe in and be confident in your ability to make decisions that will have a positive impact on kids." Her core values and beliefs again centre around a deep belief in serving the needs of the child as well as "justice." She says that something "being right for kids" is critical and "honesty and trust" are moral imperatives. Once again, as with the other participants, relationships are critical and she said that "how you manage and lead has to do with the kind of person you are and how you handle relationships." Principal Ellis did align with all other participants when she said that she "respects collective talent", however she did not elaborate further with regards to her beliefs regarding distributed leadership.

Principal's Clements said that "every leader should have a deep, resolute vision." He noted that the instructional leadership part is huge as the "core business is classroom and curriculum." He believes that we must build relationships and that everything stems from the second competency of the *PPCSL* which is "embodying visionary leadership." He also believes in responsibility and that he must use care of judgment, process, intent and action when influencing other human beings. During his interview, his beliefs and values were centered in a deep respect for human beings and thus he espouses what he believes:

- "I do not believe in the coercive abuse of power."
- "I don't believe that students should be made to cry."
- "I don't believe that guilt should prevail."
- "I think we should trust each other."
- "Loyalty should play."
- "I think we should consider the narrative of each other in nearly everything we do."

Although not clearly articulating a vision as perhaps I heard clearly from Principal's Fallow and Baker and to a lesser degree from the other participants, Principal Clements still had very clearly stated beliefs and I knew that he was student centered and took his role very seriously with great responsibility. Although his sense of self-efficacy as noted by his score on the PSES (6.89) and

perceived through interview responses was in the mid-range and quite low in relation to Principal's Baker and Fallow, the relationship between his self-efficacy beliefs and his professional practice in terms of a "clear sense of vision" was noted by the researcher.

I also noted a relationship between sense of self-efficacy beliefs and professional practice in regards to vision when speaking with Principal Denton. She spoke more about change and her "ability to create an environment and make changes" and being "a change agent" when asked about what self-efficacy meant to her, and did not really communicate a clear sense of mission or vision. It was interesting to me that she had the lowest sense of efficacy in terms of overall, managerial and instructional leadership scores and that she did not articulate more clearly her beliefs, values, mission or vision. She did speak about some of her beliefs in the interview which were: The importance of fostering relationships with staff and students; managing and leading are two different things; organizing for instruction with differentiated instruction and inclusion is essential; and that "visionary leaders have messy desks." This last comment is a reflection on her belief that the managerial tasks "drop off the list" of things to do as compared with her instructional leadership role, and that she sees herself as a visionary leader who is out working with staff, students and parents and not spending undue time on paperwork and managerial issues.

With Principal's Fallow and Baker I also noted a sense of amazing commitment as well as lack of self-doubt when they were speaking about their practice and the vision they imagined and for some parts, had said they had realized. Principal Baker continually reinforced that he had "great belief in his intelligence and ability, and that all things happened because of his influence and control. " He also said that he had huge confidence and competence in all areas of his practice and would persevere and realize outcomes because of his belief and capabilities.

Principal Fallow also exuded this same confidence with no self-doubt as she spoke about there

being "no barriers to doing what is right" and seeing "clear pathways and possibilities." She also

continually talked about "permission to and confidence in" and a vision of equity and success for

students.

Key understandings

I have identified the following key understandings with regards to the first theme of

"Clarity of Vision":

- Participants with the highest sense of self-efficacy were able to articulate a clear personal leadership vision to the me.
- Participants with the highest sense of self-efficacy were able to clearly articulate their beliefs and values to me.
- The high sense of self-efficacy activated cognitive processes that created as postulated by Bandura (1997) "positive thought in goal setting; higher goal challenge and firmer commitment and the ability to visualize successful scenarios with little self-doubt as well as great capacity to face tasks with resolve and optimism."
- The high sense of efficacy activated the motivational processes as participants "brought future into present forethought; set goals and created action plans; determined what goals to set, how much effort they would expend, and how long they would persevere; and increased their resiliency to failure. " (Bandura, 1997).
- The high sense of efficacy activated the affective processes as participants displayed personal control over thought, action and effect with a perceived ability to control their own stressors and reduce anxiousness as a calm, confident demeanor was displayed and professed to be modelled.
- The high sense of efficacy activated the selection processes whereby participants were influenced to choose certain activities and environments.

Strong Focus on Student Success

A second theme that emerged from the findings was the relationship that seemingly exists

between highly self-efficacious participants and their strong focus on student achievement. The

two participants with the highest sense of self-efficacy were very focused on the academic and

social achievements of their students and the researcher heard their passion for student s at the

centre of the interview. As I listened to the interviews and reflected on the transcripts of our time together, I noted that as the scores for the overall sense of efficacy fell amongst the participants, there was a relationship between the focus on the students and their achievements. This focus on achievement has been defined for the purposes of this section as: "success in terms of competency in subjects and areas of study with regards to meeting the acceptable standard on provincial and teacher development tests as well as demonstration and self-reporting of accomplishment of personal academic and social goals." Due to achievement being in both the academic and social realm, the word "success" has been adopted in the title of this second theme.

> Throughout my interview with Principal Fallow, whom I perceived to have the highest sense of self-efficacy of all the participants, and who scored very high n the PSES, I found that she continually put the focus on the child/student and their support and success. The acknowledgement of the student as the focal point of her work was reiterated in all aspects of the interview where she continually spoke of addressing the needs of each and every child and her dedication to providing children with equitable access to quality educational programs. Some of the statements that I heard from Principal Fallow were:

- "I am invested in advocating for authentic student voice."
- "Everyone has permission to be their best selves and do what's right for kids."
- "One goal is to make sure that kids reach their potential and are taken care of and that teachers are supported.
- "A culture where every kid matters."
- "Every child is worthy."
- "It is about equity and kids have to have access to a quality education."

During my interview time with Principal Fallow, I always felt that we had the child in the center of our conversation and that her role was "a calling" and not simply a profession. She talked about how she was invested in the success of each and every child and how every teacher in the building was aware of how student-centered she was.

> If there is one thing that everybody in the school will say about me is that I believe in kids. And the one thing that they know is that they will not get supported if they aer not willing to support a kid. They know that that's where they have crossed the line.
> (Principal Fallow, 2014)

As noted by Woolfolk and Hoy (2004) principals who create a school climate with a strong academic emphasis and serve as advocates on behalf of teachers' instructional efforts with the central administration enhance teacher's beliefs in their instructional efficacy. Echoed by Bandura (1997) "High expectations and standards for achievement pervade the environment of efficacious schools…..Teachers regard their students as capable of high scholastic attainment, set challenging academic standards for them, and reward behaviors conducive to intellectual development" (p. 244).

The clarity of a student-centered purpose was sensed most deeply when speaking with Principal Fallow but Principal Baker also spoke at length about his dedication to the students and their academic and social development. He outlined his basic educational philosophy of the school in which his teachers were "educational coaches", not judges, and he wanted "every kid to know that the teachers are standing by their sides." He believes in "constant progress for kids within a flexible learning model of advancement by competency" and asks teachers to have unconditional support with the students in order to have "student and teacher against the task." Marzano (2003) reinforces this idea in the following:

> Regardless of the research base, it is clear that effective teachers have a profound influence on student achievement and ineffective teachers do not. In fact, ineffective teachers might actually impede the learning of their students.   (pp. 74-75)

Principal Ellis stated, as her definition of self-efficacy that it was "the ability to stand up for what you believe in and be confident in your ability to make decisions that will have a positive impact on kids." She did focus on the needs of the child from the very first question in the interview and also stated that "being right for kid's is critical." I did hear the student-centeredness in her voice but it did not seem as strong and robust as in the interviews with the

participants who scored higher in the *PSES*. Perhaps this was due to her being very tired from her student excursion and plane flight with the less extensive or expansive answers as compared with the other participants. I did perceive her absolute dedication to the students and the importance of establishing solid relationships with them, but I simply did not hear the passion and determination as profoundly as was displayed with Principals Fallow and Baker.

Principal Andrews reflected on his influence on student achievement with regards to math tutorials that served to assist grade ten's struggling with the subject matter. He did say that he "believed in kids" and that he was dedicated to having an authentic relationship with them, but the topic of student achievement was not targeted. Conversation was essentially centered more on the staff then the students. Principal Clements mentioned student achievement within the first two responses in the interview and did say that the "core business is the classroom and the curriculum" and thus focused on the student and their achievement. He also spoke passionately about self-efficacy being a knowledge issue and about the importance of credibility and how you must know about children when teaching them. He questioned others when they have not read research and studied the adolescent brain and believes that you must know about gender, brain and relational research in order to be effective with students. He spoke about the care and concern he has for human beings and especially for children in his statements regarding "students not being made to cry" as well as making sure to understand that "they are just kids and they are individuating and will make mistakes." I appreciated his view of us not translating our mature, developed ideals and voices onto the youth as they are still growing and learning and we need to be patient and understanding of their developing age and abilities.

Principal Denton echoed the sentiments of Principal Andrews by highlighting the importance of building relationships with the students and getting to know as much about their

personal narratives as possible. Wanting to do what was best for students was heard by the researcher and she did say that it was the "kids and not the curriculum" that she wanted the staff to focus on. Principal Denton highlighted the Knowledge and Employability courses and how she was working to integrate those students into all regular classes and that the "work of organizing for instruction and differentiating for kids excites her." She also spoke about the dilemma of graduation commencement with students being disallowed to cross the stage at commencement if they had not paid fees and their attendance was poor. She morally had a hard time with the exclusion of students from the event and was dedicated to working with the leadership team and staff to come to an understanding about what would be best and equitable for all students in this process. She also directly addressed the *PSES* question regarding student achievement on standardized tests and said that it was "difficult to raise student achievement on standardized tests due to the diversity of the situation and that it the question asked about completing and graduating from high school" that she would have a higher sense of efficacy. Her ability to have influence over the diploma examinations and their content and timing was also something that cautioned her with regards to feeling able to "raise student achievement on standardized tests." Principal Fallow echoed this comment when speaking about this particular question as she noted that "we used to have huge trust in what those diploma exams were and that's been eroded to some extent" and thus she said that she had to answer a bit lower on that question.

Key understandings

I have identified the following key understandings with regards to the second theme of "Focus on Student Success":

- Participants with the highest sense of self-efficacy expressed a clear focus on student success (academic and social goals) to me.
- Student success was a theme across all participant interviews although the strength and clarity of focus on this theme seemed to be much higher in the participants who scored the highest on the PSES.
- All participants expressed that "student achievement" was not simply a matter of test scores or academic goals but was also a matter of the achievement of social goals.
- All participants expressed a belief in the necessity of providing a quality education program for all students.

Dedication to Instructional Leadership

"In highly efficacious schools, in addition to serving as administrators, principals are educational leaders who seek ways to improve instruction. " (Bandura, 1997, p. 244). Coladarci (1992) found that masterful academic leadership by principals built teachers sense of instructional efficacy. Research continues to support what we intuitively know that teachers make the difference. The theme of dedication to instructional leadership emerged in the data as critical in the work of principals who had a high sense of self-efficacy.

All participants expressed the importance of instructional leadership as a critical aspect of their professional practice. The *Professional Practice Competencies for School Leaders (PPCSL)* describes its fourth competency "Providing Instructional Leadership" as "a school leader must ensure that each student has access to quality teaching and the opportunity to engage in quality learning experiences." Bandura (1997) also found that "the task of creating learning environments conducive to development of cognitive competencies rests heavily on the talents and self-efficacy of teachers." (p. 240).

