The Knowing-Doing Gap: The Influence of Teacher Feedback in Changing Principal Behavior - A Mixed Methods Study

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THE KNOWING-DOING GAP: THE INFLUENCE OF TEACHER FEEDBACK IN CHANGING PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOR
— A MIXED METHODS STUDY

by

Kimberly St. Martin

A Dissertation
Submitted to the
Faculty of the Graduate College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Department of Educational Leadership, Research, and Technology
Advisor: Patricia Reeves, Ed.D.

Western Michigan University
Kalamazoo, Michigan
December 2010
This mixed methods study attempted to determine how a system of regular feedback from teachers on principal's work influenced the way in which two principals incorporated the 21 Leadership Responsibilities into their daily practice. Since Principals are the front line of school reform, even when a school commits to an improvement effort that is well grounded in research such as Response to Intervention (RtI), the principal plays a key role in leading the change of adapting the school processes, culture, roles and responsibilities, norms, and systems to support implementation. To play this role effectively, the principal often finds it necessary to examine and adapt his or her own practices and make adjustments in attention and focus. Marzano, Waters, and McNulty's (2005) meta-analysis of the research on principal responsibilities identified 21 distinct responsibilities for areas of principal focus and attention that correlate with both improved student outcomes and leading the process of second order (deep) change. Two principals received three months of feedback from their teachers from a
feedback instrument entitled, “Balanced Leadership Profile” that was designed around the 21 leadership responsibilities and served as the basis for how principals would begin to focus their time and attention. This study looked at how a systematic and repeated process of feedback from teachers to principals pertaining to their demonstration of the 21 Balanced Leadership Responsibilities (a) assists principals in identifying areas for attention to or adaptation of their daily practice; (b) how principals make sense of that feedback; and (c) the decisions principals make regarding changing or adapting their practice, attention, and focus based on their teachers’ feedback. This study illustrated how principals respond to teacher feedback with deeper reflection on their practice, focus and attention. The principals who received monthly feedback for three months on the Balanced Leadership Profile demonstrated a deeper questioning of their own work, an interest in understanding any differences between how they and their teachers assess their work and an interest in isolating areas for greater attention, focus, and even change in practice.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Although it is impossible to fully show my appreciation and gratitude to everyone who has assisted or inspired me during this process, I did want to make an effort to bring some recognition to those who stood out in helping me to complete this dissertation.

First, I would like to thank God for giving me the strength and perseverance to complete this project.

A special thanks goes to my doctoral committee, with whose guidance this project and its completion was made possible. To Dr. Reeves, I cannot express how grateful I am for the immense amount of time, energy, wisdom and foresight you put in to help me with this project. Thank you! To Dr. Cooley and Dr. Dodson, I want to thank you for all of your guidance, knowledge, support, and the many opportunities outside of the dissertation process you both provided me.

I would also like to thank my wonderful family. My wonderful partner, Mark, who was also my APA consultant, and children, Logan and Gavin all of whom had to endure countless hours of me being away and doing the ‘dissertation’. Their patience, love and comedic relief were exactly what I needed to help me through this process. Thank you, also to my parents, Judith and Joseph Ferlo who inspired and supported my education
Acknowledgements — Continued

throughout the years. Your encouragement helped me endure this seven-year journey. I would also like to thank Mrs. O'Brien, my high school English teacher. You hold a special place in my heart. Thank you for encouraging me to become the best I can be. It is hard to believe I was that student who barely made it through writing her term paper! To my special friend Mr. George, who always knew how to make me smile, I think of you often. Even though you are not with me in person, your spirit and strength lives within me. I love you and miss you so much.

Thank you to my all of my dear friends for their support and encouragement along the way. I want to especially express my gratitude to Sue Myland, for the countless hours of babysitting and emotional support during this process. Thank you to my MiBLSi and KRESA colleagues. We continue to support the ‘cause’ and your knowledge and insight are a gift that I have been blessed to be a part of for many years. To Nancy Centers, you no longer can say that your wish is to someday be in the acknowledgements of a book. Thank you for the stapler, paperclips and for being you! I also want to express my appreciation to my former staff from Comstock East Elementary for all of their support and friendship. You taught me how to lead and without you, I would not be who I am today.

Finally, I would like to thank two groups of people, who without their
Acknowledgements — Continued

help this research would have been truly impossible. First, thank you
to all participants of this research for their time, questions and participation.
Secondly, thank you to Ingham ISD, who allowed me the privilege to learn
through your eyes. It is because of you I have been given the opportunity to
focus my energy and passion in supporting the leaders of our schools.
Because of our work, many children’s lives have been saved!

Kimberly St. Martin
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Study Overview

This study examined the issue of how educators at the principal level are dealing with the knowing-doing gap. Pfeffer and Sutton (1999) described the knowing-doing gap as “the most menacing phenomenon most organizations face.” The knowing-doing gap is defined as knowledge that is not implemented. This study focused on the process of changing practice to reflect more of what is known through research to inform that practice. In particular, this study examined the day-to-day work of principals and how principals do, or do not, evolve and adapt their work to reflect new knowledge acquired through professional development and other sources of informed understanding relating to practices that correlate to raising student achievement.

Research continues to clarify what principals can and should be doing to raise student achievement within the context of their daily jobs. Recent state and federal policy initiatives, like No Child Left Behind (NCLB), Race To the Top (RTT), and high school reform, place greater pressure on both teachers and principals to change their practice to incorporate evidence
supported practices. As a result, many principals are participating in training academies and principal training programs that deliver content based on a body of research identifying certain factors within a principal's control that correlate to student achievement.

Some of those factors are conditions in the school (Fullan, 2001) which a principal can influence, and some of those factors are actual behaviors and strategies that principals can use to affect influence on the conditions in schools that support student learning (Cotton, 2003). Given that principals increasingly have access to important research findings that inform their practice, and that many principals participate in professional development designed to help them adapt their practice to better reflect that research, many researchers argue that it is also important to study how practice actually changes as a result of new knowledge (Green & Seifert, 2005).

This argument is based on the understanding that daily professional practice is shaped by a myriad of contextual, experiential and personal factors, all of which may be elements that make it difficult for individuals to make significant change in their work patterns (Guthrie & Reed, 1991). Numerous studies have noted how educational environments are resistant to change and that gaps occur between knowledge, intention and practice within those environments, the urgency of helping principals adapt their professional practice in ways that translate to increased student learning becomes clear. Now that both NCLB and RTT make improved student
learning high stakes for principals, it is important to better understand how principals can achieve the changes in daily practice that empower them to impact the success of the schools they serve in raising student achievement. Since there is evidence in the literature (Daw & Gage, 1967) that feedback on practice can be of assistance in making changes to practice behaviors, this study looked at what happened when principals use a source of feedback to assist them with closing the knowing-doing gap in their own daily practice.

Background

Since becoming law in January 2002, the No Child Left Behind Act has established high stakes accountability in schools across the nation. Passage of this legislation increased pressure on school districts by placing federal policy behind the accountability movement. The legislation requires schools to demonstrate that all children, including those who are English Language Learners, minority students, and students with disabilities, obtain an adequate level of academic progress, as measured by federally approved state assessments.

Researchers, policy makers, and even school leaders are scrutinizing the job of the principalship by asking what skills are crucial to meeting the challenges set forth in NCLB and by making recommendations for reshaping programs that prepare and support continued development for school leaders in ways that build leadership impact and strengthen the profession. Complicating matters, within the last several years there has been a rise in
the number of educational leaders retiring (Lashway, 2002). School districts are faced with the challenge of filling an increasing number of principal vacancies with few qualified applicants who possess the sophisticated skills necessary to manage a plethora of issues ranging from school safety to standards-driven accountability (Lashway, 2002). Moreover, recent studies have raised serious questions as to whether or not graduate programs in school administration alone are adequate preparation for meeting the demands of the position and for acquiring the full range of knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to function effectively as principals (Levine, 2005).

For many years, people have assumed that principal leadership is essential to the success of a school; however, many schools are having difficulty retaining school principals. According to Gates, Ringel, Santibanez, Ross and Chung (2003), there is a high turnover rate among new principals, defined as those having three or fewer years of experience. The reason cited by the authors for this high attrition rate was that principals feel as though the administrative profession is not well suited for them. Recent news reports have also highlighted the increase in principal turnover rates.

A report produced by the Wallace Foundation and authored by Spiro, Mattis & Mitgang (2007) highlighted the crisis California's Hayward School District was facing due to an exodus of principals. It was reported that 28% of the Hayward principals had quit, retired, or accepted another position within the school district, resulting in the highest principal turnover rate for
Hayward Schools in over 20 years. Similar stories are occurring throughout the nation. In 2003, the state of Illinois reported an 18.8% attrition rate among principals having one year or less of experience. Given the increased pressure placed on principals for schools to achieve, it does not seem surprising that a high turnover rate exists amongst the nation’s principals.

One reason for the increase in pressure on school principals involves the requirement for schools to demonstrate Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), the cornerstone of the NCLB accountability system. Data obtained by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) showed the percentages of schools not making AYP in 2005-2006. There was a significant amount of variance among all the states, with Hawaii reporting the highest percentage of schools not making AYP at 66%; while, Wisconsin reported the lowest percentage at 2%. The percentages of schools identified as needing improvement were also included in the report. Hawaii reported the highest percentage (48%) of schools needing improvement. The argument could be made that administrators leading low performing schools may be more likely to leave in order to avoid the pressure to increase student achievement.

Surprisingly, a limited number of research studies have been conducted in an effort to find a link between principal leadership and student achievement.

Marzano, Waters and McNulty (2005) analyzed the research in the area of school leadership and found that over the past 35 years there have been over 5,000 studies and articles. However, only 69 of those studies
examined the quantitative relationship between school-level leadership and student achievement. After reviewing the 69 studies, they reported that there is in fact a positive relationship between building leadership and student achievement. The authors acknowledge that although there is a shortage of empirical studies relating to school-level leadership, there are several published books that recommend effective leadership practices to both aspiring and practicing building level leaders.

There are an extensive number of espoused leadership theories that have assisted in defining qualities and best practices of effective principals. One of the most commonly cited leadership theorists is James MacGregor Burns (1978), who is credited with being the founder of Transformational Leadership. Burns believed this type of leadership style was more effective, due to the fact that leaders built relationships with followers leading to both the leader and the follower achieving a common goal. Warren Bennis and James Collins are other leadership theorists worth mentioning who have influenced principals’ practices. Bennis (2003) stated that 21st century leaders must have a shared vision, clear voice, strong moral code, and be able to adapt to change. Collins (2001) observed great companies are led by great leaders who demonstrate characteristics of humility, commitment, self-reflection and who surround themselves with talented people who can do the job. Collins also noted great leaders establish a culture of discipline and are constantly asking difficult questions relating to the future of their company.
The Broad Foundation and Thomas B. Fordham Institute (2003) describes the qualities school leaders must have in order to transform schools. Successful school leaders must have "energy, a sense of direction, and a determination to succeed that inspires others to perform...he or she must be able to convey a sense of urgency to those who do perform the work....define a goal and direct the institutions effort towards its realization" (p. 10). These leadership qualities are consistent with the qualities described by Bennis and Collins. Most recently, the literature regarding the role of school principals has focused on the necessity for principals to demonstrate instructional leadership.

Although the phrase "instructional leadership" is not new to the literature, its definition has evolved over time. Lashway (2002) described the differences between the responsibilities of principals who were instructional leaders in the 1980's when the phrase "instructional leadership" first surfaced, and today's principals who are expected to be instructional leaders. Instructional leaders in the 1980's were managers and led schools with a top-down approach. They were expected to be efficient; although they were still expected to focus on curriculum and instruction.

By contrast, the ideal instructional leader in the face of the current high-stakes accountability movement is "portrayed as a democratic, community-minded leader who builds consensus around a vision rooted in agreed-upon standards for student learning, with a commitment to be
accountable for results” (Lashway, 2002, p. 3). School districts are seeking administrative candidates who embody a litany of qualities and skills and are able to comply with district standards, manage personnel issues, order supplies, manage budgets, maintain the safety of the playground and hallways, manage conflicts and situations that may impact the collegiality of their staff, and are also expected to engage the entire school community around the common goal to improve student learning. The principal’s role has significantly changed over the past three decades. Consequently, school districts are faced with the challenge of finding exceptional candidates to effectively manage all of the facets of the job (Lashway, 2003).

The challenges faced by school districts to find exceptional principal candidates, have forced superintendents, principals, universities, and policy makers to analyze the effectiveness of principal preparatory programs and their ability to adequately prepare aspiring principals to effectively manage all facets of the principalship. A Public Agenda survey found that 69% of principals believed leadership programs were not adequately preparing aspiring school leaders to lead today’s schools (Darling-Hammond, LaPoint, Meyerson & Orr, 2007). This same study found that 80% of superintendents believed leadership programs were inadequate in preparing our nation’s future leaders. Over 85% of principals and superintendents surveyed indicated that overhauling administrative preparatory programs would help to improve leadership practices (Lashway, 2003).
Most troubling is the report that 96% of practicing school principals believed interactions with their colleagues better prepared them for the profession than their graduate courses (Hess & Kelly, 2005). Hess and Kelly also describe a four-year study conducted by Arthur Levine that criticizes the lack of quality of administrative preparatory programs. Levine surveyed practicing principals, university deans, chairs, faculty members, alumni, and case studies of 25 educational leadership programs. He concluded, “the majority of educational administration programs range from inadequate to appalling, even at some of the country’s leading universities” (p. 36). Lashway has also argued university programs lack the ability to create continuity between theory and practice. Although some educational leadership programs have restructured their content in order to make the course work and experiences more realistic to the demands of the job, there is a concern about the level of academic freedom delegated to professors. The resulting individuality of course content makes it difficult to ensure that the courses are taught as intended with both theory and practice combined (Byrd & Williams 2005).

While the perception data from principals and superintendents regarding the effectiveness of principal preparatory programs is negative, Lashway (2003) reported that evidence supporting principal and superintendent claims regarding the ineffectiveness of leadership programs is limited. Lashway cited the work of Louis Wildman (2001) who found that
there is limited research supporting the claims of inadequacy. Wildman found many studies that evaluated various dimensions of leadership programs, but nothing allowed him to draw any conclusions regarding their overall effectiveness. In addition, Lashway concluded that, thus far, no research has found a correlation between principal effectiveness and leadership programs. Consequently, although many principals and superintendents are critical of leadership preparatory programs, there appears to be no obvious correlation between the effectiveness of a school leader and the quality of the leadership preparatory program. This may be the most compelling evidence that leadership preparation programs, alone, are not the answer to preparing and shaping school leaders to make a positive impact on school quality and, thus, student achievement.