> Teachers with a high sense of instructional efficacy operate on the belief
> that difficult students are teachable through extra effort and appropriate
> techniques and that they can enlist family supports and overcome negating
> community influences through effective teaching…Teachers who have a

high sense of instructional efficacy devote more classroom time to academic activities, provide students who encounter difficulties with the guidance they need to succeed, and praise their academic achievements.
(Bandura, 1997, pp. 240-241)

Principal Fallow saw "clear pathways and great possibilities" when she spoke about her school and the belief she has in having "all the ability to make sure things happens as long as we are clear on the goals." She articulated a great belief in each and every child's ability to succeed and she is passionate with regards to "advocating for a public education system that supports access for every single student to a quality education." She sees her work as an instructional leader as pivotal in this process of providing each child with the very best teacher in the classroom. She spoke about the "importance of leading adult learning" and she sees

A lot of space to create and move things where they need to be to support students. And I see very clear pathways to doing that. I see very doable things that we can do with staff that creates culture, that supports all students, and that really brings community in to being in line with those goals.
(Fallow interview, 2014)

Principal Fallow views her past consultant role and the value of working with adult learners as "an integral piece of being a principal." She framed the experience as being a "stepping stone to being a principal" and said that she felt very strongly that "if you cannot be someone that can leads adult learning you shouldn't be in the job." She cites instructional leadership as being where her real core is and how "it's about leadership in classrooms and leadership with kids and families and leadership with teachers and leadership in the community."

Bandura (1997) comments on the importance of instructional leadership:

The quality of leadership is often an important contributor to the production and maintenance of organizational climates. In the educational domain, strong principals excel in their ability to get their staff to work together with a strong sense of purpose and belief in their abilities to surmount obstacles to educational attainments. Such principals display strong com-

mitments to scholastic attainment and seek ways to enhance the instructional function of their schools. Interpersonal supportiveness by principals may contribute to a positive climate in the school but does, in itself, build teachers' sense of instructional efficacy. Rather, principals who create a school climate with a strong academic emphasis and serve as advocates on behalf of teachers' beliefs in their educational efficacy.   (p. 248)

Principal Fallow has developed a professional development process for working with her leadership team and greater staff and says that "everything is very scripted and very crafted around distributed learning" and that there is a very definite developmental plan in effect. She ensures that one teacher in every four is trained as an instructional leader and each leader chooses three or four staff members from across curricular backgrounds to work with throughout the year. Principal Fallow leads all of the major professional development and instructional leadership training sessions and has a pulse on all aspects of the process. Assessment practices, differentiating for instruction, inclusion, etc., are all aspects of the professional development plan and she says that she takes each and every teacher along a path of learning that will enrich their professional practice.

> We need to allow people to learn with grace and we need to allow people to learn while they save face in the job. And we do not have the magic bullet for that. But I do believe that there is, that I've developed over the years a very strong curriculum for what that looks like; and I believe there is a curriculum that goes along with how you work with staff to build confidence, understanding, efficacy in their professions, professionalism, a culture where every kid matters.   (Fallow interview, 2014)

As identified in the earlier sections of this chapter, Principal Fallow detailed the extensive work she has done with her staff in the process of Individual Program Plans (IPP) and how she had every teacher working with two students in the school. Her professional development plan for teachers includes "giving bite sized pieces that everybody has to do" (Fallow interview, 2014) and the IPP process is one that she hoped would have teachers appreciating the knowledge they were acquiring and thus have some appetite to learn that for the other kids in their

classrooms. Time is given to the staff and their small group instructional leadership teams to talk about their practice, their development of Individual Program Plans (IPP's) and the instructional walk-throughs that they are doing. These instructional walk-throughs have been carefully designed by Principal Fallow to assist teachers in improving their practice thus impacting student achievement. She believes that "everyone is ain it together, everybody's trying something at the same level, and we're all in it together and coming at it from a variety of different ways…we all respond to it in the way that fits our practice but we're all moving forward." (Fallow interview, 2014). Principal Fallow does believe that it is the instructional leadership piece that is the key to moving forward and supporting all kids and also says that:

> Instructional leadership is misunderstood in a lot of ways. It's about building culture, it's about building teacher leaders; it's about inside-out leadership. It's about distributed leadership. It's about I am here to serve you. What do you need to support kids?

I heard this same dedication to instructional leadership and the importance of the teacher in the classroom from all other participants although they did not articulate a professional development plan that targeted this aspect to the extent that Principal Fallow outlined. It is important to note that all participants scored highest in the category of "efficacy for instructional leadership" as compared to efficacy in managerial or moral leadership with the exception of Principal Denton who scored highest in the efficacy for moral leadership. All participants however, were invested in working with their staff for the improvement of student achievement as detailed in the previous section of this thesis, but they did not go into great depth about how this instructional leadership "looked." Principal Andrews spoke extensively about distributed leadership and how he had "focused on facilitating leadership the past two years." He said that his school had a "high reputation for solid instructional processes" and he was dedicated to supporting his teachers to do the best they could for the students.

Principal Baker said that he had "strong beliefs in teaching and learning" and wanted to foster collective efficacy as he knows how much influence his teachers have on the students in their classrooms. His instructional leadership is around supporting his teachers to have the students feel that they have an "adult at their side who is an educational coach and not a judge." There are not any subject specific department heads who serve to do the supervision work with teachers and thus Principal Baker seemingly works with all teachers on a more personal basis and creates support for them in their practice in terms of resources. He also teaches a course and thus feels that he is modelling best practices by his personal dedication to the classroom. As mentioned in an earlier section of this thesis, Principal Baker does not seem to have a plan for his instructional leadership in the form of regular supervision of teachers but feels that he has knowledge of the classroom and the instructional prowess of the teachers through his relationship with the students and teachers.

Principal Clements believes that instructional leadership is "fundamental to vision as our business is learning and learning is accomplished through some definition of instruction." He urges his teachers to know about teaching and learning by reading the research and urges them to have conversations about the classroom relationship experientially, academically and philosophically. Principal Ellis said that "instructional leadership is all the time" and that she has done extensive work with professional development around the five principles in their school and the teacher-directed sessions have seen great work in the areas of assessment, Understanding by Design, etc. She said that she definitely "believes in her ability to lead teachers" and although it is more difficult to get into classrooms on a regular basis, she has been enhancing collective efficacy around instructional leadership. Principal Denton thinks she has "changed people's ideas

about education and teaching and learning as she believes in inclusion and differentiating

instruction for all children.

Key understandings

I have identified the following key understandings with regards to the third theme of

"Dedication to instructional leadership":

- Participants with the highest sense of self-efficacy expressed a strong desire and dedication to fulfilling their responsibilities of instructional leadership.
- The instructional leadership theme carried across all participant interviews although the strength and clarity of focus on this theme seemed to be much higher in the participants who scored the highest on the overall score on the PSES.
- With the exception of one participant, participants scored highest in the area of "efficacy for instructional leadership" as compared to the efficacy for management and moral leadership.
- Participants understood the importance of the relationship between a staff's collective efficacy and its significance in contributing to the school's level of academic achievement.

Experience Matters
"Confidence and Competence from Experience in the Position"

This fourth theme of "experience matters" was emphasized by the participants as the

most important variable in terms of the relationship of a principal's sense of self-efficacy to their

professional practice. Perceived self-efficacy is concerned with judgments of personal capability

and:

> Enactive mastery experiences are the most influential source of efficacy
> information because they provide the most authentic evidence of whether
> one can muster whatever it takes to succeed. Successes build a robust belief
> in one's personal efficacy. Failures undermine it, especially if failures occur
> before a sense of efficacy is firmly established…A resilient sense of efficacy
> requires experience in overcoming obstacles through perseverant effort.
> (Bandura, 1997, p. 80)

It is important to note that "performance alone does not provide sufficient information to judge

one's level of capability because many factors that have little to do with ability can affect

performance." (Bandura, 1997, p. 81). There is thus no simple equivalence of performance to

perceived efficacy and thus

> the extent to which people will alter their perceived efficacy through performance experiences depends upon, among other factors, their preconceptions of their capabilities, the perceived difficulties of the tasks, the amount of effort they expend, the amount of external aid they receive, the circumstances under which they perform, the temporal pattern of their successes and failures, and the way these enactive experiences are cognitively organized and reconstructed in memory. Performance alone thus leaves uncertainty about the amount of information it conveys about personal capabilities.

Also, the vicarious experiences of seeing others succeed as well as social persuasion with

others expressing faith in one's capabilities as well as personal positive interpretations of stress

and tension (psychological/affective states) are the other sources of self-efficacy other than

mastery experiences.

> A personal sense of self-efficacy is constructed through a complex process of self-persuasion. Efficacy beliefs are the product of cognitive processing of diverse sources of efficacy information conveyed enactively, vicariously, socially and physiologically.
>
> (Bandura, 1997, p. 115)

The two participants with the most experience as a principal exhibited the highest sense of self-

efficacy on the PSES as well as exuded the confidence in their capabilities when I interviewed

them. From the very first question and throughout the interviews, both Principal Baker and

Principal Fallow exuded a sense of competence and confidence that they openly state has come

from their years of experience. Their "long, successful track record" of which they both speak

has served to instilling a belief that they are able to be totally effective in their role as the

principal. Principal Baker during the very first question of the interview talked about the control

he had in making things happen and said that it "definitely increases with training and

experience." Principal Fallow says that she has had "lots of experiences and great mentors" and

Principal Baker says that his experience has given him "belief in his intelligence and ability." Both saw themselves as setting the tone and direction in the school and they both saw clear pathways to do what's right for kids in their learning community.

In terms of the efficacy for management, both Principal Baker and Principal Fallow seemed very relaxed and comfortable with all aspects of management. Their scores on the *PSES* for management were 8.33/9.00 and 7.33/9.00 respectively and the other participants all had scores in the 6.00 to 6.83 range. The other participants also did not display the same comfort with regards to their perception of their capability to handle management tasks and the accompanying stress and demands of the job. Principal Baker spoke of management coming very "easily to him" and that the strong sense of his position and the experience he has with the timelines and deadlines, has served to make him able to anticipate and have confidence that all will just "roll out." This "rolling out" or just working out was interpreted by the researcher as confidence in his capability to manage all the aspects of the building and know what to expect in most circumstances. He did not perceive his job to be stressful or too difficult and felt that his 37 years as an educator and 15 years as a principal had enabled him to gather a wealth of experiences to draw on. Although Principal Fallow acknowledged that the efficacy for management was the lowest on the PSES she was still higher than four of the other participants and espoused her ability to utilize distributed leadership to assist with details in the minutia of the detailed management that she does not wish to be engaged in. It was the interpretation of the researcher that Principal Fallow had the capacity to perform all of the tasks in the area of management leadership on the *PSES* but preferred to do her "management tasks quickly" and "enlist the support of others" as opposed to expending too much energy in this area. She prefers, as she says to "just do what has to be done." She also notes that sometimes she has had

colleagues say that they have "too much work to do" and that they use "paperwork as an excuse for not doing the right things." She is dedicated to spending her time with students, teachers and stakeholders and thus although the managerial aspects of the job "frustrate her at times" it does not get in the way of her doing the job.

The other participants also spoke about the importance of having years of experience in their positions and all of them spoke about how knowledge of systems, deadlines and regular calendar events assisted with their confidence. Principal Denton mentioned that her ability to "anticipate due to experience does help her de-stress." She scored the lowest in the efficacy for management with 6.00/9.00 and did reveal that she has some insecurity from being in her current position for less than a year. She said that she relies on distributed leadership and collaboration when doing budget and other managerial roles. Principal Andrews said that "he would like to get better at the management piece" and was still learning about the high school budget and other managerial aspects. The lack of experience at the senior high level was noted in our conversation and it was evident to me that he needed some time to feel more competent and confident in his current school. Principal Ellis echoed the use of a distributed perspective of leadership to support her in the management role and she expressed a quiet confidence from being a confirmed principal for over eleven years. From her experiences there was a desire to involve staff in a very collaborative decision making model which was evident in our interview. Principal Clements believed he was a good manager and made sure that "solid, predictable processes were in place" so that people would "feel heard but managed." His belief from his experiences was that teachers wanted him to make decisions and thus he said he was "not a collaborative manager and was respected for his ability to be the boss." I interpreted from our conversations that he had experienced staff who were very thankful for his management abilities and that he wanted to

have them do the work in the classroom and not have to worry about any management tasks. His

score on the *PSES* for management was low at 6.33/9.00 but I know, as discussed earlier in the

findings organized by question that he feels very capable of handling the management duties but

it is simply that he said he was not confident in whether or not he will do them. He expressed his

thoughts by saying that "he can do it but is not sure that he will do it."

The importance of experience certainly was evident when interpreting the findings in the

efficacy for instructional leadership area. It was very clear that both Principal Fallow and

Principal Baker had a multitude of experiences in terms of working with teachers around their

instructional practices and had extensive background in assessment, differentiated instruction,

inclusion, etc. Having been principals in several different schools with very different profile in

terms of social vulnerability, ethnic diversity, etc., they have developed strong beliefs about

teaching and learning and how to engage in professional development with their staff. Their

student-centered philosophies are easily detectable and they both are very invested in

programming for student differences and ensuring that each and every child has a successful

school experience. Their experiences at the district level in terms of consultant work also serves

to strengthen their background knowledge and skills and translates to what I interpreted as a

much deeper understanding of adult learning and how to empower teachers to foster collective

efficacy. As was espoused in the last section of this thesis with regards to the theme of

"dedication to instructional leadership" almost all participants had a high sense of self-efficacy

with regards to instructional leadership and I did find that all spoke about their experiences as

assisting in their competency and confidence in their current roles.

In terms of efficacy for moral leadership and its linkage with background experience, I

found that all participants had developed their own set of beliefs and values but that Principal

Fallow seemed to radiate a more mature and global sense of moral purpose in integrity and equity. It was not that the others did not speak of moral purpose and the importance of the dignity of people, it was simply that I interpreted a deeper sense of purpose in her answers. Speaking from having experience in many schools Principal Fallow seemed to have a more passionate sense of purpose to use her experience and knowledge to advocate for public education and was adamant with seeking equity so that we could eliminate a "system that supports an elitist socio-demographic." She exuded a sense of social conscious for helping "children find their voices" and asking that all principals across the school district begin to think collectively about our children and believe that "we are *all* responsible for *all* the results."

Key understandings

I have identified the following key understandings with regards to the fourth theme of "Experience Matters: Confidence and Competence from experience in the position":

- Participants in this study with the highest sense of self-efficacy score had more years of experience than those who had a lower sense of self-efficacy score;
- Participants expressed increased capability, competence and confidence (higher sense of self-efficacy) in their management role when they had experience in terms of the school calendar (deadlines and important events), procedures and policies, etc.
- Participants expressed increased capability, competence and confidence (higher sense of self-efficacy) in their instructional leadership role when they had experience with adult learning and effective professional development practices.
- Participants expressed increased capability, competence and confidence (higher sense of self-efficacy) in their moral leadership role when they had more years of experience to develop their personal values and beliefs and determine their moral imperative with regards to the students and staff under their care.

Summary

In Chapter Five, I have presented my interpretations of the data gathered from the six participants who presented their understandings through semi-structured interviews based on

their personal experiences. My data were collected and then analyzed in four main sections. The first section was interpretations presented according to the cross case comparative analysis of the six case studies and organized according to the eight questions asked during the semi-structured interviews. The presentation of the data in this matter was in hope of the reader being able to easily follow the analysis as the case studies had been presented in the same format in Chapter 4. The second section of this chapter presented my interpretations based on the cross-case analysis of data with regards to the demographic information collected; the third section of this chapter outlined findings based on the completion of the Principal Sense of Efficacy Scale (PSES); and the fourth section outlined the four overarching themes that emerged from the data- (a) Clarity of vision; (b) Focus on student success; (c) Dedication to instructional leadership; and (d) Experience matters: Confidence and competence from experience in the position . Although this is not a quantitative study the *PSES* did provide complimentary information and thus only basic comparisons were illustrated throughout the sections and no statistical analysis was done.

In Chapter Six, I will present a summary of my research with a discussion, synthesis of findings, implications and final thoughts comprising its contents. A conceptual framework is presented that illustrates how the construct of self-efficacy with its sources and activating processes is related to the participant's professional practice. The chapter will conclude with implications and recommendations for theory, for policy development and practice as well as considerations regarding further research in the area of examination of the construct of self-efficacy and its relationship to principal's professional practice.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION, SYNTHESIS OF FINDINGS, IMPLICATIONS AND FINAL THOUGHTS

This research was motivated by my interest in the construct of self-efficacy as defined and articulated by Dr. Albert Bandura, and its relationship to secondary school principals. Guided by an interpretivist paradigm or framework, I sought to construct knowledge and understanding from a qualitative collective case study with six secondary school principals to address my research question of "How do secondary school principals understand the relationship between their beliefs of self-efficacy and their professional practice?"

This part of my thesis consists of one chapter with three sections. The first section presents a discussion of the study including a synthesis of findings and implications for theory. Included within this initial section is a revised conceptual framework that assisted me in bringing together into a graphic display of the construct of self-efficacy and its relationship to the professional practice of secondary school principals. The second section provides implications for policy and practice in educational organizations, and the third section outlines some recommendations for further research and study. My final thoughts are also included at the end of the chapter in summary and reflection.

Discussion

Nationally and internationally, the role of the principal has been cited as a critical factor in the improvement of student achievement and system accountability (Leithwood, 2008, Levin, 2010). Second only to the teacher in the classroom, the quality of leadership is often an important contributor to the production and maintenance of organizational climates." (Bandura, 1997, p. 248). As stated earlier in this thesis, "in highly efficacious schools, in addition to serving as administrators, principals are educational leaders who seek ways to improve instruction."

(Bandura, 1997, p. 244). It has been noted by Bandura (1997) and Hoy and Woolfolk, (1993) that principals who create a school climate with a strong academic emphasis and serve as advocates on behalf of teachers' instructional efforts with the central administration, enhance their teachers'' beliefs in their instructional efficacy.

When I first began this research study I had developed a very simple conceptualization to represent my study and the approach and constructs I was utilizing. Figure 2.7 (p. 58) in Chapter 2 of this thesis was my preliminary conceptual framework but after the completion of my analysis and interpretation of the research data as reported, I have developed a more comprehensive framework as represented below in Figure 6.1.

Figure 6.1. Revised Conceptualized Framework
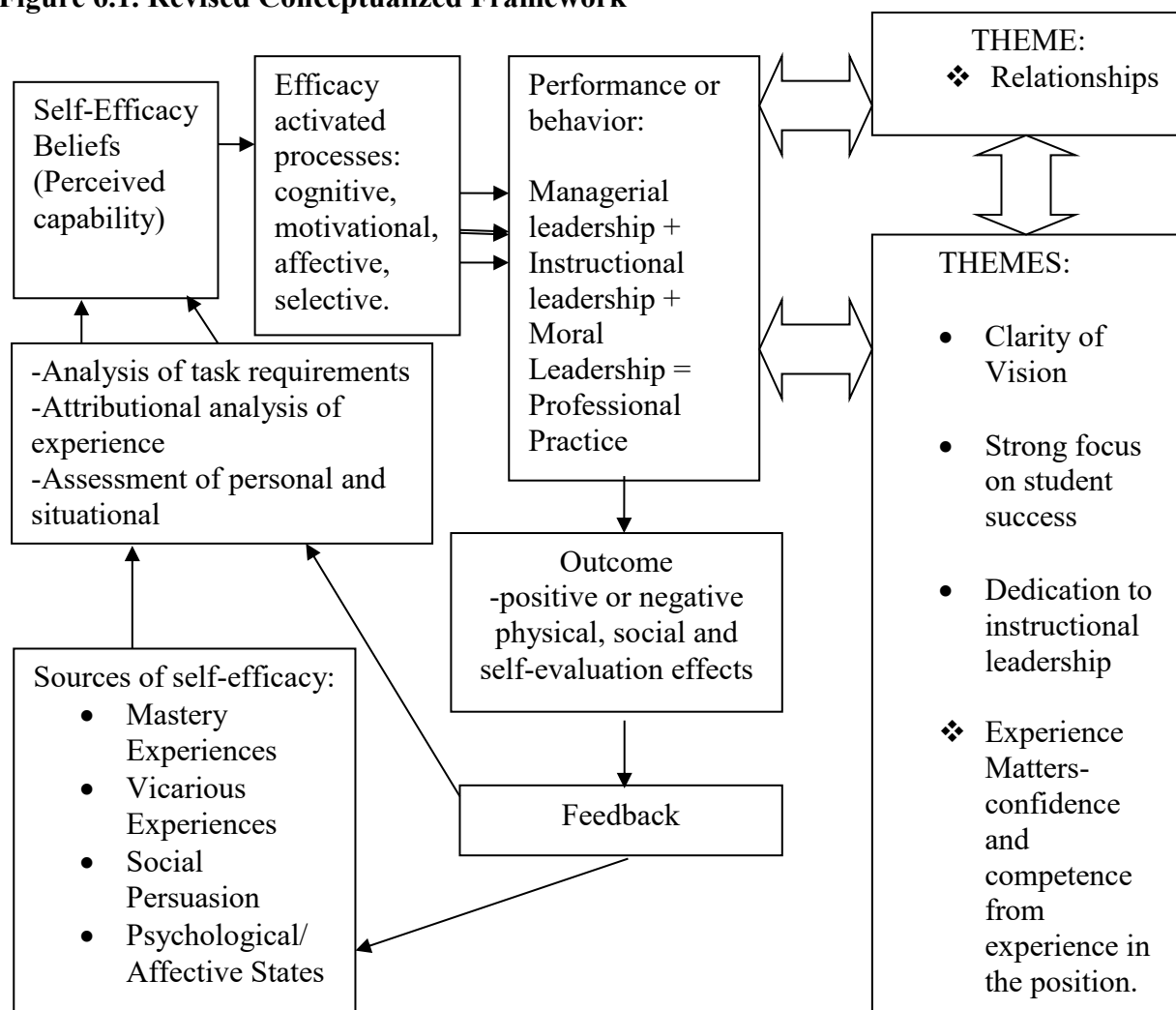
In Figure 6.1 I have expanded on the preliminary conceptual framework introduced in Chapter 2 to include the self-efficacy performance relationship. As consistent with Bandura (1996) and his research, the three assessment processes which appear to be involved in forming self-efficacy are: (a) analysis of task performance (what it will take to perform the task); (b) attributional analysis of experience (making judgments regarding level of performance); and (c) assessment of personal and situational resources/constraints (availability of support to perform the task at various levels). The efficacy activated processes (cognitive, motivational. affective and selection) are then set in motion and goal setting, commitment, visualizing successful scenarios, motivation, perseverance, control over stressors, and choice of activities and environments are enacted.

Performance/behavior then occurs, and in the case of this study, the perceptions and interpretations of behavior/performance of the participants managerial, instructional and moral leadership capabilities led to outcomes with regards to positive or negative physical, social and self-evaluation effects. From the outcomes there is reflection which will inform future behavior and performance. The large arrows represent the relationship that emerged from the study in that there was one superseding theme of "relationship" that pervaded all aspects of the participant's experiences and four themes that were noted in all of the interviews in varied strengths. Establishing and nurturing relationships with all parents, students, staff and community was seen as an essential aspect of practice for all of the participants. The participants with the highest perceived (by the researcher in the interviews) and by the score on the *Principal Sense of Efficacy Scale (PSES)*, had the strongest evidence of the themes. The four themes which were gleaned from the data analysis were: (a) Clarity of vision; (b) Strong focus on student success; (c) Dedication to instructional leadership; and (d) Experience Matters: Confidence and

competence from experience in the position. The principals with the longest years of service certainly stood out as speaking passionately regarding their belief in their "capacity to organize and execute the course of action required to produce given attainments." (Bandura, 1997, p. 3). Noted on the conceptual framework is that both "relationships" and "experience matters" are bulleted with a special symbol so that the reader is aware of the comparative heightened strength of these themes.