Even though researchers have found no relationship between principal effectiveness and leadership programs, one cannot disregard the fact that over 85% of principals and superintendents who responded to a Public Agenda survey regarding the preparation of school leaders believed leadership programs needed to be redesigned in order to better prepare school leaders (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007). States across the nation are tackling this issue. The Southern Regional Education Board (2002) is attempting to improve leadership preparation in 16 states. They have identified actions that states can take to redesign leadership programs and improve the preparation of school leaders. The steps include combining
performance based standards into leadership preparatory programs, integration of coursework and coordinated field experience, and a multi-level administrator certification system that includes formalized mentoring, reflection, the development of a portfolio, and the demonstration of skills in the work-setting.

In addition to the aforementioned actions for improvement, advanced certification for school administrators is in the process of being established in order to extend administrator preparation beyond the completion of initial licensing requirements. The National Policy Board for Educational Administration (2001) proposed the creation of the American Board of Leadership in Education (ABLE) which would carry-out thorough assessments designed to identify accomplished administrators. This would follow the successful completion of state required administrator certification standards. Since many states require certification routes for principals and superintendents that, for the most part, include university-based education administration programs (National Center for Education Information, 2003), school leaders would not be allowed to participate in the assessments created by ABLE until university course-work was completed. It is important to note that the ideas listed for better preparing school leaders include improving university-based leadership preparatory programs and providing additional activities to support school leaders; not eliminating university leadership programs altogether.
The Issue and Problem

Legislation, political pressure and reform initiatives, are placing an enormous amount of pressure on principals to change their practice; which is further complicated by the fact that the principalship is experiencing an increasing turnover rate and fewer qualified candidates to meet the demands of the job. Principals are being drawn into training and retraining in an effort to try to help them access a body of research to help them inform their practice. This study created the expectation for principals to change practice which means attention must be paid to how the pressure to change practice is impacting the principal.

There is a body of research that provides guidance to principals in the type of work they prioritize on a day-to-day basis to raise student achievement. While this exists, there is also evidence that principals have a difficult time engaging in the work that has been demonstrated to improve student achievement (Mertz, 1999). It is unknown if the presence of immediate and continual feedback from the environment in which principals work influenced the degree to which principals engaged in behaviors that correlated to student achievement.

A study conducted by Launcelot Brown (2002) explored the disparity between the tasks principals know to be beneficial to establishing effective schools that improve student achievement and other managerial tasks principals are required to complete in order to operate a school. In the study,
a focus group and interviews with senior educational leaders in Trinidad and Tobago attempted to gauge their perceptions concerning issues pertaining to school effectiveness. The school leaders identified leadership, shared vision, school mission, student empowerment, teacher expectation, frequent and consistent assessment, school environment, community involvement, and curriculum as perceived factors that were essential to school effectiveness. Although all the participants in the study agreed that all the identified variables were vital to improving a school, they also acknowledged the “distinction...between the theoretical acceptance and the operationalization, or implementation aspect” (p. 8).

Another study also attempted to explore the issue of principal’s allocation of time throughout a school day. Blendinger, Ariratana and Jones (2000) conducted field observations using an observational framework that was specifically developed for shadowing school administrators. They attempted to identify the discrepancy between the principal as leader and as manager. Specifically, researchers explored the amount of time a principal spent on administrative activities such as office related tasks, business management, staff development, curriculum and instruction, managing by walking about, student discipline, parent involvement, personnel matters, shaping school culture, and other activities. Their findings revealed 25% of the principal’s time was spent in meetings and conferences. Surprisingly,
only 9% of the principal’s time was spent working with curriculum and instructional issues and 2% spent shaping the school culture.

In that study, the small amount of time the principal observed spent on curriculum, instruction, and school culture illustrates the gap between how principals may actually be spending their time and energies versus the areas of focus that correlate to improved student achievement as identified by the findings of a meta-analysis conducted by Marzano, Waters and McNulty (2005). The authors of this meta-analysis acknowledged that additional studies are needed to confirm the true strength of the twenty-one principal factors they linked to student achievement. They also caution that additional research is needed to operationalize the factors in ways that clearly inform the day-to-day practice of principals.

At the same time, states are moving forward with the formation of school leader credentialing systems that assume the importance of preparation standards, mentoring, and some forms of documented evidence of practice. Clearly the field is looking for strategies that will help principals, regardless of the quality of their preparation or their pathway to the principalship, to achieve a greater alignment between their day-to-day practice and leadership factors or standards that are associated with raising student achievement. Given the evidence that frequent and specific feedback is a powerful mechanism for improving or changing practice (Hattie & Timperly, 2007), it is surprising that there is little mention of feedback
systems in the literature on principal effectiveness and none in the state policy recommendations for strengthening principal credentialing systems.

If an important next phase of research is to isolate specific operational descriptors that align with factors associated with raising student achievement, studies are needed that elicit actual descriptions of principal daily behaviors. This, however, will only address part of the picture. Even with better descriptions of the actual behaviors principals can use to raise student achievement, the problem of the “knowing-doing gap” is likely to remain. Further studies on the daily activities of principals must also address ways for principals to bring their practice more in line with what they know about achieving better quality results. The reality is the challenge of adapting school leader behavior and practice is so contextual, that even the articulation of actual high impact principal practice will still leave principals in need of evidence to assess their own effectiveness. Given the evidence of the importance of aligned feedback systems in shaping professional practice, how can principals get the kind of specific and regular feedback they need to support their efforts to change and grow in their work?

State certification systems are shifting their emphasis to standards based preparation and early career mentoring, self-reflection, and portfolios that demonstrate the employment of best practice strategies. While this supports a movement toward a more defined practice, the experiences of mentoring and documented applications of research supported strategies,
alone, may not be enough to help principals actually align their daily practice with what they need to do to build highly effective schools.

Principals still do not have a reliable way to check their own perceptions about their practice and, therefore, can remain blind to gaps between how they view their own practice and how those closest to their work view that same practice. These blind spots can become a further handicap in the process of translating new knowledge into changes in practice. It is not enough for researchers to continue informing principal practice through studies that connect actual operational descriptions of what principals do with positive changes in student achievement. This same line of research needs to also examine better ways for principals to get feedback on their work as they attempt to adopt new practices.

Problem Statement

Greater emphasis is being placed on principals to adapt their work to reflect new knowledge relating to practices that correlate to raising student achievement. Although principals have acquired knowledge to inform their leadership practices, the implementation of that knowledge in an environment that is known to be resistant to change creates a “knowing-doing” gap. This gap is a particular concern for principal practice since there is a body of research that can inform principal practice in ways that increase the likelihood of improved student outcomes for the school. There is research that ties teacher feedback to changes in principal behavior, but that research
is not grounded in the principal behaviors associated with improving student achievement. Additionally, there is an absence of focus on the influence of immediate and repeated feedback from teachers on principal decisions regarding their focus and practice.

Purpose

This study attempts to determine how the implementation of a system of regular feedback on a principal's work from teachers impacted the degree to which a principal incorporated the 21 leadership correlates into their day-to-day work. Teachers are a principal's primary audience and the recipients of the impact from how a principal focuses their work and carries out that work on a daily basis. Thus, this study attempted to examine how a regular system of feedback through an assessment instrument based on the 21 leadership correlates to raising student achievement impacted both the principal- and teacher-reported activities and behavior of the principal. Additionally, this study attempted to explore whether or not regular teacher feedback, based on descriptors of behaviors correlated to raising student achievement, impacted the gap between principal self-reported behavior and teacher-described behavior for those same principals, specifically in relationship to the 21 leadership correlates to improved student achievement.

To further investigate the issue of potential discrepancy between what school leaders know and how they function as it pertains to leadership focus and behavior that correlates to improved student achievement, this study
aimed to describe the alignment and differences between principal's self-described behavior and their observed behaviors as interpreted by teachers. Since many of the studies that connect principal leadership behaviors to student achievement are based on teacher perception data, it was useful in this study to examine the differences between how teachers described the behavior and influence of their principals and how the principals self-assessed their own behavior and attention as it related to the factors identified in the Marzano, Waters and McNulty meta-analysis findings.

By instituting a formal system that principals can employ to receive regular feedback from those closest to their work, this study offered a chance to test the impact of a new source of data that set up conditions for double loop learning.

Rationale

In examining the differences between how teachers described the way in which principals demonstrated specific behaviors known to increase student achievement compared to the way in which principals self-reported the degree to which they implemented the 21 research supported leadership behaviors into their day-to-day work, this study benefits the leadership practices of school principals by emphasizing the importance and necessity for principals to receive regular and specific feedback regarding their leadership practices. Douglas Reeves (1998) stated the importance of providing periodic feedback for school leaders by establishing effective
accountability systems to create improvement. Traditional principal accountability systems consist of “erratic feedback” (p. 4) that is usually infrequently provided by superintendents or school board members. Since research has already demonstrated the positive impact frequent and specific feedback has on both students and teachers, Reeves suggests that the same outcome would hold true if principals were to receive periodic feedback regarding their leadership practices, allocation of time, and attention to matters. Since teachers work with principals on a daily basis, one could argue that teachers would be the best source of feedback for principals.

**Research Questions**

This study will focus on the following research questions:

1. What are the similarities and differences in how principals and their teachers describe the principal’s behaviors and practices on a day-to-day basis?

2. What are the similarities and differences in how principals and their teachers describe the priorities for the principals’ work that impact the implementation of the change initiative, Response To Intervention (RtI)?

3. After three months of receiving feedback from teachers on the Balanced Leadership Profile Survey, is there a change in the profile of the principal’s work according to that instrument? What are the most significant areas of change in that profile?
4. After three months of receiving feedback from teachers on the Balanced Leadership Profile survey, how does the principal interpret any changes in their day-to-day practice and describe the influence that receiving feedback via this instrument has made on their day-to-day practice?

Methodology

This study is a multiple case study employing a mixed-methods research design. Quantitative methods are used with the Balanced Leadership Profile (McREL) to examine the differences between how principal’s and teachers’ rate the principal’s demonstration of the 21 Balanced Leadership correlates in their daily work. Additionally, the Balanced Leadership Profile is used to examine the changes in the principal’s and teachers’ ratings over a period of three months with a series of three repeated ratings. The analysis for this part of the study is provided by McREL through reports that provide principals with multi-dimensional feedback from their own and their teachers’ assessment of the principal’s demonstration of the 21 Balanced Leadership Responsibilities (Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005). Additionally, the McREL reports provide principals with an assessment of how their teachers perceive the order of change (either first or second order) associated with the initiative the principal is leading. Finally, the McREL report provides principals with “Responsibility Flags” for areas where their self-assessment of the 21
Balanced Leadership Responsibilities does not align with the teacher feedback.

The qualitative elements of this case study research design are the dominant features of this study and allow for the examination of how principals process the feedback provided by their teachers along with their own self assessment of their work against the 21 Balanced Leadership Responsibilities. Additionally, qualitative methods allow this study to examine how principals are influenced by the process of self assessment and regular (monthly for three months) teacher feedback. The qualitative data collection methods include two open-ended interviews with principals and focus groups with teachers. In two of the four cases studied, principals and their staffs participated in the McREL Balanced Leadership Profiles monthly for three months. The interviews and focus groups provide rich descriptions of the participant’s experiences that compliment the information provided by the Balanced Leadership Profiles provided by and analyzed by McREL.

Limitations

As a case study involving four principal participants and teacher participants from only two of the four schools served by those principals, the findings from this study cannot be generalized to principals and schools, in general. The case selection process, however, allows for transferability of the study findings to other Michigan schools in which the principal is in year one or two of adapting their leadership practices to lead the implementation of
the MiBLSi/RTI school improvement initiative. This study included four participants all from a similar geographic location within the state. Consequently, their experiences and the information they provide may be particular to that geographic region.

The data analysis methods are also a limitation of the study. Transcripts from the open-ended interviews and focus groups were coded to each of the 21 leadership responsibilities. Subjectivity in the coding methods should be considered. The definitions provided by McREL for the 21 leadership correlates are vague and require additional definition; however, the researcher attended several trainings on the Balanced Leadership correlates prior to conducting this study which assisted in assigning descriptive specificity to each of the correlates. Additionally, the researcher used both epoche and bracketing procedures to manage bias in constructing interview and focus group protocols and carrying out the actual interviews.

A final limitation of this study is that it occurred over a three month period at the end of a school year. Not only did this create a very condensed period of time in which to examine how principals are working their way through leading a major initiative and using the 21 Balanced Leadership Correlates to do so, it also provided a limited window in which to observe the way in which principals use both self assessment and teacher feedback to inform their work.
Definitions and Terms

- Balanced Leadership Profile is an on-line feedback tool that is intended to gather information about school leadership from multiple perspectives: principal, teachers who work with the principal and the principal's supervisor. The purpose of the Balanced Leadership Profile is to provide principals with information concerning their fulfillment of the 21 leadership responsibilities identified in a meta-analysis that analyzed specific leadership behaviors that were correlated to improving student outcomes.

- Individuals with Disability Education Improvement Act (IDEIA) 2004 is the federal legislative guidelines that affects how states provide special education services to students. This includes regulations regarding how students qualify for special education services and student rights. DEIA 2004, includes a provision that allows students to qualify for special education services using a Response to Intervention (RtI) approach. This is markedly different than the previous iteration of IDEIA because students qualified for special education services if there was a discrepancy between the student's ability and achievement.

- Michigan's Integrated Behavior Learning Support Initiative (MiBLSi) is a school improvement model consistent with Michigan's School Improvement Framework and developed from the scientific
research base of Applied Behavior Analysis, the findings of the National Reading Panel report, and the National Research Council. MiBLSi supports schoolwide implementation of Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (PBIS) and reading intervention. School-based leadership teams utilize a data-driven, problem-solving process to help all students become better readers with appropriate social skills. MiBLSi is funded by the Michigan Department of Education (MDE).

- Response to Intervention (RtI) is the practice of providing high quality instruction and interventions to all students within the school setting. Data-based decision making is utilized to determine systems necessary to support the continuum of learners, selection of scientifically research based practices and programs and to progress monitor the effectiveness of the instructional/intervention plans established to support the continuum of learners. RtI is broader than an approach to qualifying students to receive special education services.

Organization of the Study

The remaining chapters of this study are as follows: Chapter II provides a review of the research related to four concepts: principal as leader and manager; principal preparation and development; principal practices and student achievement; and the effects of feedback on learning. Chapter III
restates the purpose of the study and includes detailed descriptions of the research design, sample selection, instrumentation, data collection and analysis. The results of the data analysis gathered through the multiple case study will be presented in Chapter IV. A discussion of the results followed by future considerations for research will be included in Chapter V.
CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The purpose of the study was to determine how the implementation of a system of regular feedback provided by teachers on a principal's work influenced the way in which a principal incorporates the 21 research supported principal leadership responsibilities into their daily work. This chapter will be divided into four sections. The first section will examine principals' roles as leader and manager in accomplishing the necessary responsibilities associated with the complex job. The next section will review recent articles and findings around the level of preparation principals receive in meeting the demands of both state and federal educational legislation. The high-stakes accountability movement is driving principals to foster the conditions necessary for raising student achievement. Although the expectation to raise student achievement exists, the specifics about how principals can modify their daily practice to successfully lead a given reform or school improvement initiative to raise student achievement is vague. The third section of this chapter will review specific leadership practices that have emerged from the research that support improving student
achievement. The fourth section will review research in the area of feedback and its impact on learning. This section also looks at studies on teacher feedback, specifically related to principal performance. Finally, a brief summary of the chapter will conclude the literature review.

Principal as Leader and Manager

Over the past several years educational reform movements have inspired researchers and practitioners to identify elements of education in need of change. One of the areas of focus has been in the area of effective leadership necessary for school reform. There are over 30 years of school effectiveness research that repeatedly affirm the integral role principal leadership has in creating successful schools (Leithwood & Montgomery 1986; Austin & Reynolds, 1990; Sergiovanni, 1991; McCoy, 1995; Marzano, Waters & McNulty, 2005). Principals have a significant role in creating the conditions necessary for change and, oftentimes, are responsible for many different roles within their position. Some of their functions include instructional leaders, managers, keepers of the vision, problem-solvers, relationship builders, and agents of change (Goldring, 1990; Duffie, 1991; Fullan, 1991; McCoy, 1995; Vandenbergh, 1995; Weindling & Wallace, 1997). Given the complexity of the principal’s role, researchers and practitioners have tried to identify essential principal behaviors that will support the creation of effective schools.
The issue of creating effective schools by improving student outcomes has been a highly publicized issue, particularly over the past nine years since No Child Left Behind became law. Shifting federal priorities, higher curriculum standards and accountability measures for a lack of student growth have caused legislators, school boards, district administrators, and practitioners to rethink the role principals have in improving student achievement. Research in this area supports the claim that effective leadership is vital to the success of any school (Marzano, Waters & McNulty, 2005). As such, there is an increase in the level of scrutiny on the specific behaviors principals must engage in on a daily basis to help create an environment focused on higher student outcomes. This has forced district administrators to reevaluate the hiring and selection criteria for principal candidates. In addition, institutions of higher education are tackling this very issue in order to better prepare aspiring principals to meet the increased demands of the job. The heightened importance of the principalship has also sparked conversation and created a demand for action regarding how principals must allocate their time and attention in order to meet the challenges facing our nation’s schools. All of these factors have presented school districts with enormous challenges in recruiting, retaining, and developing principals (Levine, 2005; Spiro, Mattis & Mitgang, 2008).

The identification of the essential principal behaviors necessary to create effective schools has been heavily contested within the research.
Within the literature, there have existed two main schools of thought. The first school of thought identified the role of principal as manager and the second included the role of the principal as the leader of the building. Traditionally, principals were primarily expected to be managers of the school. Their role was focused on action, including controlling behavior, maintaining the efficiency and effectiveness of reaching organizational goals, making trivial decisions, maintaining the status quo, and completing various unrelated activities that took little administrative time (Duffie, 1991). The concept of principal as manager is also referred to in the literature as transactional leadership (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Sosik & Dionne, 1997). Researchers have attempted to describe varying degrees of transactional/managerial leadership. Transactional leadership places an overreliance on managerial oversight in meeting predetermined goals, maintaining the status quo, and providing contingent rewards to followers who meet organizational goals (Bass & Avolio, 1994).

The second school of thought is centered around the principal being less of a manager and more of the leader of the school. This differs from the managerial school of thought primarily based on the fact that the concept of leadership serves different functions than managerial practices. Leadership requires reflective practice, a focus on the members of the organization, a desire to create a common purpose, providing all members of the organization with a purpose and role, and seeking to give employees a sense of meaning in
their work (Duffie, 1991). The concept of transformational leadership as Burns (1978) described is primarily based on building relationships with the members of the organization to create a shared sense of purpose towards meeting the organizational goals. Employees have opportunities to be leaders themselves because they are considered to be moral agents in the organization. Since Burns coined the term transformational leadership, several other theorists have delved deeper into characterizing behaviors common to transformational leaders in various work settings; including education. Some specific characteristics include intellectual stimulation, inspiring and motivating employees, providing individualized attention to those who might seem or feel as though they are being neglected, and encouraging all stakeholders to be active members of the problem-solving process. The effective leader must be a role model for individuals by demonstrating the achievement of personal accomplishments and modeling the desired behavior (Rallis & Highsmith, 1987; Leithwood, 1994).

More recently researchers and practitioners have attempted to further define the concept of leadership by narrowing the scope of the type of leadership principals must provide in order to foster high achieving schools. Much of this research originated during the “effective schools” movement in the 1970’s and 1980’s and out of that research the concept emerged of principals needing to provide instructional leadership (Jenkins, 2009). The effective schools movement attempted to describe common characteristics
between schools that had significant numbers of students performing at higher rates. The two most dominant characteristics of effective schools included strong instructional leadership and a culture of high expectations (Purkey & Smith, 1982). Additional common characteristics found within the effective schools included a focus on clearly defined goals, creating a safe and orderly environment, frequent staff development, regular progress monitoring of goals, an increase in parental support, rigorous programming, focus on basic skills, and an increase in local control in decision making. The concept of the principal acting as the instructional leader is most commonly found within literature spanning research conducted in the mid-1990's through the present date. Many states and local school districts cite instructional leadership as an essential function of a school principal; therefore, making instructional leadership qualifications the basis for recruitment and selection of principals.

Instructional leadership reflects actions principals take in order to promote student learning (Jenkins, 2009). Various principal associations have also underscored the importance of principals demonstrating instructional leadership. In 2001, the National Association of Elementary School Principals developed a formal definition of instructional leadership. "Instructional leadership is leading learning communities, in which staff members meet on a regular basis to discuss their work, collaborate to solve problems, reflect on their jobs, and take responsibility for what students
learn" (Jenkins, 2009, p. 36). Other definitions of instructional leadership have included the principal engaging in leadership activities that center around setting clear goals, allocating resources based on instructional priority, providing oversight to the curriculum, reviewing lesson plans, and evaluating teacher performance. The necessary skills needed to exhibit this type of leadership include being an able provider of resources to teachers and staff, being an instructional resource, demonstrating effective communication skills and having a visible presence in the classroom and building setting (Whitaker, 1997). Demonstration of these skills allows principals to engage in behaviors that promote student learning (Fullan, 1991; Jenkins, 2009).

In contrast to the hierarchically divisive schools of thought in leadership research, more recent literature presents a rather compelling case that the principal's role is complex and includes elements of both leadership and management. Even when analyzing the necessary skill set for demonstrating instructional leadership, elements of management functions are found. While leadership and management are not synonymous, principals will ultimately have to function as both the leader and manager of the school (Glatthorn, 1990; Guthrie & Reed, 1991; Hooper, 1992; Mitchell & Tucker, 1992; Portin, Shen & Williams, 1998).

Leading and managing are distinct, but both are important.

Organizations that are over managed but underled eventually lose any sense of spirit or purpose. Poorly managed organizations with strong
charismatic leaders may soar temporarily only to crash shortly thereafter. The challenge of modern organizations requires the objective perspective of the manager as well as the brilliant flashes of vision and commitment that wise leadership provides (Bolman & Deal, 1991, p. xiii).

While it is essential for principals to navigate between the leadership and managerial functions of the position in a very systematic way to create methods of continuous improvement, given the complexities schools face, a plausible question is whether or not it is practical to expect principals to perform two distinct roles that require vastly different skills (Rallis & Highsmith, 1987; Guthrie & Reed, 1991). Arguably, since both functions are a necessity of the job, might the issue be their ability to achieve a balance between leadership and management functions in order to create effective schools?

The seemingly constant pull principals experience between wanting to be the instructional leader of the building and finding time to complete the necessary managerial tasks in order for the school to function smoothly and efficiently creates a complex set of challenges for principals. While many principals reported that they wanted to move into the principalship because of their desire to provide instructional leadership, they have consistently reported that it is impossible to separate the managerial responsibilities from the leadership responsibilities (Pellicer, 1988; Lewis, A. C., 1993; Yergalonis,
2005; Jenkins, 2009). Guthrie and Reed (1991) provide a rather exhaustive list of job responsibilities principals must engage in on a frequent basis:

Much of the site administrator's time is spent engaged in important but fundamentally noninstructional activities: supervising students between classes in the hallways, at lunch, at various extracurricular events, before and after school, during bus loading and unloading; responding to parental and community concerns; preparing reports and responding to central office requests; resolving conflicts between students, between students and teachers; handling student discipline; requiring and distributing teacher resources; scheduling classes and other school activities; supervising staff; meet with individual and small groups of students, teachers, and parents; and responding to any number of unexpected school emergencies that may arise during the school day (p.232).

The aforementioned responsibilities principals encounter on a daily basis significantly impact their ability to engage in activities that are considered to be closely aligned with the responsibilities of being an instructional leader. This forces principals to delegate instructionally related tasks that they would normally be expected to handle in order to respond to the other noninstructionally related tasks that are vying for their time and attention. This presents an enormous challenge to school leaders because they are experiencing increased pressure to move their school towards high levels of

Other studies have also emphasized the complexity facing principals in being able to manage their time and attention to matters within their schools. These studies suggest that principals spend very little time directly working with teachers, therefore making them unable to perform the necessary functions of an instructional leader. Instead, it is reported that much of the principal's work involves brief interactions with various stakeholders: students, parents, teachers, and central office administrators. Principals spend most of their workday responding to various noninstructional situations that require quick solutions. If these situations are left unattended the principal risks damaging the status quo of the school. Their resistance to disrupting the status quo causes principals to try to personally solve every problem they encounter, thereby making everything a high priority (Lightfoot, 1983).

While current state and federal educational legislation has focused on deemphasizing the role of principal as manager, many principals repeatedly report how difficult it is to relieve themselves of managerial responsibilities (Mertz, 1999). This caused researchers and practitioners to discuss principals' use of time and the administrative support structure that would be necessary to reapportion principals' managerial responsibilities. This idea had gained
popularity among principals over the past few years; however, given various constraints facing school districts, the establishment of a building-level support structure was not very feasible (Pellicer, 1988).

The underlying philosophy behind creating an administrative support structure was for the principal to delegate many of the managerial tasks in order to devote more time to instructional leadership. Although this idea sounded plausible, high school principals who utilized the support structure reported spending “relatively less time on program development and planning, and relatively more time on student behavior and working with the district office” (Pellicer, 1988). Researchers attempted to see if the same outcome held true for 12 urban middle school principals who had the assistance of a similar administrative support structure as the study conducted by Pellicer. Findings from job shadowing observations revealed similar results, indicating although principals had systems of support to delegate managerial tasks that would normally be occupying their time, most of the principals still had too little time to spend on instructional leadership matters because they still spent “an inordinate amount of time keeping order and dealing with administrative trivia” (Lewis, A. C., 1993).

While studies have questioned whether adding staff to create an administrative support structure would assist principals in becoming better instructional leaders, that isn’t preventing states from still recommending school districts adopt such a structure. In 2000, the Maryland State
Department of Education adopted recommendations from the Maryland Task Force on the Principalship. The task force provided recommendations in the following areas: redefining the role of the principal; recruiting, retaining, rewarding; and improving principal preparation and development. The recommendation was made that principals be given "sufficient staff and support and the power to use staffing creatively to build an effective leadership team" (p. iii). This notion of clearing the principal's plate suggests principals have far too many responsibilities to realistically manage. Several studies support this claim. Common frustrations of school principals include: managing time demands, paperwork, bureaucracy, constantly changing rules and regulations, frequent interruptions, multiple conflicting priorities, and fragmentation of time (Pellicer, 1988; Lewis, A., 1993; Favaro, 1996; Portin, Shen & Williams, 1998; Lyons, 1999, Kelly, Thornton & Daugherty, 2005).

The numerous responsibilities of the principalship have certainly not diminished or stagnated over time. On the contrary, many researchers and practitioners have reported an increasing layering of administrative responsibilities with a decreasing amount of principal autonomy (Adamowski, Therriault & Cavanna, 2007). Several states have attempted to solicit feedback from principals regarding various aspects of the principalship. In the state of Washington, practicing principals were asked to identify aspects of the principalship that they felt had changed over the past five years. The respondents reported the following: increase in the amount of collaboration
with various stakeholder groups when making decisions, increase in complex school reform legislation, additional roles and responsibilities that were sometimes unfamiliar to principals, expectation to respond to conflicting community demands, and requirements to expand the work week (Wulff, 1996). Given the perceptions of the principal's changing role, many principals report that the "layering of responsibilities" causes them to alter the way they allocate their time and attention to matters. More time is devoted to managerial aspects of the position while less time is allocated for instructional leadership (Fullan, 1991; Portin, Shen & Williams, 1997; Jenkins, 2009).

The lack of autonomy principals have also impacts their effectiveness as leaders (Adamowski, Therriault & Cavanna, 2007). While principals report an increase in the amount of pressure to demonstrate the leadership skills necessary to improving student achievement, they also report not having the flexibility necessary to accomplish this goal because of the lack of autonomy they have in making personnel decisions. Reasons cited include: state policies, district procedures, and restrictions placed on them by collective bargaining agreements (Portin, Shen & Williams, 1997; Kelley, Thornton & Daugherty, 2005). Although principals reported that barriers in their autonomy hinder their leadership in improving student outcomes, most of the public school principals in this study reported feeling as though they do have the ability to demonstrate effective leadership within the confines of their
perceived job responsibilities. They cite flaws in the systems created by their school districts (i.e. policies and procedures for paperwork, evaluations) and describe having to "work the system" in order to accomplish their administrative responsibilities (Adamowski, Therriault & Cavanna, 2007). Given the fact that there is a discrepancy amongst principals as to whether or not they can demonstrate the necessary leadership needed in this era of high stakes accountability, it is plausible to wonder whether or not principals have learned the necessary skills needed to be effective instructional leaders.

While the concept of instructional leadership appears to be narrow in scope and easy to implement in theory, researchers and practitioners have shown that it is not easily borne out in practice (Mertz, 1999; Jenkins, 2009). This is arguably because it is an ill-defined concept (Leithwood, Jantzi & Steinbach, 1999) and might be due to the fact that instructional leadership not only needs further definition, but that principals are in need of additional training in how to carry out the functions of instructional leadership. In addition to needing more training in how to demonstrate instructional leadership, there seems to be a need for training in time management and the prioritization of job responsibilities. The complexity of the principalship creates a unique challenge for administrators, referred to in this study as the knowing-doing gap. Although principals know the research-supported practices known to improve student outcomes, they are finding themselves
engaged in many activities that, while still important, are not directly linked to improving student achievement.