Through the exploration of this topic I came to a deeper understanding of my own personal sense of self-efficacy and how it relates to my professional practice as well as those of my principal colleagues. It is my hope that this work will benefit those who have the desire to aspire to the principalship as well as those who are in positions of supervisory leadership with principals. It is also hoped that the insight and key findings will clarify the influence that the construct of self-efficacy has on individuals and how it relates to principal professional practices in terms of the managerial, instructional and moral leadership role dimensions.

Synthesis of Findings

Synthesis of the findings with regards to the relationship between six high school principals' beliefs of self-efficacy and their professional practice illuminated one overarching, pervasive, permeating element as well as four additional themes. Relationships, seen as this permeating critical element in all principal interviews was said to be an essential factor in all roles that a principal engaged in. Anderson (2009) in his book entitled "Advocacy Leadership" speaks about linking leadership, authenticity and advocacy and the importance of relationships. Starratt (2004) also advocates for authentic relationships.

> The authentic educational leader will exhibit authenticity in his or her relation-
> ships with teachers, students, parents and district officials. Despite the authority
> and power of his or her office, the leader insists on both the human respect and

the civil respect that are due of his or her colleagues. Extending respect to a colleague means listening carefully, discerning the needs behind the requests, and responding to the person, not just their organizational role. (Starratt, 2004, p. 79)

This importance of relationships was echoed by all participants in this study as they mentioned trust and integrity throughout the interviews as well as they spoke about the importance of shared or distributed leadership and teamwork. Principal ability to create and maintain a strong team involves some strength in interpersonal relationships as "teams are more than collections of individuals, and building a strong team requires attention to the overall set of skills and personalities as much as it does to the individual team members." (Levin, 2008, p. 183).

Excellent listening skills and the ability to clearly communicate to others were also skills that participants spoke about as critical in their practice. Participants who had a higher sense of self-efficacy spoke more often about the importance of relationships in terms of trust, integrity, listening and honoring voices, and communicating authentically, but all participants did speak about the importance of relationships in their practice.

The other aspect of the relationship element in the relationship of self-efficacy beliefs to professional practice was that participants spoke about dignity and respect as being integral to their practice. The worthiness of each human being was integral to practice and advocacy for children under our care. This advocacy is what Anderson (2009) asks for educators to do and he asks for leaders to not simply work for shared or distributed leadership but to create advocacy leadership that he believes is a more politicized notion of leadership that illuminates the fact that schools are "sites of struggle over material and cultural resources and ideological commitments" (p. 13). Bringing greater social justice to low-income schools and communities was also mentioned by Anderson (2009) as critical when bringing greater authenticity to schools and the participants certainly agreed with this quest for equity. My thoughts reflected back to Foster (1989) who also spoke about his beliefs of leadership not being centered on organizational management and how he saw the role of

the leader as being socially critical, oriented toward social vision and change, and that the purpose of education is fundamentally addressed to social change and human emancipation.

Much of the research in educational leadership speaks about the importance of personal connections between students and adults in the schoolhouse (Anderson (2009); Levin, (2008); Leithwood and Jantzi (2008). Anderson (2009) speaks of the "systems world" and the "life world" and he spoke of the systems world as being out of control and out of balance and that there was a "shrinking of the life world of schools" (p. 11). Drawing on Habermas's social theory of systems and the life world, Anderson (2009) states that:

> The system world is a set of rules, procedures, accountability measures, and
> other structures required for the effective and efficient functioning of
> an educational organization…the life world is made up of the lives of the
> students, their relationships with each other and the adults in the school,
> and the teaching and learning that occurs in the classrooms and throughout
> the school and community. (p. 11)

Focusing on the student and creating and maintaining authentic relationships with them is very difficult with all the outside pressures of curriculum, data and testing reviews; district senior administration and trustee reports, etc. It is a goal for me as expressed by other researchers (Foster, 1989 and Anderson, 2009) for the achievement and refinement of human community and to have all people feeling a part of the "human race" and being valued and celebrated for their gifts and strengths. As noted by Levin (2008) "Where educators and support staffs believe in their work, feel they are respected, and see their mission as both important and supported, overall human relationships will be better, with spill over to teacher-student relationships." (pp. 97-98)

Participants also noted the importance of collegial relationships as well as those between them and central office as being instrumental in feeling competent and confident in their roles. Having a friendship with principal colleagues who are able to share and act as critical friends was deemed as invaluable by the participants. Vicarious experiences gleaned from their principalships were also significant to support participants who perceived others succeed in the face of obstacles

and thus created a higher belief in the observer. A perceived healthy, respectful and positive relationship with the Superintendent and central office staff was also seen as contributing to a high sense of self-efficacy in participants as they felt a trust from their supervisors that they were focused on their students, staff and other stakeholders and doing a good job.

Clarity of vision with the inclusion of concentrating on the life work of the school and the importance of relationships and a shared sense of understanding and responsibility regarding children under our care, I believe will serve our children well. Participants in this study saw themselves working for a cause bigger than them and it was clear to the researcher that all participants wished to create, as Principal Fallow stated: "a strong public education system that supports equity and access for every single student to a quality education." (Fallow interview, 2014). This vision of equity and having each and every student being programmed for their individual needs was echoed throughout all of the interviews with the principals having the highest sense of self-efficacy articulating their visions in a very clear and concise manner. Principals with a higher sense of self-efficacy articulated a vision complete with goals for student assessment and achievement, effective communication and collaboration, equity and accessibility to quality programming, teacher growth and professional development and supports for staff and students. Trust, listening to all stakeholder voices, inclusion, and diversity were all aspects of the vision of those with strong efficacy beliefs. To address and ultimately eliminate racism, genderism, and classism would be the goal within the vision of all participants I interviewed and resonated most strongly in the two exhibiting the highest sense of self-efficacy. As well, the efficacy activated processes seemed much stronger in those highly efficacious individuals where they had solid goal setting with distinctive action plans and could visualize successful scenarios with little self-doubt. Their control over their thought, action and affect brought the future into present

forethought and there was a strong indication of perseverance and resilience to failure. This finding is reinforced by Leithwood and Jantzi (2008) who said that:

> Both task direction and goal setting are leader behaviors empirically associated with the development of self-efficacy beliefs (Earley & Lituchy, 1991; Prussia et al., 1998). Often cited as helping set directions are specific practices such as identifying and articulating a vision, fostering the acceptance of group goals, and creating high performance expectations. Visioning and establishing purpose are also enhanced by monitoring organizational performance and promoting effective communication and collaboration. (p. 507)

A strong focus on student success is also seen as relational to those participants with a high sense of self-efficacy. Student success as defined by both academic and social goals is perhaps summed up nicely by the words of Levin (2008) when he outlined what people want in terms of educational goals which differ from the traditional three "R's":

> We want children to have a broad understanding of the world, in such areas as science, history, psychology, government, and economics. We want them to have an appreciation of and experience in the arts as vital and enriching elements of individual and community life. Even more, we want them to have the broader skills and attitudes necessary for a good and useful life-the ability to work with others, problem-solving skills, a positive attitude, the desire and ability to keep on learning, a sense of confidence in their own capabilities and future, an understanding of what it means to be a good neighbor and citizen. People do not want to have to choose among these goals, either. We want them all, and we want them for all children. (Levin, 2008, p. 60)

Participants with a high sense of self-efficacy spoke about their belief that every child is worthy of receiving the very best education possible and both of those participants with the highest PSES scores espoused their views of students having " educational coaches not judges" (Baker interview, 2014) and of "advocating for authentic student voice" (Fallow interview, 2014). The clarity of the student-centered purpose was evident in their interviews as well as across all participant interviews.

According to Bandura (1997) "another distinguishing factor of efficacious schools is the structuring of the learning activities in ways that promote a sense of personal capability and scholastic achievement in all students." (p. 247). Inclusive education and the differentiation of

instruction in the classrooms of the schools with participants with a high sense of self-efficacy were acknowledged in the present study. Bandura (1997) even goes further to note that "in efficacious schools, students are not sorted into homogeneous tracks of fast and slow learners" (p. 247). The inclusivity of the sites where principals were highly efficacious seemed to be in synch with Bandura's findings. "Masterful academic leadership by the principal build's teachers' sense of instructional efficacy" (Coladarci, 1992 in Bandura, 1997, p. 244) and it is also noted by Bandura (1997) that

> Teachers with a strong sense of instructional efficacy created a positive climate for academic learning by devoting the major share of time to academic activities, conveying positive expectations of student achievement, and instilling and rewarding academic success.   (p. 247)

Dedication to instructional leadership is seen as another essential element to all of the participants. According to Hoy and Woolfolk (1993) principals who create a school climate with a strong academic emphasis and serve as advocates on behalf of teachers' instructional efforts with the central administration enhance their teachers' beliefs in their instructional efficacy. Adult professional development with the teachers in the school was seen by the two principal's exhibiting the highest level of belief in self-efficacy as critically important in order to ensure that each and every student receives the best possible instruction and support possible. A high level of trust and respect for the instructional ability of the teachers was also evidenced by the participants and they considered their role as instructional leader as one of a supportive guiding mentor who made sure that supports were available for supporting any needs that students might have. Principal Fallow, who was deemed a highly efficacious principal due to the interpretation by the researcher as well as scores from the PSES, was very clear on an articulated plan for professional development. Teachers were given "bite sized pieces" of instructional, assessment, disciplinary, and other research based practices and were guided by her team of instructional leaders towards planning and achieving student success.

Teachers must be very knowledgeable with regards to assessment and understand the "how" and "why" of their intentions and applications to ensure that they are emerging with an accurate learner profile of each and every student under their care. There is also an importance of creating a "growth mindset" that encourages hard work and dedication to have positive outcomes. Children need to know that they are not "smart" or "not smart" and that their effort, attitude, and persistence will make a difference in their pursuit of academic endeavors. Teachers are the single most important determinant of successful student achievement and thus teachers need to be advocacy leaders in their classrooms and foster higher order thinking skills through their weaving of relevancy and interest with creative pedagogy to engage hearts and minds. Starratt (2003) emphasizes that:

> By their work of building a collective vision, educational administrators engage in the initial stages of cultivating meaning, community and responsibility. In this work they initiate a conversation among teachers about the basic meaning behind what and how they teach, and the meanings that are applied and assumed in the curriculum. (p. 224)

Effective teaching practices in all classrooms on a daily basis are the ideal for students to reach their academic and social potential. Dedication to the teachers in the school and supporting their role as key instructional leaders for students is a professional responsibility that the participants held as critical to their role as principal. Instructional leadership as defined by the parameters of the *Principal Sense of Efficacy Scale (PSES)* were the six questions that were asked after the initial stem of: "In your current role as a principal, to what extent can you…" The six question stems were: (a) facilitate student learning in your school?; (b) generate enthusiasm for a shared vision for your school?; (c) mange change in your school?; (d) create a positive learning environment in your school?; and (e) raise student achievement on standardized tests?; and (f) motivate teachers?. Findings illustrated that the instructional leadership aspect of the participant's roles and responsibilities were the highest as illustrated in the *PSES* and their interview responses- as compared with the areas of managerial and moral leadership. The only question that was highlighted as reducing the mean scores was that of raising student achievement on standardized tests. Generally

the reflections among participants, who scored low on this item, were those of citing their "distrust of the provincial examinations" due to their inability to have influence over the content and timing of the diploma examinations. There was still evidence in the findings with regards to participants believing that they could definitely facilitate student learning, motivate teachers, manage change, create a positive learning environment and generate enthusiasm for a collective vision. Interpretations of participant interviews found that the belief was strong for being able to lead a learning community and support teachers in creating the very best classroom experiences for students.