Preparation and Development

Many school districts report not having enough highly qualified administrators who are ready to face the escalating demands of NCLB (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Innovation and Improvement, 2004) even though there is an abundance of certified school leaders. The federal government has responded to the school leadership crisis by allocating federal Title II money to support the recruitment, training, and retention of effective school leaders (U.S. Department of Education, 2010). In fact, several research findings have underscored the need to improve traditional leadership programs, which have been categorized as “diploma mills” (Levine, 2005) that are graduating inadequate numbers of effective leaders (Murphy, 2002; U.S. Department of Education, Office of Innovation and Improvement, 2004; Hess & Kelly, 2005; Levine, 2005). The belief leadership programs are inadequately preparing effective leaders is not necessarily a recent view. In fact, the rise and fall of leadership preparatory programs has been well researched and documented. Universities traditionally provided states with a preferred way of handling the process of preparing school leaders for state licensing standards. The approach was considered to be more “rational” (Levine, 2005, p. 17) in that the universities could recruit potential school administrators, be responsible for designing and teaching the necessary
curriculum, and be responsible for providing quality control for newly hired principals and superintendents. The integral role universities played in the process of preparing school leaders solidified partnerships between the university, state, and local school districts (Levine, 2005).

Those partnerships began to unravel in the late 1960's due to changes in social and political pressures (Levine, 2005). The second and most significant blow to the partnership came as a result of the school reform movement commonly referred to as “A Nation at Risk” (1983), which placed a spotlight on school leadership and the importance of school success. Scrutiny by the media regarding the ineffectiveness of schools across the nation also contributed to the unraveling. Rather than university programs being the preferred way of recruiting and training school leaders, states and local school boards began to circumvent the process by creating alternate pathways for developing school leaders. In 1987, a major blow was dealt to university programs when the University Council for Educational Administration published a report entitled, “Leaders for America’s Schools.” The council was comprised of university presidents, deans, professors, superintendents, leaders of various educational associations, and then Governor Bill Clinton. The report identified that fewer than 200 of the 505 educational administration graduate programs were “capable of meeting excellence” (p. 18). The commission went so far as to suggest that the remaining 305 graduate programs could be closed. The criticism did not end
there though. Two members from the commission took their views to the New York Times where they argued leadership preparatory programs have low expectations for students and the preparation of the students was poor. They also argued that university programs that offered educational administration programs had become “diploma mills” (Guthrie & Sanders, 2001, p. 46). By 2003, the reputation of leadership preparatory programs had declined so much that many critics of such programs suggested states and local districts replace the university programs with alternatives to those more traditional university programs with leadership academies that are organized and supported by local school districts.

Based on the thinking that university leadership programs should be replaced with alternatives led to several research studies and policy reports that placed a significant amount of blame for the leadership crisis on coursework unrelated to the realities facing school leaders (Grogan & Kelly, 2002; Hess & Kelly, 2005; Levine, 2005), as well as irrelevant state licensure standards viewed as preventing potentially good administrative candidates from considering entering into the profession (Thomas B. Fordham Foundation, 2003). Although the blame for ill-prepared school leaders was partially placed on what was referred to as “irrelevant coursework,” (Levine, 2005; Southern Regional School Board, 2002) the research documenting the study content of aspiring school leaders is scant (Keller, 2003; Hess & Kelly,
This conclusion has prompted research in analyzing the core coursework students experience in school leadership programs.

An analysis of syllabi from various leadership preparatory programs documented course attention to seven principal responsibilities that were synthesized from research on school leadership. The seven responsibilities were as follows: “managing for results, managing personnel, technical knowledge, external leadership, norms and values, managing classroom instruction, and leadership and school culture” (Hess & Kelly, 2005, pp. 5, 6). Their findings substantiated Levine’s claims that overall leadership preparatory programs are poor in quality. A detailed analysis of the findings revealed that of the 2,424 weeks of courses, the highest percentage of course time fell under the category, “technical knowledge.” Technical knowledge entails, “law, finance, facilities, data and research training, or technology” (p. 15) and during the weeks of coursework discussions centered around, “school funding, budgeting, due process, church and state, student and teacher freedoms, tort law, literature reviews, sampling, and statistical analysis, and database management” (p. 15). It is interesting to find that only 13% of course work time was allocated to preparing principals with the necessary skills to address accountability, emphasis on state assessments, and the federal demands of No Child Left Behind. The findings underscored the desire on the part of states and local districts to advocate for better methods
of preparing school leaders but also for seeking an alternative method to the university track for preparing school leaders.

Recommendations to states, school districts, and universities for creating better programs for preparing school leaders have advocated that training programs for school leaders demonstrate proven effectiveness (Levine, 2005), better selection procedures, increased focus on improving instruction, relaxation to the needs of the local school districts in which candidates would be working, and internship experiences that are relevant for preparing leaders (Levine, 2005; Olsen, 2007; Spiro, Mattis & Mitgang, 2008). The recommendations also advocate for continued support well beyond the initial hiring of principals (Southern Regional Education Board, 2006). These recommendations not only apply to university-based programs but also to alternate tracks for preparing school leaders.

A variety of alternatives for both preparation and certification exist for aspiring school leaders and are currently being implemented in a number of states. Research emerging in this area indicates that nontraditional leadership candidates, who are candidates who have leadership experiences outside of the educational field, appear to excel in the things that licensed school leaders do not: creating a mission for the organization and obtaining necessary resources to do the job (Adams & Copeland, 2005). Currently, nontraditional recruitment processes are being implemented in states like Illinois, Kentucky, Massachusetts, New York, and Ohio in an effort to try to
fill the high number of administrative vacancies. The concentration is on the leadership skills necessary for principals to succeed in specific circumstances that are reflective of each state’s unique demographics.

Some common themes exist across non-university-based leadership preparatory programs. Recruitment, selection, training, and coaching of leadership candidates and current practicing principals are different than methods used in traditional university-based programs. In the area of recruitment, school districts differ in the methods and procedures used to find qualified candidates to lead their schools. Some districts seek individuals who have leadership experience that may or may not be in the school setting, such as leadership in community organizations, non-profit organizations, and participation in youth development. Candidates who have leadership experience outside of the school setting would be classified as “non-traditional candidates.” Other districts use a more traditional approach to recruiting potential school leaders by focusing on individuals who are already working within the school district. The advantage of recruiting participants already working in the school district has to do with their familiarity with the student population and the needs facing the school district.

The training of principal candidates who are enrolled in alternatives to university-based programs is focused on immersing participants “in the daily work of effective principals and then they are placed in some of the city’s neediest schools” (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Innovation and
Improvement, 2004, p.10). These programs tend to be very experienced-based, thereby relying heavily on daily tasks to provide learning experiences for the candidates. This is in stark contrast to the university theory-based leadership programs mandated by many states. The experiences that principal candidates encounter on a daily basis and the tasks they are expected to engage in as a normal part of the job can provide states and universities with a framework for developing a more performance-based approach to certifying school leaders. This could resolve many of the criticisms of traditional university based leadership programs.

The question remains as to which method of administrative certification will produce the most qualified school leaders. Should states disregard traditional university preparatory programs and, instead, rely on individual schools to develop alternate pathways for recruiting and preparing school leaders? The research on the effectiveness of alternate pathways to administrative certification is mixed. A recent study on the Urban Excellence Framework, New Leaders for New Schools conducted by the RAND Corporation (2009) examined student achievement outcomes of schools whose principals received training through New Leaders for New Schools compared to other principals within the same school district who had not received leadership training through the same venue. Their findings indicated that studies conducted in K-8 schools where the principal received training through the New Leadership Academy, “outpaced the districts in academic
achievement gains over the course of their principalship by statistically significant margins” (p. 3). Specifically, graduation rates in the high schools increased compared to other high schools in the district (78%-65%) while dropout rates decreased. While the data are promising, New Leaders for New Schools has also been transparent about challenges that exist for their principals varying from one city to another.

Additional research conducted comparing principal candidates from traditional and non-traditional principal preparatory programs revealed that non-traditional administrative candidates excel in many of the things traditional candidates seem to struggle to accomplish (Adams & Copeland, 2005). The research suggests that non-traditional pathways to administrative certification may be beneficial for states to explore. However, Bryant, Isernhagen, LeTendre and Neu's (2003) study to determine if aspiring administrators from preparatory programs having either a connection or no connection to the educational field would perform better on a sample of the School Leaders Licensure Assessment (SLLA) revealed contradictory findings. The researchers acknowledged that the SLLA is used by an increasing number of states to determine eligibility for administrative certification. Although they found that the SLLA scores of aspiring administrators having either a connection or no connection to education was not an indicator of their ability to lead a school, it did well to discriminate between those who understood the Interstate Leader's Licensure
Consortium’s (ISLLC) standards and those who did not. Aspiring administrator’s understanding of the ISLLC standards also significantly impacted their score on the SLLA in a positive way.

Since many states require administrators to pass a state certification exam, it appears as though aspiring administrators would benefit from learning leadership theories and practices in order to receive a passing score. In addition, the profiled programs of the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Innovation and Improvement (2004) reported a limited number of participants enrolled in alternate pathways to administrative certification. In cities like Boston, using alternate pathways for recruiting and preparing school leaders, the number of participants is a fraction of the amount of principal vacancies. In 2004, Boston reported only 10 participants enrolled in the Boston Principal Fellowship (BPF) and only 11 enrolled in 2005. More recent statistics regarding a similar type of principal certification pathway, New Leaders for New Schools, reported a steady increase of participants enrolled in their program. Their enrollment data was reflective of the participation in the program by nine cities in various states. The number of participants increased from 13 participants in 2001 to over 550 participants in 2009. The low participation rate in programs such as New Leaders for New Schools compared to the high number of principal vacancies appears to be inadequate for producing enough aspiring administrators to fill the vacancies.
While many states and researchers have agreed that preparing principals to lead given the demands facing the nation's schools is not only an immediate need but also something that has been grossly neglected, very little research has actually identified specific, teachable principal behaviors required in order for principals to be effective leaders. Olsen (2007), Blum and Butler (1989), Hess and Kelly (2005), and Levine (2005) reviewed the current state of affairs in university preparatory programs and offered recommendations for improving said programs; however, many of the recommendations are broadly defined. The common broad themes generated from the recommendations in the research include advocating for high standards, strengthening or closing weak university programs, high quality training rooted in practice, increasing opportunities to apply knowledge to real experiences, and increasing problem-solving in leadership courses that centers around real world problems. The question that remains is what specific principal actions need to be taught and applied in the context of the recommendations?

Principal Practices/Responsibilities and Student Achievement

Several researchers have synthesized research studies in an effort to compile a list of leadership practices that have demonstrated positive effects in improving student achievement (Cotton, 2003; Marzano, Waters & McNulty, 2005). Ironically, many of the lists of leadership behaviors were compiled in an effort to develop assessments for school districts to use to
improve the effectiveness of school leaders by identifying principal strengths and weaknesses (Butler & Alberg, 1991; Blake & Mouton, 1994; Hersey & Blanchard, 1996; Bulach & Berry, 2001; Bulach, Boothe & Pickett, 2006). Regardless of the intent of the use, several of the principal behaviors identified over the years have been relatively consistent. The difference is in the specificity of the behaviors, because through research methodologies, such as a factor analysis, Wirt and Krug (1998) and Gruenert (2005) categorized the behaviors into factors or leadership dimensions.

Some leadership behaviors identified in the various instruments are as follows: monitoring student progress; mission, vision; managing curriculum; teacher supervision; culture, climate (Wirt & Krug, 1998); collaboration between principals and teachers, and between teachers; collegial support, unity of vision, mission, purpose, and learning partnerships (Gruenert, 2005). While these behaviors provide more specificity and further knowledge of what principals need to be taught in order to effectively lead schools, further definition and clarification of the behaviors is possible.

In 2003, Kathleen Cotton synthesized research articles on principal effectiveness in order to examine leadership practices that impact student achievement. Interestingly enough, Cotton appears to be one of the first authors to identify behavioral descriptors for leadership practices for the purposes of communicating these practices rather than using them to assess principal effectiveness. While there were several studies included in research
databases, Kathleen chose to focus on studies that were conducted post 1985. In addition to the year, the studies needed to focus on research that analyzed the principal’s behavior in relationship to student outcomes. Articles that studied principals’ allocation of time and attention but did not compare the findings to student achievement were excluded from the synthesis. There were a total of 81 research articles included in Cotton’s analysis. The majority of the research reports addressed principal leadership behaviors in relationship to either general student achievement or student achievement in specified subject areas.

Within this synthesis of the research, the author describes 25 principal behaviors that contribute to student outcomes. The specific behaviors were categorized into five specific areas: establishing a clear focus on student learning, interactions and relationships, school culture, instruction and accountability (Cotton, 2003, x). In other studies seeking to identify principal behaviors, the categorization of the behaviors seems to be where researchers chose to focus. Cotton went a step further though by elaborating on each of the five categories in an effort to identify 25 very specific, observable behaviors. The 25 leadership behaviors are:

- safe and orderly school environment
- vision and goals focused on high levels of student learning
- high expectations for student learning
- self-confidence, responsibility, and perseverance
• visibility and accessibility
• positive and supportive school climate
• communication and interaction
• emotional and interpersonal support
• parent and community outreach and involvement
• rituals, ceremonies, and other symbolic actions
• shared leadership, decision making, and staff empowerment
• collaboration
• general behaviors related to instructional leadership
• ongoing pursuit of high levels of student learning
• norm of continuous improvement
• discussion of instructional issues
• classroom observation and feedback to teachers
• support of teacher autonomy
• support of risk taking
• professional development opportunities and resources
• protecting instructional time
• monitoring student progress and sharing findings
• use of student progress data for program improvement
• recognition of student and staff achievement
• role modeling
An interesting contribution from Cotton's work is the well-defined descriptors related to the usually broad term of instructional leadership. The principal behaviors associated with instructional leadership include: ongoing pursuit of high levels of student learning; norm of continuous improvement; discussion of instructional issues; classroom observation and feedback to teachers; support of teacher autonomy; support of risk-taking; professional development opportunities and resources; protecting of instructional time; use of student progress data for program improvement; recognition of student and staff achievement and role modeling (2003).

Included in the research review of effective leadership is also a body of work that found “absent from [the principals’] responses were such verbs as control, manage, direct, command, and regulate” (Bartell, 1990, p. 121). Studies have also been conducted to find the specific behaviors in which effective principals consistently do not engage (Cotton, 2003). These investigations found principals who spend large amounts of time engaged in managerial, organizational tasks tended to be classified as average principals (Gaziel, 1995). This finding is not surprising because the majority of course time for aspiring school leaders was connected to managerial and technical functions necessary for running the school (Hess and Kelly, 2005) while significantly less time was devoted to many of the 25 principal behaviors synthesized by Cotton.
Cotton (2003) addressed one of the potential misinterpretations regarding the specific leadership behaviors synthesized in the research by saying, “…the extraordinary principals who are the focus of some of these studies embody all or nearly all these traits and actions. And as we shall see, the picture that emerges of their effectiveness is much more than a mere collection of behaviors” (p. 7). Marzano, Waters and McNulty (2005) also addressed the potential misinterpretation and went a step farther than Cotton to provide further explanation on whether all leadership behaviors are equally important while addressing their impact on improving student outcomes. A meta-analysis was the primary research methodology Marzano, Waters and McNulty used to synthesize quantitative studies that were conducted in the area of principal leadership. In order to complete this, the researchers pre-identified criteria for the inclusion of studies into the meta-analysis. The studies had to be conducted in the United States with students represented in grade kindergarten through twelfth grade. In addition, the study needed to research the direct or indirect relationship between principal leadership and student achievement measured using a standardized achievement test. Finally, the effect sizes needed to be included in the research study.

Overall, there were 69 studies, which represented 2,802 schools that met the criteria for being included in the meta-analysis from 1978-2001. The largest number of studies included in the meta-analysis were elementary
schools (39) while the remaining amount included comparable amounts of middle schools, high schools, K-8 or K-12 schools. Outlier scores were excluded from the analysis resulting in a total of 64 studies, representing 2,559 schools in the meta-analysis.

The results from the meta-analysis indicated the overall impact of leadership on student achievement had an effect size of .25. Although this effect size when compared to a standard scale is considered to be small, it is also typical of educational interventions (Biancarosa, 2009). When reviewing effect sizes, it is important to take into consideration the field in which an individual is working to assist in contextualizing the effect size (Biancarosa, 2009). Marzano, Waters and McNulty’s research was unique in that they were able to move beyond the overall impact of leadership on student achievement to identifying 21 categories of leadership behaviors that they referred to as “responsibilities.” The authors’ identification of specific actions responded to the request of researchers like, Wimpleberg, Teddlie and Stringfield (1989) who “exhorted that research on principals’ leadership not only must attend to general characteristics of behavior such as ‘has a vision,’ but also must identify specific actions that affect student achievement” (Marzano, Waters & McNulty, 2005, p. 41).
The 21 categories of responsibilities are as follows:

- affirmation
- contingent rewards
- culture
- flexibility
- intellectual stimulation
- optimizer
- outreach
- resources
- visibility
- ideals/beliefs
- input
- change agent
- discipline
- communication
- focus
- monitoring/evaluation
- order
- relationships
- situational awareness
- involvement in curriculum, instruction, and assessment
- knowledge of curriculum, instruction, and assessment

The work of Marzano, Waters, and McNulty extends the work of Cotton and other leadership researchers by quantifying the relationship each of the 21 responsibilities has with student outcomes. This is significant because the identification and quantification of the leadership responsibilities is the first time in the United States that a research based set of principal competencies can be referenced (Marzano, Waters & McNulty 2005). The general outcome was that not all leadership responsibilities equally contributed to student achievement.
Similar to Cotton's work, the authors did not believe that the 21 responsibilities were a mere collection of behaviors. Rather, Marzano, Waters, and McNulty identified collections of leadership responsibilities that related to one another by using a statistical method known as a factor analysis. Two common traits emerged from the factor analysis that seem to underlie the 21 leadership responsibilities. The factors were first order change and second order change. In essence, they framed the integration of the leadership responsibilities around the initiative the principal was trying to lead as well as peoples' perceptions of the impact the initiative will have on their purpose and role in the school. This body of work not only has added value to the body of research on specific principal behaviors known to improve student outcomes, but it also demonstrates that different collections of leadership behaviors will need to be deployed depending on what the principal is attempting to lead. This demonstrates to principals that they need to purposely think about the impact the initiative will have on their staff and lead accordingly.

Another extension of previous work on identifying principal behaviors known to improve student outcomes included in Marzano, Waters and McNulty's work has to do with developing the systems necessary for effective leadership. Since the research on leadership has evolved to include a more collaborative and distributive leadership approach (Elmore 2000; Fullan, 2001; Spillane & Sherer, 2004), as opposed to a top-down, managerial model,
the necessity for identifying which of the leadership responsibilities can be shared across a building-based leadership team is important. The authors not only identify the specific leadership behaviors that can be shared amongst the principal and team members but they also help principals with the establishment and management of a leadership team and provide guidance on how to identify the right work on which the team should be focusing their efforts.

Those additions to the body of leadership research dispel the myth that the principal's role is of "virtuoso soloist" (Spiro, Mattis & Mitgang, 2008, p. 2) and instead, "more closely resembles an orchestra conductor" (2008, p. 2). It also suggests that creating leadership team based functions is a vehicle to assist principals in achieving a balance that supports student achievement. Since principals are being drawn into training and re-training in an effort to help them access a body of research to inform their practice, one important consideration to break this cycle would be for both traditional university and non-traditional preparation programs to align the coursework and experiences for principals to the specific behaviors that have been synthesized from the literature on school leadership. After reviewing the research on principal preparatory programs, very little information has been compiled regarding the specific topics of study principals are taught prior to becoming a principal (Hess & Kelly, 2005). Recommendations for the content needed for preparing aspiring school leaders from organizations like the
Wallace Foundation and Thomas B. Fordham Institute has been general and subject to interpretation.

The problem raised in this research is complex. Although there is a body of research that provides guidance to principals on how they should prioritize and spend their time, it has been demonstrated in numerous research studies that principals have difficulty engaging in the work associated with improved student outcomes. An early study on teacher feedback to principals as part of the performance review process shows that teacher feedback can influence principal behavior (Daw & Gage, 1967). With no recent studies to corroborate this earlier study, however, this is an area needing further research. Additionally, there is a need to examine teacher feedback within the context of an explicit frame for principal practice associated with improved student outcomes. This creates a researchable hole in the literature.

Effects of Feedback on Learning

Feedback, although it has been demonstrated in the research to be a major influence on learning, is not as cut and dry as one might believe. After years of research around this topic, many meta-analyses found that not all forms of feedback are equal. How and when feedback is delivered are important variables impacting how one perceives the feedback and decides to change practice.
Before reviewing conditions under which feedback is most effective, it is important to describe how feedback has been conceptualized in the literature. The meaning of feedback has been articulated in many different ways over the course of the past 50-60 years. Feedback has been “conceptualized as information provided by an agent (e.g. teacher, peer, book, parent, self, experience) regarding aspects of one's performance or understanding...feedback is thus a consequence of performance” (Hattie & Timperley, 2007, p. 81). In order to understand how people perceive the purpose of feedback, the effects of feedback, and the various forms of feedback, it will be necessary to discuss the interaction between instruction and feedback.

There is a clear distinction between the instruction and the feedback one receives in learning a new task. As a person learns new information, if correctional feedback is provided then “the process itself takes on the forms of new instruction, rather than informing the student solely about correctness” (Kulhavy, 1977, p. 212). However, feedback itself does not necessarily reinforce learning because as an individual receives feedback, the information can be accepted, modified, or rejected. Feedback alone is not always enough to prompt further action.

Regardless of whether or not feedback prompts further action, the effectiveness of feedback has been well documented in the literature. Hattie (1999) conducted a synthesis of the research studying the influences on
student achievement. He reported findings from over 500 meta-analyses that included 450,000 effect sizes from approximately 180,000 studies. The analysis identified a series of factors that contributed to student achievement. Based on the synthesis, the mere act of students attending school had an effect size of .40 on student achievement. The effects of feedback ranked in the top five most influential factors on student achievement. The effect size for feedback was .79, which is nearly double the effect of schooling on student achievement. An analysis of the research revealed there was a great deal of variability between the types of feedback provided to students. This led the research team to conclude that not all forms of feedback were equal in their impact on learning.

The most effective forms of feedback were in the form of video, computer assisted, or audio feedback. The feedback provided either a cue or reinforced the learner's learning of the skill. Some forms of feedback had negative impacts on learning. Those came in the form of extrinsic rewards (Deci, Kotestner & Ryan, 1999). It was found that tangible rewards actually decreased an individual's motivation to engage in tasks that were already intrinsically motivating to the person (-.68). Other forms of feedback found to be less effective, but to not necessarily have a negative impact on learning were the use of punishers, praise, and programmed instruction (Hattie, 1999).
Another common theme from the literature related to the variables needed for feedback to have the biggest impact on learning was the level of difficulty of the task the learner was trying to master. In order to impact learning, the feedback needed to be targeted to the learner's appropriate level because feedback was supposed to reduce the gap between the learner's current level of understanding on the mastery of the concept. If that gap was too wide, then the effect of feedback was diminished (Kluger & DeNisi, 1996; Hattie, 2007). In fact, in one of the most systematic studies conducted regarding the effectiveness of feedback (Kluger & DeNisi) reported on how feedback works. It reported that as human beings, “we are more likely to increase effort when the intended goal is clear, when commitment is secured for it, and when belief in eventual success is high” (p. 260). That statement is a powerful one in understanding that feedback is not only more of a complex process but it also has implications involving both the person giving the feedback as well as involving the person who is receiving the feedback.

Feedback itself needs to provide answers to questions a learner cognitively asks while trying to achieve their intended learning target. The three questions as synthesized in the research by Hattie (2007) are: Where am I going; How am I going; and Where to next? As the learner successfully integrates the three questions, the gap between current performance and the learning goal closes (Sadler, 1989). Since this study will create the expectation for principals to change their practice in how they allocate their
time to engage in specific principal behaviors known to improve student outcomes, the feedback teachers will be providing to principals will need to answer those three questions.

After reviewing the feedback literature, there have been a few studies conducted to determine whether feedback of employees' rating to their employers leads to perceived, positive changes in their employer's subsequent behavior. The findings in these studies were all consistent in that there were favorable results depicting a change in the supervisor's behavior after receiving feedback from the employees (Maloney & Hinrichs, 1959; Wakely, 1964); however, there were limitations to the research design because there was no control group to compare data. In light of that limitation, Hegarty (1974), just like the previous three research studies, attempted to determine whether feedback from employees regarding their employer's behavior would result in positive changes in their employer's behavior. Unlike the previous three research designs, Hegarty employed both an experimental and control group to compare the results. His findings were consistent with the other studies regarding the use of feedback in positively changing supervisor's behavior. However, Hegarty raised an interesting question needing to be answered in future research. He asked what the comparative effects of feedback would be from different sources. This question in a similar way will be addressed in the research design of this study because principals will be
conducting a self-assessment on the same tool that teachers will use to provide principals with their feedback.

While the majority of the studies related to feedback between employees and employers in business settings, there were a few studies conducted that dealt with using feedback to change behavior in the academic setting. A series of studies that served as the catalyst for looking at teacher feedback as the means to changing principal behavior involved the student-teacher feedback loop. Those studies demonstrated similar results from other employee-employer feedback loop studies by finding significant differences between both the control group and experimental group that received the feedback from students (Bryan, 1963; Gage, 1963; Gage, Runkel & Chatterjee, 1963). The lead author in two of the three aforementioned studies extended the findings from student to teacher feedback studies and extended the research design to include the feedback loop between teachers and principals.

In reviewing the study conducted by Daw and Gage (1967), the theoretical justification behind the feedback loop between teachers and principals involved the element of respect for people's opinions. The researchers hypothesized that principals respect the opinions of their teachers and consequently, feedback from teachers resulting in poorer principal ratings would in essence create incongruence for the principal between how the principal perceives his/her own behavior and teachers'
perceptions of their principal's behavior. The result of the feedback would be the principal seeking to restore balance by changing his/her behavior to align with the teachers' perceptions. The findings not only mirrored the findings in the previous studies conducted, but it also extended the learning by going into greater detail by researching the impact of the interval between feedback sessions that contributed to the change in the principals' behaviors. Daw and Gage found that while "principals who received feedback came closer to their teachers' desires...the effect of the feedback was not a function of the interval over which it was measured" (p. 187).

Following their study, the researchers recognized that several questions remained regarding the research topic. For the sake of this literature review, two of the questions raised will be highlighted. Dow and Gage recommended that future research be conducted to determine whether or not ratings of the principal from the same set of teachers during the feedback cycles would reveal the same kinds of changes in behaviors from principals. The second recommendation was to investigate whether or not interviews of principals who were receiving the teacher feedback would demonstrate that principals were making a conscious attempt to change their behavior. Both of these recommendations for future research will be addressed within the research questions of this study. This study will extend the research of Daw and Gage by focusing the teachers' feedback around the
21 leadership practices that are correlated to increasing student achievement.

Summary

Current educational legislation that requires high-stakes accountability for schools to improve student achievement has placed the principal's role in leading schools to meet this challenge in the forefront. Specifically, the role of the principal has significantly evolved to include a change in the way the principalship is conceptualized at multiple levels. School districts are placing an enormous amount of emphasis on principals acting as instructional leaders. This emphasis has exposed a tremendous chasm between what principals are expected to do to lead student achievement and what they were taught to do while preparing to be principals. That information has precipitated the creation of many alternate pathways to prepare school leaders to meet the challenges facing schools. Although the concept was good, many of the programs are ignoring the body of research that exists revealing specific principal behaviors that have research supporting their impact on improving student achievement. Complicating matters, the knowing-doing gap has been exposed and reveals principals who know the leadership practices associated with improving student outcomes have a difficult time engaging in those practices in a consistent manner. This will result in principals needing to change their behavior in order to re-allocate their time to engage in the specific principal
behaviors known to improve student achievement. The research supporting feedback as the means for improving learning and closing the gap between an individual's current understanding of a concept and the intended learning outcome, provides the path by which the knowing-doing gap facing principals can be reduced or eliminated. The involvement of teachers in that process, since they work the closest with principals, has demonstrated positive results in changing the behavior of their principals.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Current research continues to clarify what principals can and should be doing to raise student achievement within the context of their daily jobs. Federal and state educational policies, like No Child Left Behind and Race to the Top, place significant pressure on teachers and principals to change their practice to incorporate evidence based practices. Principals face two challenges in adapting their practice to reflect research supported responsibilities associated with raising student achievement: first, they must interpret the generalized research findings to daily practice; second, they must adapt their understanding of research supported practices to the context in which they are providing school leadership, including the context of specific school improvement initiatives.

The purpose of this study was to determine how principals use the combination of reflection guided by an assessment tool based on research supported correlates to improved student outcomes and teacher feedback on those same correlates over a three month period in which principals and teachers used the McREL Balanced Leadership Profile to assess the
principals daily practice. This study also looks at what principals who did not participate in the self-assessment and teacher feedback system thought about the challenges of leading their schools to better student outcomes over the same three month period. In all four cases included in this study, the principals were leading a major school improvement initiative called MiBLSi and were either in year one or two of the implementation process.