The theme of" experience matters" and its relationship to the self-efficacy of participants was perceived to be very strong in terms of how confident and competent principals felt when they had been confirmed for many years and could anticipate issues and "ebbs and flows" that arose. The two participants with 15 and 17 years of experience spoke more confidently with regards to all aspects of their position and exuded a very high sense of self efficacy when espousing their vision of their school and what teaching and learning looked, sounded and felt like in their building. Being able to anticipate the requests for district information from central office, and having a very intricate knowledge of the daily, monthly and annual paperwork necessities, served to alleviate the stress that may have swallowed participants in their earlier years in the position. Levin(2008) emphasizes that:

> James March pointed out many years ago (1984) that while change and in-
> novation get the attention, much of the success of any organization rests on
> effective routines – timetables, bus schedules, maintenance, ordering of sup-
> plies, payroll, and handling of all the inevitable daily demands such as a
> sick child or a parent with a concern or an absent teacher. (p. 205)

"Managing the distractions without losing focus" a chapter in Ben Levin's (2008) book *How to Change 5000 Schools: A practical and positive approach for leading change at every level*, speaks about the importance of routine and that the "unexpected will happen, and it will get in the way of our plans." (p. 207). The participants with the most number of years of experience seemingly were more aware and expressed having intricate and deep knowledge of the routines that needed to be accomplished as well as were seemingly well versed in the countless ways in which surprise

dominates the world of the educational administrator. Although sometimes "frustrated by minutia" (Fallow interview, 2014), participants felt that they had a "long and successful track record" (Fallow & Baker interviews, 2014) and that they had the control, confidence and competence to make things happen when they remained clear and focused on the goals. Managing distractions for them were relatively easy due to their strong sense of the position and their ability to anticipate deadlines, issues and other distractors.

The positive mastery experiences that the participants amassed built up their confidence and belief as well as seeing others succeed through vicarious experiences (modelling by mentors, peers, family and others). Principal Fallow commented on the strength of the models in her personal life (parent who was a very successful educator), as well as others during her professional career and both Principal's Baker and Fallow also had significant others in their families and at the central office senior administrative level, who had expressed great faith in their capabilities which strengthened their social persuasion source of self-efficacy. From the experiences collected by the highly self-efficacious participants, they also were able to manage their psychological and affective states and were able to modify self-beliefs of efficacy to "enhance physical status, reduce stress levels and negative emotional proclivities, and correct misinterpretations of bodily states" (Bandura, 1997, p. 106).

Experience in the principalship position also brought comfort, competence and confidence with the distribution of leadership in order to ensure that management duties were completed and that items were prioritized and dealt with. Sense of efficacy for management was not recognized as the highest level of efficacy as compared to efficacy for instructional and moral leadership, but highly efficacious principals were still confident in their overall abilities to complete necessary tasks and manage their budgets. They found others with complementary strengths to support them as they undertook managerial tasks and they chose not to be stressed with regards to accountability to central office.

Experienced principals had also been working with the various staff groups for many years (custodial, support, teaching, and others) and were comfortable with being the instructional leader. They were also comfortable in improving teaching and learning practices and supporting teacher practice in whatever ways they could. Putting the effort into building capacity and strengthening skills is evident when speaking with highly efficacious principals. The ability to motivate and engage students and work closely with colleagues on professional development centered on improving teaching and learning is critical to an effective school and highly efficacious principals seem to have this skill. Bandura (1997) found that "staff's collective sense of efficacy that they can promote high levels of academic progress contributes significantly to the schools' level of academic achievement" (p. 250) and findings were that participants did espouse the goal of working to enhance this collective efficacy. Believing in their teacher's abilities to improve their professional practice and therefore improving student achievement was definitely a goal of self-efficacious principals.

Experienced principals within this study did seem to be more self-efficacious than those with less experience and exuded a sense of great confidence and competence due to having a pulse on managerial demands and deadlines of the position; being confident in their distributed leadership model for addressing school and student needs; understanding and addressing instructional leadership for improvement of student success; etc. As well, from years of experience and in knowing themselves and the school culture, there was a sense of a deeper understanding in the highly efficacious principals of their moral purpose and directive and clarity in their vision for their school and public education.

The following implications and recommendations are supported by data analysis and interpretations reported in previous chapters of this thesis.

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Implications

  This research focused on the construct of self-efficacy and how secondary school principals understood the relationship between their beliefs of self-efficacy and professional practice. The relationship between a principal's sense of self-efficacy and his or her professional practice in terms of managerial, instructional and moral leadership roles served to identify the importance of relationships as pivotal in all aspects of the position with the themes of clarity of vision, focus on student success, and dedication to instructional leadership as noted across participant interviews. The factor of experience in the principalship was also deemed by the researcher to be evident in those participants who exhibited a higher sense of self-efficacy. Implications of this study will be discussed in three sections: (a) Implications for theory; (b) Implications for policy and practice; and (c) Implications for further research. Implications for policy and practice are directed at senior administrators within educational organizations and their roles in principal preparation and recruitment, ongoing professional growth and supervision, and principal supervision, evaluation and practice review. As well, implications for policy and practice are also directed to university preparation programs.

Implications for Theory

  This study explored how secondary school principals' beliefs of self-efficacy related to their professional practice and was of great significance due to very few studies being focused on the construct of self-efficacy with secondary principals. Bandura's (1997) construct of self-efficacy and the *Professional Practice Competencies for School Leaders (PPCSL)* combined to create a conceptual framework when focusing on the exploration of the research question: "How do secondary school principals understand the relationship between their beliefs of self-efficacy

and their professional practice?" My conceptual framework makes an original contribution to the literature and assists with enhancing the work completed from the few studies that have utilized a *Principal Sense of Self-Efficacy Scale (PSES)* and other scales as well as qualitative measures to investigate the phenomenon on self-efficacy and principal practice.

This study illuminated a few interpretations with regards to the research but no definite patterns or generalizations can be made. In terms of the demographic variables studied there was no relationship between principal self-efficacy and gender; age; ethnicity; school type; and the number of students and teachers in the school. There were relationships noted, but no patterns could be absolutely established, between total number of years as a confirmed principal; education and training; and mentorship/supportive opportunities. Overall, the essential element of establishing and nurturing relationships as well as the four themes of (a) Clarity of vision; (b) Strong focus on student success; (c) Dedication to instructional leadership; and (e) Experience Matters serve to contribute to the research and may be very useful for policy and practice in training future principals. This study also makes a contribution by providing specific details on how new leaders developed knowledge, skills and attitudes and how they view their personal beliefs of self-efficacy and their professional practice.

Implications for Policy and Practice

The use of Bandura's construct of self-efficacy with regards to research on the principalship has been minimal as compared with the research on educational leadership in general. Teacher and student self-efficacy has been given quite a lot of attention over the years but the research with regards to principals, especially secondary school principals is indeed scarce. Due to the fact that principal leadership is vital to the improvement of schools in

effectively preparing students (Bandura, 1997; Barth, 2001, Levin, 2008, Lunenburg & Ormstein, 2004; Anderson, 2009; Leithwood & Janzi, 2008), it is vital that we continue to identify elements that are essential to increasing principal effectiveness.

The Alberta School Leadership Framework (June, 2010), which has the Professional *Practice Competencies for School Leaders (PPCSL*) as one of its four elements, identifies its purposes as "promoting innovative and transformative leadership models, evaluating and defining the roles of school leaders, accommodating local priorities and contexts and extending the traditional concept of School" (p. 3) It also states that: "school leaders have significant responsibilities for ensuring quality student learning and teacher practice efficacy and for promoting an effective learning culture in the school community." (p. 7) It is noted within the document that there is attention to the situation of school leadership due to the result of a large number of retirements of practicing school leaders, a drop in qualified applicants, research illuminating the impact of school leaders on the success of the students, an increase in accountability for results and the emergence of models identifying a more balanced approach to management and instructional leadership responsibilities. Within goal two of the *Alberta Education Action Agenda for 2011 to 2014* which was "transformed education through collaboration" there were three initiatives of which one was entitled: "Action on Teaching and Leadership." Within this initiative there was the discussion of the implementation of the *Alberta School Leadership Framework* which includes the *Professional Practice Competencies for School Leaders (PPCSL)* as well as improvements to the *Teaching Quality Standard (TQS)*.

The historical context which has been outlined in Chapter 2 of this dissertation, and the preceding discussion, serves to highlight the importance of the *Alberta School Leadership Framework* and the *Professional Practice Competencies for School Leaders* (PPCSL) as framing the roles and responsibilities of leaders and specifically principals in this province. The

documents establish a framework for preparation, induction and practice of school leaders and it is critical that school systems ensure the alignment with the *Competencies.* In the Guide to Support Implementation it was very promising to see the collaborative efforts of the contributing education partners and policy actors (Alberta Regional Professional Development Consortia (ARPDC), Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA), Alberta School Boards Association (ASBA), Alberta School Councils' Association (ASCA), Association of School Business Officials of Alberta (ASBOA), College of Alberta School Superintendents (CASS), Faculties of Education, Alberta Universities, Alberta Assessment Consortium (AAC) and Alberta Education) coming together to author this business plan and leadership framework. It is hoped that continued collaboration and collective wisdom will see the establishment of the *Professional Practice Competencies for School Leaders (PPCSL)* in government policy and the inculcation of the competencies for use with all leaders in the province of Alberta. I assert that a common policy such as the *Teaching Quality Standard (TQS)* will assist principals and their supervisors to better address quality teaching and learning in each and every school and each and every classroom. Some accountability measures are necessary in order to sustain our professional standards and continue to have credibility for our profession. The word "efficacy" has also been infused into the most recent revisions of the *Professional Practice Competencies for School Leaders (PPCSL)* and I would urge government and districts to embrace this concept through furthering their understanding in its benefits to assisting aspiring and currently practicing principals.

I believe that this study's findings, in utilizing the theoretical framework of Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory and the construct of self-efficacy coupled with utilization of the Pro*fessional Practice Competencies for School Leaders (PPCSL)* and the *Principal Sense of Efficacy Scale (PSES)*, assists in highlighting implications for policy and practice. When stakeholders involved with the preparation of school leaders (teacher preparation institutions,

government departments of education, teacher provincial professional organizations, and school systems), unite with common purpose to align the provincial professional guidelines, there may be a clearly identified pathway to collective success. A combination of theory and practice is essential for a deep understanding of the professional practice of principals and thus careful and purposeful opportunities for theoretical study and reflection coupled with practice is advised. Trustees, superintendents and other stakeholder organizations will find it helpful to use this study and the construct of self-efficacy to clearly articulate a district and then subsequently school-based leadership development policy.

Inherent in the development of school leaders is the pre-service, induction and in-service components which are identified in the *Alberta School Leadership Framework* (2010). An even more important element that was mentioned by participants in this study but not reflected in the *Framework* is the recruitment and selection of those individuals who will assume the role of the principal. Attention to this critical aspect involving the choice of principal for each site will be instrumental in having them be able to create and sustain meaningful relationships and have the clarity of vision, (including formation of a collective vision), focus on student success, and dedication to instructional leadership that is needed.

A high sense of self-efficacy contributes to increased self- regulation and motivation and principals who "excel in their ability to get their staff working together with a strong sense of purpose an belief in their abilities to surmount obstacles to educational attainments" (Bandura, 1997). Building a strong school climate with clarity of vision and a strong focus on student success enables the principals to serve as advocates for staff instructional efforts leading to enhanced teacher instructional efficacy. The importance of principal self-efficacy combined with a high sense of collective teacher efficacy serves to

> promote high levels of academic progress contributes significantly to their
> schools' level of academic achievement…with staff firmly believing that,

by their determined efforts, students are motivatable and teachable whatever their background, schools heavily populated with poor and minority students achieve at their highest percentile ranks based on national norms of language and mathematical competencies" (Bandura, 1997).