The impetus for this study came from the literature that describes the challenges that principals face in transforming their practice in ways that enhance school improvement or reform success. Additionally, this study evolved from interactions with principals across the state who are attempting to implement a Response to Intervention framework within their schools and the difficulties they face in trying to lead significant change. Finally, the focus on feedback from teachers coupled with self-assessment using a research based instrument responds to the concern in the literature regarding the limited opportunities principals experience for feedback on their work.

The remainder of this chapter includes an overview of the methodology used for this study. Additionally, this chapter will provide a detailed explanation for sampling procedures, data collection methods, instrumentation, procedures, timelines, and data analysis procedures will be provided.
Problem Statement

As stated in Chapter 1, this study attempts to address the absence of formal study on how the combination of self-reflection and teacher feedback via a research supported lens or instrument can help principals adapt their daily practice in ways that (a) support deeper implementation of a research based school improvement initiative, and (b) reflect principal practices and responsibilities associated with improved student results at a school level.

The Research Questions

This study focused on the following research questions:

1. What are the similarities and differences in how principals and their teachers describe the principal's behaviors and practices on a day-to-day basis?

2. What are the similarities and differences in how principals and their teachers describe the priorities for the principals' work that impact the implementation of the change initiative, Response To Intervention (RtI)?

3. After three months of receiving feedback from teachers on the Balanced Leadership Profile Survey, is there a change in the profile of the principal's work according to that instrument? What are the most significant areas of change in that profile?
4. After three months of receiving feedback from teachers on the Balanced Leadership Profile survey, how does the principal interpret any changes in their day-to-day practice and describe the influence that receiving feedback via this instrument has made on their day-to-day practice?

Overview Methodology

Although researchers have spent many years collecting both qualitative and quantitative data, it was not until the past decade when features of combining qualitative and quantitative data emerged. Creswell and Plano Clark (2007) discussed how the terminology, procedures, research designs, and expressed challenges of conducting this type of research are relatively new; however, they acknowledge the approach has been used throughout the last fifty years. There is a great deal of variation in the title of this methodological approach. For the purpose of this study, the phrase “mixed methods” was used to describe this research methodology. Creswell and Plano Clark (2007) define mixed methods research as,

...a research design with philosophical assumptions as well as methods of inquiry. As a methodology, it involves philosophical assumptions that guide the direction of the collection and analysis of data and the mixture of qualitative and quantitative approaches in many phases in the research process. As a method, it focuses on collecting, analyzing, and mixing both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study or
series of studies. Its central premise is that the use of quantitative and qualitative approaches in combination provides a better understanding of research problems than either approach alone. (p. 5)

This definition is considered unique because the mixing of the two data sets provides a "more complete picture than they do when they stand alone" (p. 7). This is because both qualitative and quantitative approaches towards data collection provide strengths; however, when presented in tandem, they provide a more comprehensive analysis of the research problem.

Jick (1979) provided an argument for combining quantitative and qualitative research by identifying weaknesses of each methodology and building a compelling case for why each methodology accounts for the other's weaknesses. He argued that quantitative research fails to reveal the voices of participants. Their experiences combined with the setting in which they speak is not understood in quantitative research. Furthermore, the ways in which the researcher interprets the data and their own biases they bring into the research project are very rarely addressed through a quantitative study. Qualitative research accounts for those weaknesses.

On the other hand, qualitative research is criticized for the significant role the researcher plays in analyzing the data. Since the researcher personally interprets the data, the analysis may be considered subjective. This study utilizes a research supported lens translated into a validated instrument (the Balanced Leadership Profile from McREL) as the basis for
coding and interpreting the qualitative data, thereby, reducing the potential for research bias. There is also an issue of whether or not qualitative data is generalizable, because qualitative research often uses a small number of participants whose data is not generalizable to a larger population. This study uses quantitative methods to yield a Balanced Leadership Profile (McREL) with validation studies that establish generalizability. It is not the intent of this study, however, to generalize the qualitative results or establish transferability of the results beyond the criteria for selecting the schools and principals that would serve as the four cases under study.

Given how each methodology poses its own strengths and weaknesses, Creswell and Plano Clark (2007) provided a rationale for using a mixed methods approach to conducting research because the evidence provided by using a mixed methods approach is considerably more comprehensive. It includes a structure and system for answering research questions that could not be adequately answered by using either quantitative or qualitative methods alone. Finally, the authors argued that using a mixed methods approach “is ‘practical’ in the sense that the researcher is free to use all methods possible to address a research problem” (p. 10).

Research Design

This study addressed the qualitative aspect of the methodology by using a multiple case design. Quantitative methods were employed within the overarching case study design to yield the benefits of mixed methods as
described in the above discussion. Yin (2003) discussed the advantages in employing a multiple case research design and the acceptableness of using a case study design in collecting both quantitative and qualitative evidence. Multiple case designs provide more compelling evidence than single case study designs because they allow for “literal replication” and a “theoretical replication” (p. 47). Yin defined literal replication as being able to “predict similar results” (p. 47). Two or three cases would provide justification for literal replication, whereas four or six cases would be designed to pursue “patterns of theoretical replications” (p. 47). By employing a multiple case design, the procedures used for each case can be replicated. Yin (2003) and Creswell (2007) argued the logic of replication across cases indicates the extent to which the researcher can explain why certain outcomes in cases prompted the researcher to predict certain results. Given the fact this study utilized the same procedures across 4 collective cases, the likelihood of applying “analytic generalizations” increases. Yin stated that if “two or more cases are shown to support the same theory, then replication may be claimed” (p. 33).

The case study approach was the best research methodology for this study because case studies allow complex social events to be understood in a real-life context. In the case of this study, the real life events are the daily practices of principals as they attempt to lead their schools to full implementation of a research supported school improvement initiative. The
real-life context is the unique context of each of the four schools in which the participating principals serve.

Yin (2003) and Marshall and Rossman (2006) discussed how case study research allows a review of the full range of evidence, spanning from observations to document analysis, while preserving the real-life context in which the participants are operating. This study attempted to penetrate the real-life context of principal leadership by engaging four principals and their staffs in conversations about the nature of the principal's work and daily practice. To probe deeper into the real-life context of two principal participants, this study employed a research supported and validated instrument that yields a profile of the principal's work (the Balanced Leadership Profile).

**HSIRB and Data Storage**

In preparation for this study, the full research design and all required supporting information and documents were provided to the Western Michigan University Human Subjects Institutional Review Board for expedited review. HSIRB approval was received on May 12, 2008 and can be found in the Appendix. Data collected on the Balanced Leadership Profile for this study was submitted online to McREL where it is stored, analyzed and interpreted for the Balanced Leadership Profile. Qualitative data collected for this study has been maintained in the proper locked storage and will be
transferred to the W.M.U. university archives after successful defense and the close of the HSIRB approval and final report.

**Sampling and Participant Selection**

A purposeful sample was used for this study. This sampling strategy is commonly used in qualitative research (Creswell, 2007, p. 125). The criteria for selection as a potential participant for this study were: elementary and middle school principals in schools that are in either the fifth or sixth cohort (first or second year of implementation) of the Michigan Integrated Behavior and Learning Support Initiative (MiBLSi) to establish a Response to Intervention (RtI) Framework in the areas of literacy and behavior. Permission was obtained to access the database of potential participants from the MiBLSi directors to find these potential principal and school participants for the four cases needed in this study. Every principal who met this criterion was a potential participant.

After identifying all potential principal participants, each one was contacted by telephone to explain the study and ascertain their interest in participating in the study. If the principal indicated further interest in the study, permission was obtained from district administration to proceed to the next step: determining staff interest in participating in the study. After receiving district permission for interested principals to participate in this study, principals were re-contacted and provided with additional information. Those principals who agreed to proceed as participants were asked to sign
consent forms and were informed that the actual principal participants would be selected based on at least one-third of the school staff members also agreeing to participate in the study. The one-third criteria was chosen to insure at least 7-8 teaching staff participating in the focus groups.

Originally, the research plan was to do a blind draw from the pool of principals providing signed principal participant consent forms to qualify further through determining staff interest. Since only five principal consents were received, steps were taken to qualify all five of the potential participants on the basis of staff willingness to participate. In the case that the minimum level of participation from one of the potential principal's teaching staff could not secured, the selection process would have been re-opened to identify additional principals until there was a full roster of four principals with the needed teacher participant levels.

Once all the principal participants were selected and signed the consent form, the researcher scheduled meetings with each of the potential participating school's teaching staff. During that meeting, the researcher explained the study and recruited teacher participants. All teachers who were, at the time of the study, full-time members of the certified teaching staff of the school building and willing to participate were placed in the participant pool for that school. Teachers who wished to learn more about the study were provided an opportunity to either meet with the researcher following the staff meeting or they could have asked to be contacted to receive
additional information. Any teacher willing to participate was asked to complete the consent process necessary for this study. The potential teacher subjects completed the consent process at the location of the staff meeting. The school remained in the participant pool as long as a minimum of eight teachers, or at least one third of the full time teaching staff, agreed to participate in the study. This minimum number insured an adequate participation in the study focus groups.

The above process yielded exactly four principals and school staffs to participate in this study. If the process had fallen short of the needed four schools for the case study, the researcher would have gone back to the original principal pool to recruit additional potential participants.

Risk and Benefits for Participants

There were minimal known risks to subjects. Taking the time to participate in open-ended interviews and focus groups might have inconvenienced some subjects. Taking the time to complete the electronic Balanced Leadership Profile Survey might have also inconvenienced some subjects. In order to minimize any inconvenience to the subjects, they were informed during the recruitment process of the approximate time necessary to complete the open-ended interviews, focus groups, and Balanced Leadership Profile survey. To further minimize any inconvenience to the subjects, the interviews and focus group sessions were conducted at a time and location convenient for the subjects. In an effort to further minimize any
inconvenience experienced by subjects, all teacher subjects participating in the two focus group sessions were provided with an opportunity to win a $100.00, $50.00, or $25.00 gift card to Meijer® Retail and Grocery Supercenter. Subjects participating in the on-line survey portion of this study had an additional opportunity to win a $100.00, $50.00, or $25.00 gift card to Meijer® Retail and Grocery Supercenter. Principal subjects who participated in the two open-ended interviews and on-line survey portions of the research project also had an opportunity to win a $100.00, $50.00, or $25.00 gift card to Meijer® Retail and Grocery Supercenter.

Study Design Specifics and Instrumentation

As stated in the overview of methodology, this is a multiple case study utilizing four cases of MiBLSi schools, principals, and staffs as participants. After selecting the participants for this study, they were randomly assigned to one of two groups. In Group One, the principals were interviewed at the start of the study and, again, three months later and a focus group was conducted with teacher participants. In group two, the above data collection methods were repeated, but the study design added participating in the Balanced Leadership Profile assessment. The details of the data collection process and phases are described under “Data Collection Methods.”

The study utilizes one data collection instrument, The Balanced Leadership Profile, two principal interview protocols, and a focus group protocol. The Balanced Leadership Profile assessment is “an online feedback
tool intended to gather information about school leadership from various perspectives: an individual principal, the teachers working with the principal and the principal's supervisor” (McREL, 2010). The tool is intended to provide principals with feedback from multiple perspectives regarding their implementation of the 21 leadership responsibilities identified in McREL’s research on school leadership. It is also intended to provide principals with feedback regarding their leadership in first or second order change initiatives. The feedback feature of this instrument allows principals to recognize the discrepancy between the perceptions of respondents and their own perceptions of their leadership in the areas associated with the 21 responsibilities related to student achievement.

Principals who participate in the Balanced Leadership Profile assessment must identify a specific school improvement initiative – in the case of this study, MiBLSi. Individuals who are invited by the principal to complete the Balanced Leadership Profile survey must identify the same improvement initiative. For the purpose of this study, since principals were inviting teachers to complete the Balanced Leadership Profile survey once per month for three months, each month the teachers had to identify the same improvement initiative. The Balanced Leadership Profile survey provided principals information around their fulfillment of the 21 leadership correlates to student outcomes as well as provided principals feedback around first and second order change leadership.
Upon completion of the Balanced Leadership Profile survey, principals received two reports. The first report principals reviewed was the Summary Report. The Summary Report provided information to principals regarding how well principals executed each of the 21 leadership responsibilities. The Summary Report included information that assisted principals in understanding the survey data. For example, principals were taught how to interpret responsibilities that are marked with a “responsibility flag.” Since differences between the principal score and teachers' average score on each of the leadership responsibilities was computed, a responsibility flag indicated there was an absolute difference between the principal’s score and the teachers' average score which was greater than the standard deviation of the teachers’ score. The leadership responsibilities that had a responsibility flag did not necessarily indicate the principal self-assessed higher than the teachers assessed; the opposite can also be true.

The Summary Report also provides possibilities for principals to consider even if any of the leadership responsibilities were flagged because of an atypical response pattern where the principal self-assesses at least one standard deviation different than the teaching staff assess a given responsibility.

McREL also provided an electronic “Guidance Document” for each of the 21 leadership responsibilities. The Guidance Document provided the principals with specific questions to consider in order to develop an action
plan for improving their demonstration of a particular leadership responsibility. Since this study examined how principals use self-reflection and teacher feedback to inform their daily practice, the questions and actions for principals to consider provided feedback that was more specific and easier to act upon rather than if principals were only analyzing average scores. Included in Appendix A is an example Summary Report.

The second type of information principals received from the Balanced Leadership Profile survey included the Comprehensive Results. Similar to the Summary Report, the Comprehensive Results were based on the implementation of the improvement initiative that respondents needed to identify prior to beginning the survey. The Comprehensive Results provided principals with a “7-4-3 Analysis.” In Marzano, Waters and McNulty’s meta-analysis they identified seven leadership responsibilities that are positively associated with leading second order change. They also found four leadership responsibilities negatively associated with second order change and three responsibilities that were important to emphasize regardless of first or second order change. Included in the Comprehensive Results are responsibility flags that indicated a meaningful difference (at least one standard deviation) between the computed mean score between the principal’s response and the teachers’ responses. Unlike the Summary Report, the Comprehensive Results do not provide specific questions and actions for principals to consider.
The Balanced Leadership Profile survey was validated beginning March 29, 2005 through August 2005 (Thome, McREL interview, February 15, 2010). Dr. Waters was instrumental in the validation process. Beginning in March of 2005, he sent out letters about the validation process to superintendents and principals asking them to complete the validation of the Balanced Leadership Profile to measure the legitimacy of the degree to which the items measured the 21 responsibilities of school leaders.