It is therefore important to have the construct of self-efficacy forefront in policy and practice as the belief and confidence in the ability to create conditions for optimal learning environments, and the perseverance and belief that students are teachable through extra effort and appropriate techniques, will serve to improve student success. Competency in the knowledge, skills and attitudes required for the position combined with adequate background experience in the form of other leadership positions is urged for all principal candidates. Strong mentorship and collaborative learning experiences are indicated in order for the principal candidate to feel supported and guided through the uncharted waters of a new position. It has been my experience and it is my belief that we need to pay very close attention to the beliefs, values and attitudes of the leadership candidate as well as ensure that they have the knowledge, skills and attitudes required of the position in order that they may be able to handle the managerial, instructional and moral leadership roles. A district leadership development framework that aligns with the provincial policy would then be desired. I would urge that the culture of the school and the community profile be carefully matched with a complimentary skill set of the incoming principal so that the intricate dance of relationships will be functional, and the principal will have confidence and competence in leading the learning community that he or she have inherited.

A skillful ability in creating and sustaining quality interpersonal relationships has been cited in much of the research in terms of excellence in leadership by principals. Therefore this skill also needs to be developed and sustained by principals. Working with their staff to create a collective vison and mission for their work as well and focusing on student success an instructional leadership requires a skill set which a principal needs to have. I would argue and

my findings suggest that teacher preparation institutions and district leaders and professional development staff need to provide instruction with regards to interpersonal relationship building, listening skills, questioning strategies, dealing with difficult people, written and verbal communication skills and etiquette. It follows that it is most desirable when principals are able to create highly efficacious schools as high expectations and standards for achievement pervade the environment. "Masterful academic leadership by the principal builds teachers' sense of instructional efficacy" (Coladarci, 1992) and if the belief teachers have in themselves and their students is high and they also "maintain a resilient sense of instructional efficacy and accept a fair share of responsibility for their student's academic progress." (Bandura, 1997, p. 244). As well, the beliefs in capabilities of the students improve the relationships that are ultimately formed with teacher and student. Relationships are also strengthened with parents as "teachers who are secure in their perceived capabilities are most likely to invite and support parents' educational efforts" (Bandura, 1997, p. 246). It is also interesting to note that "in efficacious schools, classroom behavior is managed successfully. This is achieved more by promoting, recognizing and praising productive activities than by punishing disruptive behavior." (Bandura, 1997, p. 247). Positive relationships once again seem to stem from an environment where there are self-efficacious people. I therefore reiterate the need for theory and practice with regards to development of excellent interpersonal skills in our potential principal candidates. It follows that principal candidates have developed essential listening skills and other effective interpersonal relationship skills so that they are able to create a shared vision encompassing a student-centered, achievement focused environment where excellence in teaching and learning is accomplished for each and every student. Inherent in this shared vision is the care and concern for all stakeholders in the community and particularly on the student and teacher.

Experience does matter and that message seemed to resonate throughout all of the interviews with the participants in my study. Those principals with the highest sense of self-efficacy had been a confirmed principal for the most number of years and also had been in many different schools during their careers. In terms of implications for policy and practice, it is evident, as in any role, that experience does provide the person with a clearer understanding of the intricacies of the managerial aspects of the position as well as the policies and procedures in all areas of instruction, assessment, supervision and evaluation, etc. With experience or time on the job, also comes a knowledge of a school district structure and personnel and thus relationships are formed and there is greater knowledge of the interconnectedness of the hierarchical structure of the organization.

Provision of a strong principal development program at the school district level would assist candidates, who have been self-identified or selected for further leadership opportunities by the principal and/or central office senior administration, to receive support in theory and practice to be better prepared for the role of a school principal. This leadership development designed would need to have input from many stakeholders including the Ministry of Education, teacher preparation institutions, superintendents and their organization, trustees and their organization, teachers and their organization, principals and other formal leaders at the system level in order to ascertain the very best process and program. It is also urged that the identified leadership development be designed to fit the school district's unique profile and that of its schools. A supportive network of retired, seasoned and new principals may also serve to assist the principal candidate in having mentors and models on their journey. As well, it is urged that graduate programs and other related course work at the university level, be tailored to include courses that provide targeted instruction and reflective practice that meet the requirements of the *Professional Practice Competencies for school Leaders* (PPCSL). I urge any principal development process to also reflect

the School Leadership Framework from the provincial business plan in order to strive for the transformative change that they believe to be critical in order to ensure that we are looking carefully at every student's needs and are examining our pedagogical and engagement strategies as well as using research to inform practice. I also urge these preparatory courses to have offerings in terms of theory and practice with respect to child growth and development, child and developmental psychology, practices for supporting First Nations, Metis, and Inuit learners, strategies in addressing the needs of our sexual and gender minority youth, guidelines for teacher growth, supervision and evaluation, and research based practices for assessment, inclusion, and student achievement.

Learning from the experiences of others through a collaborative network assists principals to feel supported in their daily work. Participants in this study espoused the value of having supportive friendships of others in the principalship as well as being involved in networks of principals and educators. Participants also spoke of the importance of their network involvement with other principals as collaboration and conversation with peers serves to assist with the managerial and instructional aspects of their positions. Knowing that they could draw on the experiences of others was reassuring and empowering for the principals in this study. Support and pressure from the district leadership staff was also important as their experience and leadership provided guidance and connectedness.

Implications for future research

This study has provided some additional insight into the relationship of secondary school principal's beliefs of self-efficacy and their professional practice. While information reported in this thesis is significant, there is a need for more research with regards to the construct of self-efficacy and secondary school principals. The findings of this interpretive exploratory case study have stimulated some ideas for future research which will now be presented.

Utilization of the *Principal Sense of Efficacy Scale (PSES)* served to focus the participants on the construct of self-efficacy with a preliminary tool that identified 18 questions from the three areas of managerial, instructional and moral leadership. The *Principal Sense of Efficacy Scale (PSES)* was developed in the United States and although it was a tool that mirrored the *Professional Practice Competencies for School Leaders (PPCLS)* developed in Alberta, Canada, the instrument was designed from the standards of the *Interstate School Leader Licensure Consortium* (ISLLC). Therefore, it would be a recommendation for future research to design a self-efficacy scale for teachers and principals that would more accurately reflect the Alberta Competencies. As well, a future mixed-methods research study involving the use of the *Principal Sense of Efficacy Scale (PSES)* and semi-structured interviews would significantly add to the existing research base.

Further research would be recommended with regards to extending the parameters of the current study with subsequent interviewing of the leadership team in support of the principal as well as the teachers in each school site. This subsequent interviewing would serve to ascertain if the relationships that were noted between a principals self-efficacy beliefs and their professional practice were reflected by the people they lead. Subordinates (teachers and school leadership staff) could comment on the principal's sense of efficacy as well as answer the same interview questions with regards to the managerial, instructional and moral leadership of their principal. This comparative analysis would serve to see if the self-efficacy beliefs were echoed in the actual perceived performance of the principal. The dissemination of the *Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale* (TSES) during this study would also add to the research in that teacher and collective efficacy in the school site could be ascertained to determine if any relationships existed.

Further research is also suggested with respect to principal and teacher efficacy and student achievement at the high school level. Teacher, principal and collective efficacy comparative analysis would serve to explore the interwoven nature of relationships between staff sense of self-efficacy and student achievement which could lead to greater understanding of factors that affect student success. As well, within this study a collection of more extensive demographic information which could include, among other things, socioeconomic level of the children in the school as well as their ethnicity would assist in providing more clarity and perhaps significance in the findings.

Further research would also be recommended with regards to replicating the current study with a larger representative sample so as to be able to make more extensive cross case analysis that would perhaps identify further relationships between a principal's sense of self-efficacy and their professional practice.

Questions that have arisen based on my conduct of this study include the following:

(1) What is the relationship between secondary principal's sense of self-efficacy and student sense of self-efficacy?
(2) What factors contributes to a secondary student's sense of self-efficacy?
(3) How does a secondary principal's sense of self-efficacy contribute to the sense of collective efficacy in their teaching staff?

Final Thoughts

This study has been a labor of love and was an incredible journey for me. I have enjoyed every moment of this experience from the very first doctoral course to the completion of this dissertation. I am so appreciative for all I have learned and for the blessing of being a breast cancer survivor and being able to come to the end of this wonderful chapter in my life. I was very fortunate to be able to study a psychologist and researcher who I so admire, Dr. Albert

Bandura, who happens to be an Albertan and to also interview principal colleagues who so

enriched my life and practice as they spoke about theirs. This study was designed to explore

further the relationship of self-efficacy beliefs of secondary school principals and their

professional practice to add to the existing body of knowledge with regards to this influential

construct from Bandura's social cognitive theory. I began my research believing that self-

efficacy was a very powerful factor in human agency and behavior and I now have a deeper

appreciation and understanding for the importance of the construct in our professional and

personal lives. It is important to note that the findings in this study are bounded by a particular

point in time and a particular context, therefore it is up to individual readers to decide if these

findings have relevance and are transferrable to their own unique context.

I now have an immense appreciation for those who have diligently worked to completion

of a doctoral thesis. I have learned so much regarding research and although I struggled at times

to negotiate my path through intricate theory and interpretive analysis of participant experiences,

I am so fulfilled knowing that I have come to the end of this quest. My knowledge and skill in

interviewing, data collection and analysis, interpretation, writing and editing has grown so much

and I am so thankful for this journey.

As I return to the principalship after a year of interviewing, interpreting, writing and

reflection, I know that I will be a better person and a better educational leader because of this

experience. I have learned more about my personal beliefs of self-efficacy and have strengthened

my beliefs in my capabilities and thus my self-efficacy due to the involvement in this entire

doctoral experience. I know that my attention to my managerial, instructional and moral

leadership will be sharpened and that I will continue to be a reflective professional who strives to

be authentic in my relationships and leading from a place of integrity and moral purpose. It has

been a purposeful, meaningful and intricate journey and I have savored every minute of it

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Appendix A: Principal Questionnaire (Sense of Efficacy Scale)

Principal Questionnaire

This questionnaire is designed to help us gain a better understanding of the kinds of things that create challenges for principals in their school activities.

Directions: Please indicate your opinion about each of the questions below by marking one of the nine responses in the columns on the right side. The scale of responses ranges from "None at all" (1) to "A Great Deal" (9), with "Some Degree" (5) representing the mid-point between these low and high extremes. You may choose any of the nine possible responses, since each represents a degree on the continuum. Your answers are confidential.

Please respond to each of the questions by considering the combination of your *current* ability, resources, and opportunity to do each of the following in your present position.

"In your current role as principal, to what extent can you…"	None at All		Very Little		Some Degree		Quite a Bit		A Great Deal
1. facilitate student learning in your school?	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧	⑨
2. generate enthusiasm for a shared vision for the school?	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧	⑨
3. handle the time demands of the job?	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧	⑨
4. manage change in your school?	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧	⑨
5. promote school spirit among a large majority of the student population?	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧	⑨
6. create a positive learning environment in your school?	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧	⑨
7. raise student achievement on standardized tests?	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧	⑨
8. promote a positive image of your school with the media?	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧	⑨
9. motivate teachers?	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧	⑨
10. promote the prevailing values of the community in your school?	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧	⑨
11. maintain control of your own daily schedule?	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧	⑨
12. shape the operational policies and procedures that are necessary to manage your school?	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧	⑨
13. handle effectively the discipline of students in your school?	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧	⑨
14. promote acceptable behavior among students?	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧	⑨
15. handle the paperwork required of the job?	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧	⑨
16. promote ethical behavior among school personnel?	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧	⑨
17. cope with the stress of the job?	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧	⑨
18. prioritize among competing demands of the job?	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧	⑨

Principal Sense of Efficacy Survey (PSES) by Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2004

<p style="text-align: center;">**Appendix B**</p>

The Alberta Professional Practice Competencies for School Leaders (rev. June 6/11)

Background

The *Alberta Professional Practice Competencies for School Leaders* (*Competencies*) are one of three elements contained in the Alberta School Leadership Framework (Framework) that has been developed by an advisory committee of Alberta's education sector stakeholder organizations and post-secondary institutions(stakeholders). The other two Framework elements are:
- Indicators of Quality for School Leader Development Programs
- Education Stakeholder Roles and Responsibilities for Framework Implementation.