The Balanced Leadership Profile survey uses a Likert scale for 102 items. Rensis Likert, who sought a method that would measure individual's attitudes or perceptions in a quantitative way, developed Likert scales. Using the Likert method, an individual's attitude would be calculated by averaging their responses across all items included on the scale. There are several features of Likert scales and the scales contain many items. The responses are horizontally ordered. The levels in which participants respond are “anchored with consecutive integers; and response levels are also anchored with verbal labels which connote more-or-less evenly-spaced gradations” (Uebersax, 2008, p. 2). The items included on the Balanced Leadership Profile have the aforementioned characteristics that Uebersax uses to define a Likert scale.

All of the data analysis for the Balanced Leadership Profile is done at McREL through a proprietary data analysis process. McREL declined to provide further details on the analysis of the data collected through the on-
line Balanced Leadership Profile instrument, but the above referenced reports and instrument development background established credibility for the instrument and analysis for the purposes of this study.

Data Collection Methods

The study employed both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods. There were two groups of cases for this research study, each consisting of two principals and the corresponding teaching staff who were employed in the building in which the principal leads. There were three phases to the first group of cases.

- Phase 1: Open-ended interviews with two principal subjects and focus groups with 8-12 teacher subjects who were employed in the building in which the principal leads. The interviews and focus groups were located in the environment in which the subjects work. They occurred at a date and time convenient for the subjects.

- Phase 2: Principal subjects and teacher subjects completed an online feedback tool entitled, “The Balanced Leadership Profile survey” to gather information from various perspectives on the principal’s fulfillment of the 21 leadership responsibilities and to furnish feedback on principals’ change leadership. Subjects completed the Balanced Leadership Profile Survey on a monthly basis for a total of three months.
• Phase 3: Open-ended interviews with the two principal subjects
  who were participants. The interviews were located in the
  environment in which the subjects work. They occurred at a date
  and time convenient for the subjects.

The second group of cases consisted of two principals and the corresponding
  teaching staff who were currently employed in the building in which the
  principal leads. There were two phases to the second group of cases.

• Phase 1: Open-ended interviews with two principal subjects and
  focus groups with teacher subjects who were employed in the
  building in which the principal leads. The interviews and focus
  groups were located in the environment in which the subjects work.
  They occurred at a date and time convenient for the subjects.

• Phase 2: Open-ended interviews for the two principal subjects who
  were participants. The interviews were located in the environment
  in which the subjects work. They occurred at a date and time
  convenient for the subjects.

As stated above, open-ended interviews were conducted with both
groups of cases in this research study. This interviewing technique is
commonly used when implementing a case study research design (Marshall &
Rossman, 2006). The goal of the researcher is to engage the participants in a
conversation with a purpose. This is done in an effort to reveal the
participant’s views on a particular issue (Marshall & Rossman). Employing
the interviewing technique was not as easy as some believe. The role of the interviewer was to make the participants feel comfortable and to make them feel as though their opinions, values, and beliefs were important (Marshall & Rossman, 2006; Seidman, 2006; Yin, 2003). There are many advantages to using an interviewing approach in a qualitative research study. Interviews provide depth in understanding the research problem. They also allow for clarification and follow-up of participant’s responses. Seidman (2006) discusses how the interviewing technique allows the researcher to delve into the lived experiences of the participants and, as a result, leave the interview with a higher level of detail and depth of information.

There is a great deal of literature supporting the use of an interview protocol. The interviewing protocol helped the researcher maintain focus for the interviews (Creswell, 2007; Seidman, 2006; Yin, 2003). It also allowed potential problems to be anticipated. When using interview protocols, Seidman suggests the interview protocol be used cautiously because they can pose some potential pitfalls to a research project. Researchers sometimes end up using an interview protocol in an attempt to get participants to “corroborate opinions” (p. 92).

During the interview process, the interviewer further utilized probes that extended and deepened the detail and descriptive content of the subject’s responses (Rubin and Rubin, 1995). Similar to the concept of probing, Seidman (2006) prefers to use the word “explore” as opposed to probe.
Although the author uses a different term, the outcome of deepening the detail of the participant's responses is the same. Seidman also recommended caution in over utilizing the probing or exploration technique. This is because "the interview can become too easily a vehicle for the interviewer's agenda rather than an exploration of the participant's experience" (p. 84).

Conversely, a researcher may under utilize this method, which can leave the researcher with inadequate information to answer the research questions of the study.

Each open-ended interview lasted approximately 60 minutes and was conducted at a time and location convenient for the subjects. It was important to decide upon a length of time for the interviews because having an open-ended time period could have caused participants to become anxious (Seidman, 2006). Seidman found the 60-90 minute time frame tends to be "long enough" to make participants feel as though their opinions were "taken seriously" (p. 20). The location for conducting the interviews makes a difference as well. Participants may feel more comfortable meeting with the researcher in their own environment. Depending on the location of the interview, that could have impacted the quality and depth of information provided by the participants.

The interviewer voice recorded all open-ended interviews conducted in this study. It was important to identify a plan for gathering data. When conducting open-ended interviews, voice recording is the most common way to
gather data. This was because voice recording provided an accurate representation of the interview (Yin, 2003). Seidman (2006) believed that in order for a researcher to analyze the words of the participants in a reliable way, voice recording the interview and then transcribing those words into written text is the best method available. Both Seidman and Yin discuss the potential pitfalls to recording participant interviews. Sometimes participants initially feel uncomfortable knowing the conversation is being recorded. Although this may happen, Seidman reported in his experiences, participants soon forget about the recording device. Another pitfall Yin (2003) described is when researchers use the tape recording device as a “substitute” for needing to demonstrate effective listening skills during the open-ended interview. These potential pitfalls were addressed in the interviewing protocol.

Once all open-ended interviews were completed, a trained transcriber transcribed the recordings. Explicit instructions were given to the transcriber to not include any identifiable information. When the data was transcribed, each participant was given a pseudonym, so that the other individuals who viewed the data were unaware of the subject’s actual identity. The transcriber also received instructions to make notation of punctuation, pauses, laughter, and hesitations. Marshall and Rossman (2006) discussed the potential problems with transcribing participant interviews. The authors discuss how transcribing interviews is not a “technical task; both entail judgment and interpretation” (p. 110). There is no parallel between the
spoken words of participants and the written text. This is because when individuals speak, they do not necessarily speak in complete paragraphs and they also do not signal punctuation. The role of the transcriber then was to make judgments on placing periods or semicolons. Other pitfalls with transcribing interviews often involve the loss of paralinguistic cues that individuals rely on to construct meaning.

While acknowledging the limitations of transcriptions, Yin (2003) and Seidman (2006) reported the benefits of having written text of the participant’s spoken words. The written text assists the researcher in analyzing and interpreting the interview material. The participants’ thoughts are encapsulated in their words. “To substitute the researcher’s paraphrasing or summaries of what the participants say for their actual words is to substitute the researcher’s consciousness for that of the participant” (Seidman, p. 114). The necessity for transcribing the interviews within the context of this study was so the written words of the participants could be utilized during the analysis phase of the research study.

As stated earlier, the first phase of both research groups in this research study consisted of the researcher conducting focus groups with teacher participants. This particular data collection method was best suited to identify how teachers described the way in which principals demonstrated specific behaviors known to increase student achievement. This method also illuminated how they defined the priorities for a principal’s work and
described the influences that impacted how principals carried out those priorities. In reviewing the research on focus groups, the purpose of conducting focus groups is to collect information from a particular group of individuals who have experience in a specific situation (Stewart, Shamdasani & Rook, 2007). Although this information could have been collected using an individual interview approach, researchers have hypothesized that group participation generates more information than would have been collected in an individual setting (Stewart, Shamdasani & Rook, 2007; Shay Schumm, Sinagub & Vaughn 1996). The authors argued that utilizing focus group data collection “encourages interaction...and offers support for individual participants and encourages greater openness in their responses” (Shay Schumm, Sinagub & Vaughn 1996, p. 18). The authors also identified additional advantages to including the focus group data collection methodology in a research study. They included the swiftness in being able to assemble focus groups, cost efficiency; the ability for the researcher to clarify participant responses, and the ability of respondents to qualify responses or provide contingent answers to questions.

This data collection methodology is not without its limitations. Since focus groups tend to rely on participant responses, certain group members could dominate the conversation and, consequently, may or may not accurately reflect the opinions of the other group members (Stewart, Shamdasani & Rook, 2007; Shay Schumm, Sinagub & Vaughn 1996). The
moderator may also bias the results of the focus group session by inadvertently leading participants to the desired responses. In order to avoid those potential problems, a moderator's guide was used that assisted the researcher in adhering to an agenda for the focus group sessions.

When organizing focus groups, it was important to be mindful of the number of participants who participated in the focus group session. Literature review on the ideal number of participants used in focused groups indicated the number participants range between six and twelve (Stewart, Shamdasani & Rook, 2007; Shay Schumm, Sinagub & Vaughn 1996). Focus group size is important to carefully consider when designing the research study. Groups with too few participants tend not to generate enough conversation, while groups with too many participants tend to be difficult for the moderator to manage (Stewart, Shamdasani & Rook, 2007; Shay Schumm, Sinagub & Vaughn 1996). For the purpose of this study, the researcher attempted to recruit between 8 and 12 participants to participate in each focus group. Participants for the focus groups were teachers who were employed full-time in the building in which principal subjects lead. Although the research informing assembling focus groups cautions the consideration of factors such as group dynamics, demographics, personality, physical characteristics, and environmental influences, the average teaching staff in one particular elementary school consists of 17-23 individuals (Stewart,
Shamdasani & Rook, 2007). This necessitated overlooking some of those factors in order to have the ideal number of focus group participants.

The researcher served as the moderator of the focus groups. The role of the moderator was crucial in the success or failure of a focus group session. Stewart, Shamdasani and Rook (2007) quote Karger (1987) when discussing the characteristics an effective moderator must employ during the focus group session.

The best facilitator has unobtrusive chameleon-like qualities; gently draws consumers into the process; deftly encourages them to interact with one another for optimum synergy; lets the intercourse flow naturally with a minimum of intervention; listens openly and deeply; uses silence well; plays back consumer statements in a distilling way which brings out more refined thoughts or explanations; and remains completely non-authoritarian and non-judgmental. (p. 69)

Given the complex role of the moderator, it was important to include the moderator’s roles and responsibilities in the interview guide (Stewart, Shamdasani & Rook, 2007).

Since this study utilized a mixed methods approach, quantitative data was collected from group one of the research design. An on-line survey was the instrument this study utilized in order to best respond to the quantitative research questions. This study attempted to determine how a system of regular feedback from teachers through an assessment instrument, based on
the 21 leadership correlates to raising student achievement, changed the profile of the principal’s work according to that instrument. A quantitative survey was the best data collection method to use for this study.

Qualitative Data Analysis

The general strategy for analyzing the qualitative data collected for this research project is what Yin (2003) referred to as “relying on theoretical propositions” (p. 111). This is a preferred strategy for analyzing qualitative data. The goal was to follow the theories that led to development of the research questions for the study. The underlying theories shaped the data collected throughout the study and, consequently, were given priority when applying strategies for analyzing the data. Yin discussed how using this strategy assists the researcher in being able to pay attention to some data while being able to ignore other data at the same time.

The open-ended interviews and focus groups were used to identify the similarities and differences in how principals described the way they demonstrated specific behaviors known to increase student achievement and how teachers described the way in which principals demonstrated specific behaviors known to increase student achievement. The open-ended interviews and focus group data were also used to identify the similarities and differences in how principals prioritized their work and how teachers defined the priorities for the principal’s work. Principals and teachers also
described the influences that impacted how principals carried out those priorities.

Transcripts from the open-ended interviews and focus groups were used to analyze the data. Each transcript was read three times prior to identifying salient points and themes. Seidman (2006) discusses the importance of approaching each transcript with an open attitude. Once each transcript is read in its entirety three times, an analysis of the transcripts begins using the direct interpretation. Creswell (2007) described how Stake (1995) defined the process of data analysis using direct interpretation. "The case study researcher looks at a single instance and draws meaning from it without looking for multiple instances" (p. 163). Using direct interpretation, this process begins by bracketing words and passages that are of interest. The goal of this phase of data analysis is not to begin interpreting; rather, to engage in the "winnowing process" (Seidman, 2006, p.) by exercising judgment about what is important.

Because the study focused on the 21 leadership behaviors identified in the meta-analysis conducted by Marzano, Waters and McNulty (2005), it was necessary to bracket words and passages related to any of the 21 leadership responsibilities. A coding process was developed where an organizational table was created that listed the leadership responsibilities in the first column; and the second column included corresponding definitions for the responsibilities. The third and fourth columns included further definition and
explanation for each of the leadership responsibilities from authors of the research studies used in the original meta-analysis conducted by Marzano, Waters and McNulty, and passages from the participant transcripts that closely aligned to the definitions and further explanations of the leadership responsibilities.

The data analysis coding book utilized a different color for each principal to assist the researcher in quickly identifying the text taken from the participant transcript and illustrate how the codes of text from each participant distributed themselves across the 21 responsibilities. Passages from the focus groups that aligned to the leadership responsibilities were also included on the table and color coded by principal. Once this process was completed, the data was bound together and titled, “Dissertation Coding Manual.” Organizing the interview data in this way allowed the researcher to quantify the number of passages from the interviews and focus groups that corresponded to each of the 21 leadership responsibilities.

Following the aforementioned process, words, phrases, and passages were marked and the process of identifying patterns began. Yin (2003) referred to this process as pattern matching. Pattern matching is considered to be one of the most desirable case study analysis techniques. When using this technique with a multiple case study research design, the internal validity is strengthened. A table to display the patterns and themes from each case was developed. This process lends itself to applying a cross-case
synthesis analytic technique (Creswell, 2007; Yin, 2003). Cross-case synthesis facilitates the identification of similarities across cases and will easily assist the reader in identifying the findings. A table was created to synthesize and easily display the coded data that included each of the 21 leadership responsibilities in the first column. The following headings were listed in subsequent columns belonging to each of the principal subjects: “Interview 1,” “Focus Group,” “Responsibility Flags,” and “Interview 2.” Only principal subjects who were included in the first group of cases that received three months of feedback using the Balanced Leadership Profile survey had the column entitled, “Responsibility Flags.” Once the table was created, a dissertation coding manual was used to count each transcript passage for each of the 21 leadership responsibilities. For every interview and focus group passage belonging to a principal, an “x” was placed in the appropriate column and row for the leadership responsibility.

There were passages in the interview and focus group transcripts that demonstrated an absence of a particular leadership responsibility. In those cases, the data were coded in both the dissertation coding manual, using the color-coding system, and the organizational table, using a negative “x.” Passages that provided salient points relevant to the research questions but did not directly relate to the 21 leadership responsibilities were coded as a negative leadership responsibility. For example, some principal subjects reported that district meetings and obligations were consuming large
portions of their daily work. The district meetings were held off-site at the administration building. This meant the principal was unable to demonstrate the responsibility of Visibility due to being off the school premises. Instances, such as the one provided, would have been coded as an absence of the leadership responsibility, or a "-x".