The Framework vision is that "all Alberta schools are served by suitable, highly competent educational leaders who create learning cultures that that each student has an opportunity to engage in quality learning experiences that lead to achievement of the goals of education and address the student's learning and developmental needs."
The Framework elements are intended to promote innovative, transformative leadership models that reflect local priorities. Consistent and sustained implementation of the Framework by school leaders and stakeholders will improve school leadership in Alberta, contribute to the resolution of school leadership workforce issues and achieve the Framework vision.

The Framework fosters these outcomes of effective school leadership practice:

a. School leaders ensure that the learning needs and well-being of students are the basis of decision-making and programming.
b. School leaders positively influence the teaching and learning conditions in the school and thereby contribute to the quality of instruction provided by teachers.
c. School leaders foster teachers' instructional efficacy by promoting their professional learning and reflective practice and through the on-going supervision of their practices.
b. Aspiring and practicing school leaders have opportunities to acquire and refine the *Competencies* throughout their careers.
c. School leaders strike a fair and optimal balance in the time and effort devoted to fulfilling their responsibilities and in meeting competing demands.
d. The school community actively supports and understands the challenges faced by school leaders and accepts new models of school leadership.
e. The school community is assured that Alberta's school leaders have the knowledge, skills and attributes to fulfill their responsibilities and to address community expectations.
f. Education stakeholders have a foundation and a common language for policy development and programs to ensure sustained quality school leadership across the province.
g. School authorities' workforce succession plans are effective in identifying, nurturing and recruiting future school leaders.

h. Stakeholders use the *Competencies* as a focus of the content of their school leader preparation, induction and career-long professional learning programs and policies.

School leaders have significant responsibility for ensuring quality student learning, teacher practice efficacy and an effective learning culture. The development and career-long demonstration of the *Competencies* by school leaders lead to the fulfillment of this responsibility. The *Competencies* extend the Ministry's 2009 *Principal Quality Practice Guideline* to apply to all school leaders; i.e., principals as well as assistant, associate and vice principals. As provincial requirements, the *Competencies* will validate the role of Alberta school leaders and ensure province-wide consistency and alignment in the initiatives related to school leaders' preparation, induction, professional development, supervision and evaluation.

The Procedures included in the *Competencies* will ensure that all new and experienced school leaders have the opportunity to develop the related knowledge, skills and attributes throughout their careers, are actively supported in their daily practice and are successful in demonstrating the *Competencies*, in meeting their mandated responsibilities and in addressing school community expectations. As a consequence, the successful implementation of the *Competencies* will be instrumental in stakeholder efforts to attract more teachers to the ranks of school leaders. The *Competencies* acknowledge and promote the professional status of school leaders who should be provided opportunities for meaningful input into the school authority policies and processes related to school leadership. The *Competencies* make school leaders responsible for the results of their practice while empowering them to be successful through a robust practice supervision process.

Preamble

The essential purpose of educational leadership is to ensure that each student has an opportunity to engage in quality learning experiences that lead to achievement of the goals of education and that address his or her learning and developmental needs. In this context, student engagement refers to three dimensions of the learning experience – social, emotional and intellectual—resulting in students' becoming engaged thinkers and ethical citizens, and their development of an entrepreneurial spirit. Quality learning experiences refer to school-sponsored activities that foster students' capacity to think critically; be resilient, adaptable and confident in their abilities; take personal responsibility for life-long learning and collaborate to achieve a common purpose.

Every school leader must be an accomplished teacher and is responsible for fulfilling the essential purpose of educational leadership.

Objectives

The objectives of this document are to:

a. identify the basic competencies for effective school leadership, applicable in all Alberta school contexts;
b. frame a school leader's career-long responsibility to fulfill the essential purpose of educational leadership; and
c. facilitate province-wide consistency in school authority policies and processes for school leader professional growth, supervision and evaluation.

Definitions

In the context of this document,

"**Competencies**" refers to the provincial requirements for the practice of school leadership for which Alberta school leaders are accountable throughout their careers.

"**Notice of Remediation**" refers to the written statement issued to a school leader by the individual undertaking the evaluation process if he or she concludes that the school leader does not demonstrate one or more of the applicable *Alberta Professional Practice Competencies for School Leaders* and/or does not fulfill one or more of applicable provincial and school authority requirements.

"**Principal**" refers to an individual who holds a valid Alberta teaching certificate, is designated by a school authority and is responsible for the provision of educational leadership as set out in provincial legislation.

"**School authority**" refers to a school board, a person or society that operates a charter school or an accredited private school.

"**School community**" refers to students, teachers and other staff, parents, school council and others who have an interest in the school.

"**School leader**" refers to a principal as set out in provincial legislation and to an assistant principal, associate principal or vice principal subject to the responsibilities assigned to the designation by the school authority.

"**School leader evaluation**" refers to the formal process of gathering and recording information and evidence over a period of time and the application of reasoned professional judgment in determining whether or not a school leader demonstrates the applicable *Alberta Professional Practice Competencies for School Leaders*.

"**School leader professional growth**" refers to a career-long learning process whereby a school leader develops and refines the knowledge, skills, and attributes related to the *Alberta Professional Practice Competencies for School Leaders.*

"**School leader professional growth plan**" refers to the document that each school leader annually develops, implements and reports on, in accordance with the school authority's policy and processes.

"**School leader supervision**" refers to the ongoing process by which the individual assigned to undertake this responsibility by a school authority supports and guides school leaders in demonstrating the applicable *Alberta Professional Practice Competencies for School Leaders*.

Competencies

Every school leader is expected to:

a. fulfill the applicable provincial requirements
b. demonstrate the applicable *Alberta Professional Practice Competencies for School Leaders* (*Competencies*)
c. meet the school authority's requirements for school leaders.

The *Competencies* are provincial requirements for the practice of school leadership. They are interrelated and are not presented in rank order. The *Indicators* that accompany each competency describe how it is demonstrated. School authorities may interpret, refine and add to the *Indicators* to reflect the local context.

Principals are accountable for the demonstration of all the *Competencies* throughout their careers. Assistant principals, associate principals and vice principals are accountable for the demonstration of those *Competencies* that are directly related to their assigned role and leadership designation.

Reasoned, evidence-based, professional judgment must be used to determine whether the applicable *Competencies* are demonstrated by a school leader.

Professional Practice Competency #1 - Fostering Effective Relationships

A school leader must build trust and foster positive working relationships within the school community on the basis of appropriate values and ethical foundations.

Indicators

A school leader:

a. acts with fairness, dignity and integrity;

b. demonstrates a sensitivity to and genuine caring for others and cultivates a climate of mutual respect;

c. promotes an inclusive, safe school culture that respects and honours diversity;

d. demonstrates responsibility for all students and acts in their best interests;

e. models and promotes open and collaborative dialogue;

f. uses effective communication, facilitation, and problem-solving skills;

g. supports processes for improving relationships and dealing with conflict within the school community; and

h. adheres to applicable professional standards of conduct.

Professional Practice Competency #2 - Embodying Visionary Leadership
A school leader must involve the school community in creating and sustaining shared vision, mission, values, principles and goals.

Indicators

A school leader:

a. communicates and is guided by an educational philosophy based upon sound research, personal experience and reflection;

b. provides leadership that leads to achievement of the school's vision and mission;

c. meaningfully engages the school community in identifying and addressing areas for school improvement;

d. ensures that planning, decision-making, and implementation strategies are based on a vision shared by the school community and an understanding of the school culture;

e. facilitates change and promotes innovation consistent with current and anticipated school community needs;

f. analyzes a wide range of data to determine progress towards achieving school goals; and

g. communicates and celebrates school accomplishments.

> **Professional Practice Competency #3 - Leading a Learning Community**
>
> A school leader must nurture and sustain a school culture that values and supports learning.

Indicators

A school leader:

a. engages the school community to promote the success and development of all students as a shared responsibility;

b. promotes and models life-long learning for students, teachers and other staff;

c. fosters a culture of high expectations for students, teachers and other staff;

d. fosters and sustains an inclusive school environment where diversity is celebrated, students are encouraged to take risks in learning, and each student is equally valued as a contributing member of the school community;

e. promotes and facilitates meaningful, collaborative professional learning for teachers and other staff;

f. ensures that parents are informed and have opportunities for meaningful input into how their children's learning and developmental needs will be addressed; and

g. fosters the use of local community resources and agencies to enhance student learning and development.

> **Professional Practice Competency #4 - Providing Instructional Leadership**
>
> A school leader must ensure that each student has access to quality teaching and the opportunity to engage in quality learning experiences.

Indicators

A school leader:

a. implements supervision and evaluation processes to ensure that all teachers consistently achieve the *Teaching Quality Standard Applicable to the Provision of Basic Education in Alberta* and/or other provincial requirements;

b. demonstrates a sound understanding of effective pedagogy and curriculum;

c. ensures that teachers use appropriate pedagogy to respond to various dimensions of student diversity;

d. ensures that students have access to appropriate programming based on their individual learning needs;

e. implements strategies for meeting the standards of student achievement;

f. ensures that student assessment and evaluation practices throughout the school are fair, appropriate and balanced;

g. recognizes the potential of new and emerging technologies and enables their appropriate integration in support of teaching, learning and reporting; and

h. ensures that teachers and other staff effectively communicate and collaborate with parents, and when appropriate local community agencies, to support student learning and development.

Professional Practice Competency #5 - Developing and Facilitating Leadership

A school leader must promote the development of leadership capacity within the school community for the overall benefit of the school community and education system.

Indicators

A school leader:

a. demonstrates informed decision-making through open dialogue and consideration of multiple perspectives;

b. promotes team-building and shared leadership among members of the school community;

c. facilitates meaningful involvement of the school community in the school's operation, where appropriate, using collaborative and consultative decision-making strategies; and

d. identifies and mentors teachers with the potential for educational leadership roles.

Professional Practice Competency #6 - Managing School Operations and Resources

A school leader must manage school operations and resources to ensure a safe, caring, and effective learning environment.

Indicators

A school leader:

a. effectively plans, organizes and manages the human, physical and financial resources of the school and identifies areas of need;

b. ensures that school operations align with provincial legislation, regulations, and policies as well as the school authority's policies and processes; and

c. applies principles of effective teaching, learning and student development as well as ethical leadership to management decisions.

Professional Practice Competency #7 - Understanding and Responding to the Larger Societal Context

A school leader must understand and appropriately respond to the political, social, economic, legal and cultural contexts impacting the school.

Indicators

A school leader:

a. advocates for the needs and interests of children and youth;

b. demonstrates a knowledge of local, provincial, national, and global issues and trends related to education;

c. assesses and responds to the community context in fulfilling the school's vision and mission; and

d. advocates for community support of education at the school, system and provincial levels.

Procedures for School Leader Professional Growth, Supervision and Evaluation

These *Procedures* promote a school leader's career-long development and demonstration of the *Competencies* and constitute provincial requirements for a school leader's professional growth, supervision and evaluation.

These *Procedures* do not restrict a superintendent or the governing body of an accredited private school from taking disciplinary or other action, as appropriate, where there are reasonable grounds to believe that the behaviours or practices of a school

leader endanger the safety of students, constitute a neglect of duty, a breach of trust, or a refusal to obey an order of the school authority.

School Authority Policy and Processes

1. School authorities must establish and make public the policies and processes for school leader professional growth, supervision and evaluation. These policies and processes must align with the *Competencies*, *Indicators,* and *Procedures* as well as other applicable provincial legislation, regulations and policies.
2. School authorities must establish and make public the qualifications and eligibility requirements for school leaders.

School Leader Professional Growth

3. Each school leader must annually develop and complete a professional growth plan, in accordance with the school authority's policies and processes.
4. A school leader's professional growth plan must include professional goals that:
   a. are based on a self-assessment of his or her learning needs;
   b. consider feedback from the school community and the individual assigned to supervise the school leader's practice;
   c. show a demonstrable relationship to the *Competencies*; and
   d. consider the education plans of the school, the school authority and the province.

5. Unless the school leader agrees, the content of his or her professional growth plan must not be part of the evaluation process.

School Leader Supervision

6. A fundamental component must be ongoing supervision, including:
   a. providing support and guidance;
   b. observing and receiving information from any source; and
   c. identifying the behaviours or competencies of the school leader that for any reason may require an evaluation.
7. The school leader supervision process must be applied to each school leader; consider his or her designated duties, career-stage and school context; and focus on the applicable *Competencies*.
8. The individual assigned by the school authority to undertake the school leader supervision process must initiate a school leader evaluation process if there is reason to believe that a school leader may not demonstrate the applicable *Competencies* and fulfill the applicable provincial and school authority requirements.

School Leader Evaluation

9. The evaluation process must be conducted:
   a. upon the written request of the school leader;
   b. for purposes of gathering information related to a specific employment decision;
   c. when the superintendent or the governing body of an accredited private school has reason to believe, on the basis of information received through the school leader supervision process, that a principal's leadership practice may not demonstrate the *Competencies* or fulfill the applicable provincial and school authority requirements; or
   d. when the principal, on the basis of information received through the school leader supervision process, has reason to believe that the assistant principal, associate principal or vice principal's leadership practice may not demonstrate the applicable *Competencies* or fulfill the applicable provincial and school authority requirements.

10. On initiating the evaluation process, the individual undertaking it must communicate in writing to the school leader the:
    a. reasons for and purposes of the evaluation,
    b. process and criteria to be used,
    c. timelines to be applied; and
    d. possible outcomes of the evaluation process.

11. The evaluation process for a principal must be undertaken by the superintendent or senior school system personnel to whom this duty has been assigned, or an individual assigned to fulfill this role by the governing body of an accredited private school, in accordance with the school authority's policy and processes.

12. The evaluation process for an assistant principal, associate principal or vice principal must be undertaken by the individual to whom this duty has been assigned in accordance with the school authority's policy and processes.

13. The individual assigned to undertake the evaluation process must consider the school leader's designated duties, career-stage and school context in exercising reasoned professional judgment to issue a finding as to whether the school leader demonstrates the applicable *Competencies* and fulfills the applicable provincial and school authority requirements.

14. The individual assigned to undertake the evaluation process must complete an Evaluation Report at the conclusion of the evaluation process. The Evaluation Report must:

a. include a finding on whether or not the school leader demonstrates the applicable *Competencies* and fulfills the applicable provincial and school authority requirements;

b. outline the evidence on which the finding is based; and

c. be provided in writing to the school leader and if applicable the superintendent or the governing body of an accredited private school.

15. If the Evaluation Report includes a finding that the school leader does not demonstrate the applicable *Competencies* and/or fulfill the applicable provincial and school authority requirements, the individual undertaking the evaluation process must issue a Notice of Remediation. The Notice of Remediation must:

a. identify the *Competencies* that have not been demonstrated and/or the provincial and the school authority's requirements that have not been fulfilled;

b. describe the required changes in the school leader's leadership practice and the timeline for their implementation;

c. outline the supports that will be provided to the school leader to implement the required changes in the school leader's leadership practice; and

d. articulate the consequences of not achieving the required changes in the school leader's leadership practice including, but not limited to, the termination of the school leader's administrative designation.

16. A Notice of Remediation may stipulate:
a. the remedies to be implemented by the school leader, and/or
b. that the school leader's efforts to implement the required changes in leadership practice will replace the school leader's obligation to develop and implement a Professional Growth Plan for that year.

17. In accordance with the timeline stipulated in the Notice of Remediation, the individual assigned to undertake the evaluation process must issue a second finding as to whether the school leader has been successful in demonstrating the *Competencies* and provincial and school authority requirements, and in making the changes in his or her leadership practice, identified in the Notice of Remediation; this finding must be included in the Evaluation Report.

18. The school leader has the right to appeal the findings contained in the Evaluation Report, in accordance with the school authority's policy and related provincial legislation.

Appendix C

Interview Questions

- What does the term self-efficacy mean to you?

- What is your reaction after completing the PSES survey?

- How familiar are you with the PPCSL (Professional Practice Competencies of School Leaders, 2011) and how has this competency document affected your life as a principal?

- How do you see the PSES relating to your professional practice?

- Would you please reflect on your <u>management role</u> and share with me your beliefs and feelings with regards to the relationship of your self-efficacy beliefs and your professional practice regarding management?

- Would you please reflect on <u>your instructional leadership role</u> and share with me your beliefs and feelings with regards to the relationship of your self-efficacy beliefs and your professional practice regarding instructional leadership?

- Would you please reflect on your <u>moral leadership role</u> within your school and share with me your beliefs and feelings with regards to the relationship of your self-efficacy beliefs and your professional practice regarding moral leadership?

- What supports do you see as essential to you being an effective principal in meeting your managerial, instructional leadership and moral leadership roles and responsibilities (competencies)?

Background/Demographic Information

1. Gender
2. Age
3. Ethnicity
4. Total number of years as a confirmed principal
5. Highest degree completed
6. Type of school (public, separate, private, chartered, etc.)
7. School type (rural, urban suburban)
8. Number of students in the school
9. Number of teachers in the school
10. School level: (elementary, junior high, high school, alternative school, etc)
11. Participation in a structured principal preparation course
12. Mentorship opportunities

Initial Contact Letter - Principal
INFORMATION LETTER

Study Title: How do secondary school principals understand the relationship between beliefs of self-efficacy and their professional practice?

Research Investigator:	**Supervisor:**
Maureen Yates	Dr. Rosemary Foster
University of Alberta	Professor, University of Alberta
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Maureen.yates@epsb.ca	ryfoster@ualberta.ca
(780) 909-4804	(780) 492-7060

Background

My name is Maureen Yates and I am conducting a study as part of the requirements in pursuit of my Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Administration and Leadership with the department of Educational Policy Studies at the University of Alberta. The research question for my study is: "How do secondary school principals understand the relationship between beliefs of self-efficacy and their professional practice?" I would like to extend an invitation to you participate in this timely study. A form is provided for you to acknowledge understanding of the study and consent for the participation in this study.

Purpose

Nationally and internationally, the role of the principal has been cited as a critical factor in the improvement of student achievement and system accountability (Leithwood, 2008; Levin, 2010). According to Bandura (1997), self-efficacy is the most central and pervasive mechanism of human agency; and the belief that people have in their ability to produce desired effects by the actions – efficacy belief – is central to motivation and action. A principal's self-efficacy beliefs have a significant impact on his or her level of aspiration or goal-setting, effort, adaptability and persistence (Bandura, 1986; Gist & Mitchell, 1992). The single highest determinant of success for students in the classroom is the effectiveness and skill of the teacher, and thus high expectations for achievement pervade the environment of efficacious schools. Given the central role that principals are expected to perform in instructional leadership, it is important to conceptualize and operationalize measures of principal self-efficacy

Study Procedures

I will conduct this research in the province of Alberta as it is an ideal place to investigate principal self-efficacy with regards to the *Professional Practice Competencies for School Leaders* given the historical, legal and policy framework. For the purpose of this study, I will be using Bandura's social cognitive theory as the analytical framework. To address my research questions I will employ a qualitative case study methodology with an initial semi-structured

interview including the dissemination of the PSES (Principal Sense of Efficacy Scale) and questions regarding same. In a subsequent follow-up semi-structured interview, I will continue to ask questions to identify what the relationship is between the principal's sense of self-efficacy and their professional practice. The PSES instrument will be an "ice-breaker" so to speak and the follow-up interview will delve into the three areas of professional practice identified in the PSES instrument: Moral, Instructional and Managerial leadership. I anticipate that the survey (which is comprised of 18 questions) will take approximately 20 minutes to complete, with the first interview lasting 60-90 minutes. I also anticipate that the second follow-up semi-structured interview will take an additional 60-90 minutes.

Benefits

With the recent introduction of the *Professional Practice Competencies for School Leaders*, and the well defined accountability framework in the province of Alberta, this study is very timely and will be useful for principal preparation, recruitment, professional development and supervision. Since the research to date on school principal efficacy is scarce, this study is timely and important especially in light of the fact that research has shown that principal leadership is vital to the improvement of student improvement.

Risk

I do not anticipate any shot or long term risks and discomforts from participation in this research. However, participants may find that sharing their experiences with me, the researcher, may evoke some strong emotional feelings that may or may not lead to discomfort. I will minimize any risks or discomforts to the best of my ability by ensuring confidentiality and giving any referral to services as needed. I believe that the benefits of participating in the research far outweigh any risks as the participant will be involved in self-reflection with regards to their self-efficacy beliefs and the relationship of those beliefs to their professional practice and will be able to enrich their practice and ultimately the practice of teachers and the success of students.

Voluntary Participation

You are under no obligation to participate and you are able to withdraw from the study at any time up to the debrief clarification interview session which is held to determine the correctness of the answers from the interviews and have you give your confirmation to proceed with including your case study in the dissertation.

Confidentiality

Only my supervisor and I will have access to the audio-recordings and the transcripts. Prior to analysis and use, information gathered through interviews will be returned to participants for verification of accuracy. I will comply with the University of Alberta Standards for the Protection of Human Research Participants may choose to withdraw from the study at any time prior to the completion of the interviews and until the transcripts are reviewed and confirmed for accuracy by the participant. All information will be kept in a secure place for a minimum of five

years following completion of the research and then destroyed so as to ensure privacy and confidentiality.

If you have further questions or concerns regarding this research please contact: Maureen Yates, researcher (780)909-4804 or Dr. Rosemary Foster, Supervisor (780) 492-0760.The plan for this study has been reviewed for its adherence to ethical guidelines and approved by the University of Alberta Research Ethics board 1. Questions about your rights as a research participant may be directed to the University of Alberta Research Ethics Office at 780-492-2615.

I will follow up with a phone call to confirm the receipt of this letter as well as to clarify any questions you may have regarding this study. You may receive a copy of the final research report by contacting me.

I have provided you with two copies of the invitation letter and consent form so that you may retain one for your records and return one to me in the self-addressed envelope provided for you.

I look forward to our future conversation and am hopeful that you will be agreeable with regards to participating in this timely research.

Yours in education,

M. Maureen Yates, BPE, BEd, MEd
Doctoral Candidate

CONSENT FORM

Study Title :   How do secondary school principals understand the relationship between beliefs of self-efficacy and their professional practice?

Research Investigator:	**Supervisor:**
Maureen Yates	Dr. Rosemary Foster
University of Alberta	Professor, University of Alberta
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(780) 909-4804	(780) 492-7060

Do you understand that you have been asked to be in a research study?   Yes   No

Have you read and received a copy of the attached information sheet?   Yes   No

Do you understand the benefits and risks involved in taking part in this
research study?   Yes   No

Have you had an opportunity to ask questions and discuss this study?   Yes   No

Do you understand that you are free to refuse to participate, or to withdraw
from the study at any time (up until the final acceptance of the transcribed
notes), without consequence, and that your information will be withdrawn
at your request?   Yes   No

Has the issue of confidentiality been explained to you? Do you understand
who will have access to your information?   Yes   No

This study was explained to me by: _____

I have read and understood the attached information letter and agree to take part in the study:

_____ _____
Signature of research participant   Date

_____
Printed Name

I believe that the person signing this form understands what is involved in the study and voluntarily agrees to participate.

_____ _____
Signature of Investigator or Designee   Date