Once the passages were tallied, extracted from the transcripts, and placed in the appropriate leadership category, boxes were placed around the emerging patterns. Since this study attempted to identify similarities and differences in how principals and their teachers describe the principal's behaviors and practices, boxes were placed around common leadership responsibilities identified by the principal during the open-ended interviews and by teachers during the focus groups. By drawing boxes around areas of agreement, similarities and differences between principal and teacher responses were identified, as well as patterns across the four principal subjects.

Another focus of this study included the similarities and differences in how principals and their teachers described the priorities for the principal's work. An additional row was added to the organizational table to assist in identifying patterns related to this research question. The row was entitled, "Priorities." The researcher extracted from the transcripts the priorities each principal subject identified as well as the priorities for the principal's work described by the teachers during the focus groups. Those priorities were
listed in a table for easy identification of the extent by which there was agreement between the principals and their teachers.

The crux of this study involved the variable of feedback and its influence on principal’s day-to-day practices. The feedback principals received was the quantitative aspect of this study. Because quantitative data were also included in the organizational table, a detailed discussion around how the data were analyzed occurs in the Quantitative Data Analysis section of this chapter. Then the research supporting mixed methods data analysis will be presented. Principals included in Group One received three months of feedback from teachers using the Balanced Leadership Profile survey. The two principals included in Group 1 had an additional column for data in the organizational table, entitled, “Responsibility Flags” to be coded. The Responsibility Flags that were identified each month from the survey were coded as either a “1”, “2”, or “3.” The numbers corresponded to the month in which the flag occurred. For example, if a principal subject received a “1”, “2”, and “3” for the responsibility of Visibility, then that meant the principal received a responsibility flag for Visibility each of the three months the principal received the feedback from teachers. In addition to the “Responsibility Flag” column, another row was added to the organization table and was labeled, “Influence of Feedback.” Passages from the Phase 3 open-ended interviews were coded and inserted into that row of the table. This allowed for not only quick identification of the themes from each of the
principals, but it also allowed the researcher to determine whether or not their day-to-day work changed compared to the initial interview and focus groups conducted in Phase 1 of the research study. That, coupled with the "Responsibility Flags" column, made the data analysis for the two research questions related to feedback easy.

Quantitative Data Analysis

As previously mentioned in the instrumentation section of this chapter, principals received two types of reports. Both the Summary Report and the Comprehensive Results displayed the survey results by identifying the principal's responses and then the average of the teacher responses. In both reports, the average teacher responses were categorized by teachers who identified the improvement initiative as either a first or second order change. For the purpose of this study, the Summary Report was the main report principals used as a feedback tool regarding their fulfillment of the 21 leadership responsibilities. Consequently, the quantitative data used for analysis was compiled from the Summary Report.

The principals' self-assessment ratings were compiled as well as the teacher's assessment of the principal's fulfillment of the 21 leadership practices once per month for a total of three months. Each of the principal's summary reports were reviewed in order to determine which leadership responsibilities received a "responsibility flag" denoting that the absolute difference between the principal's score and the teachers' average score was
greater than the standard deviation of the teachers’ score. An additional table was created listing the 21 leadership responsibilities which included corresponding self-assessment scores from the principal’s and average teacher scores. Included on this table next to the specific leadership responsibilities were “responsibility flags” for each of the three time periods the principal received feedback.

A weighted average of teacher responses was calculated to combine responses of teachers who reported the change initiative as either first order, second order, or mixed change based on the number of teachers in each group. The weighting of average teacher responses allowed for easy comparison of the principal’s self-assessment scores to an overall average of teacher responses of the principal’s fulfillment of each of the leadership responsibilities. The weighting of the averages was justified because in the Balanced Leadership Profile survey there are 10 questions included in the survey that identify whether or not the improvement initiative is perceived by principals and teachers as first order, second order, or mixed change.

For the purpose of this study, an analysis of the differences in the teacher’s perceptions of whether the change initiative they used to frame their responses was a first or second order change. Changes in the responsibilities that received a flag were noted to determine whether or not the quantity of flags a principal received on a monthly basis increases or decreases over time. Additionally, the researcher attempted to identify
patterns in how principals received responsibility flags over time (e.g. principal receives responsibility flags for the same responsibility over the course of the three month study).

Mixed Methods Data Analysis

For the purpose of this mixed methods study, a triangulation design was utilized to best analyze the data and answer the research questions. The triangulation design is considered to be the most common approach to conducting a mixed methods project (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). The authors argued that a triangulation design is used to compare and contrast quantitative inferential statistical data with qualitative findings. They also emphasized this research approach would be beneficial to researchers who want to validate their results using either quantitative or qualitative data. A triangulation design is conducted by separately collecting and analyzing both quantitative and qualitative data at “roughly the same time” (p. 66).

For the purpose of this study, the qualitative data collection methods were gathered in phases one and three for Group 1 of the research study. Both methods of data collection occurred during roughly the same period. It must be acknowledged that this study slightly differed from the procedures set forth by Creswell and Plano Clark (2007) for triangulation research design because there was a sequence in which the qualitative and quantitative data were gathered. When describing the data collection methods for a triangulation design, the authors state the data collection
occurs at “roughly the same time” (p. 66). For this study, the data collection process was more sequential; where qualitative data was collected the first month, quantitative data was collected once a month for a total of three months, and then qualitative data was collected again in the third month. Given the ambiguous timeframe posed by the authors, the researcher was left to her own interpretation that the timeframe posed in this study could be considered to meet Creswell and Plano Clark’s definition of collecting data “roughly at the same time.” Once each set of data is analyzed, both quantitative and qualitative data sets were combined in the interpretation and analysis phase of the research project.

The triangulation design is not without its strengths and challenges. Researchers argue that this design has “become a framework for thinking about mixed methods research” (p. 66). It is considered to be efficient because each data set is collected and analyzed separately within the same time frame. The qualitative and quantitative data analysis procedures and techniques happen independently of one another and rely on individuals who possess a level of expertise to assist in the analysis of either quantitative or qualitative data. Creswell and Plano Clark acknowledged that although the triangulation design is the most commonly used, it is also one of the most challenging designs. Some challenges with using the triangulation research design include the need for a level of expertise in the data collection and analysis phase. The researcher did not have the level of expertise necessary
to place equal emphasis on both research methods. One way to avoid this was to develop a dissertation committee comprised of individuals who had expertise in both qualitative and quantitative methods. Another challenge posed by this design is what the researcher does if there is a conflict between the quantitative and qualitative results. The author suggested that if this situation occurred, additional data might have needed to be collected. The challenge was also in what additional data might have been needed and whether or not qualitative or quantitative methods would have been used to gather the additional data.

In an effort to avoid the potential challenges of using a triangulation design, the researcher had created a research protocol that addressed potential unanticipated events during the research project. Since the researcher in this study was using qualitative methods to explore the similarities and differences in how principals described the way they demonstrated specific behaviors known to increase student achievement and how teachers described the way in which principals demonstrated specific behaviors known to increase student achievement, it is possible the quantitative assessment instrument both principals and teachers in Group 1 will use, based on the 21 leadership responsibilities, correlates to raising student achievement, might conflict with the qualitative data. Two things would have occurred to avoid these challenges. A case study protocol would be used to adhere to the general procedures and rules that need to be followed in
this research project. Yin (2003) discussed the importance of using a protocol in the implementation of a case study. A protocol assists the researcher in remaining focused on the overarching goal of the research project. It also forces the researcher to anticipate potential problems that may be encountered while conducting the study (Yin). The level of anticipation necessary in the protocol will assist researchers in avoiding disastrous results. A protocol was developed to address the qualitative aspect of this study.

Summary

This study is a multiple case study employing a mixed methods research design to four cases. There were two groups of cases each consisting of two principals and teaching staff. Principals who were included in the first group of cases participated in three phases of data collection. Phase one included open-ended interviews with principals and focus groups with teachers. Phase two included three months of feedback to principals from teachers using the Balanced Leadership Profile survey (McREL). Phase three included open-ended interviews with principals. Principals who were included in the second group of cases participated in two phases of data collection. Phase one consisted of open-ended interviews with principals and focus groups with the principal's teaching staff. The second phase consisted of open-ended interviews with principals.
The qualitative data analysis consisted of coding the transcripts from the interviews and focus groups around the 21 Balanced Leadership correlates. Descriptions that related to each of the 21 responsibilities were appropriately placed in a Coding Manual organized by each of the 21 Balanced Leadership correlates. The information taken from the coding manual was transferred to an organization table. The organization table documented the following: the number of descriptions principals provided during the first interview for each of the 21 Balanced Leadership correlates; the number of descriptions teachers provided during the focus group for each of the 21 correlates; the month of the responsibility flags principals who participated in group one received over the course of three months of using the Balanced Leadership Profile; and the number of descriptions principals provided during the second interview for each of the 21 leadership correlates.

Quantitative data analysis for the Balanced Leadership Profile was done at McREL. Principals who participated in the first group of cases and received monthly feedback for three months received their data from the McREL website. The Summary Report was the report the principals were reviewing in order to reflect and adapt their daily work around the 21 Balanced Leadership correlations. Principals whose self-assessment score was at least one standard deviation higher or lower than the average of the teacher's assessment score received a Responsibility Flag. McREL did not provide additional details on the analysis of the data collected through the
on-line instrument; however, additional information about the Balanced Leadership Profile can be accessed in Marzano, Waters and McNulty's (2005) book, *School Leadership that Works*. The qualitative and quantitative data were triangulated and used together to answer the research questions.
CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Introduction

The purpose of the study was to determine how principals use a combination of reflection and teacher feedback that is guided by an evidence based assessment tool on the Balanced Leadership correlates over a three month period. This study also looked at how principals who did not participate in the self-assessment and teacher feedback system thought about the challenges of leading their schools to improved student outcomes over the same three month period. In this chapter the results of the data analysis data gathered through a multiple case study involving four principal subjects and their respective teaching staff. The first section of this chapter will include a profile for each of the four participants. Following the principal profiles will be an analysis of the data for each of the four research questions this study attempted to answer. The final section is a brief chapter summary.

Principal Profiles

Four principals participated in the project. The first two principals profiled were included in the first group of cases, while the remaining two principals were included in the second group of cases. The principal
participants included in Group One participated in three phases of data collection with the intent to determine if systematic feedback from their teaching staff influenced the priorities for their work. The second group of principals only participated in two phases of data collection, which included two open-ended interviews in months one and three with principals, and one focus group with teachers shortly after the first principal interview. The questions asked during the second phase of interviews were the same as the two questions asked during the first phase of interviews. Pseudonyms were used during the profiling of the principal subjects to protect their identities.

Participant One: Kara

Kara is a middle school principal for a school district located in Southwest Michigan. The school district is classified as an urban fringe district that serves a large percentage of at-risk students. This is her second year as the building principal. Prior to becoming the middle school principal, Kara was first a high school Spanish teacher for the school district and then was promoted to be the assistant principal of the high school. She served as the assistant high school principal for five years. After a district-wide reconfiguration, Kara was promoted as lead principal of the middle school. The middle school is comprised of 40 professional staff and one assistant principal. Of the 40 staff members, 26 are classified as teaching staff, which are employed full-time in the school building. As of February 2010, there were 504 students enrolled in the middle school.
When Kara was appointed as the middle school principal, admittedly, she spent her first year strengthening the culture of the building. This was because of the previous administrator's leadership style:

They have a past history with the former principal who they thought just hid from them and wasn't interested in them...there were some things that were just screaming when I came here and I am no longer keeping the lid on them...but when I first came here, it was important to just get the lid back on...because my first year I needed their trust before I was able to help them.

Throughout this research study, Kara continually emphasized 'people' as being her main focus. She described her staff as having "a lot of integrity" and being "hard-workers." Kara communicates a great deal of respect and admiration for not only the work they do, but for the kind of people that they are as well:

I know I am nothing without them and I don't want to be anything. I want them to be everything because I am not the Queen Bee; I am not at the top of any hierarchy; I am in the middle, and so I hope they have ownership over what they deserve. That is critical for this 'machine' to work.

Seven teachers from Kara's building participated in the focus group and 10 participated in the feedback portion of the research study. The teachers who participated in the focus group described themselves as teacher
leaders in the building. Although some worked on the implementation of RtI practices, others were department chairs that provided leadership in other ways within the building. All teachers who participated in the focus group also volunteered to complete the Balanced Leadership Profile survey.

Participant Two: Tanya

Tanya is currently an elementary principal for a suburban school district located in the center of the state. The community the school serves is an affluent population with a small percentage of at-risk students. She has been the principal assigned to her building for the past four years. Prior to her current role, Tanya worked as a teacher and administrator for an urban school district located in the same county. She has a total of 13 years of experience as a building principal. Tanya’s school district was facing significant budgetary issues and during the time of this study was in the process of consolidating elementary schools. Tanya’s school was comprised of 41 staff members. Of the 41 staff, 22 were classified as full-time teaching staff that taught in the school building. As of the February 2010 pupil count day, there were 259 students enrolled in the school.

When Tanya began her participation in this study, she noted that the current school year presented some challenges that were unique to the circumstances occurring in the district. Those challenges necessitated her involvement in several planning meetings. Consequently, the planning meetings detracted from her building responsibilities.
I am not spending enough time doing the things that need to be happening in this building because of the consolidations happening in the district. I think that about 50% of my time in any given day or in any given week is going towards that...while the other 50% of my time is spent trying to play catch-up....so forget about getting ahead of the game.

In addition to the consolidations, the district was also embarking on implementing the practices associated with creating a Response to Intervention (RtI) framework. Participation in RtI training sessions, planning for systems to support the RtI work, while juggling the staffing decisions resulting from consolidating two elementary schools, required Tanya to try to find balance to all of her responsibilities. It also required her to manage a period of personal uncertainty:

I wish this year had been a more ordinary year. Going through this change initiative would have felt like going through an ordinary change initiative, but actually the district is going through changes too. While we were learning about RtI we were also doing district-wide transitions; we were closing two elementary schools; we were restructuring to a K-4 instead of a K-5 and so I really felt like I had to kind of balance my time and energy between both very, very major things...but I am just not the kind of person who jumps in big and then fixes it and I would rather kind of see it and get it right before I get
into it and kind of be methodical about it. I really just had to come to
the point where I needed to jump off that cliff and work with whatever
it is later on because it is the right stuff to be doing...

Eight of Tanya’s teachers participated in the focus group. The focus
group participants included teacher leaders as well as teachers who were not
supportive of some the leadership decisions Tanya has made during her
tenure in the building. Thirteen teachers volunteered to complete the
Balanced Leadership Profile survey. Five teachers who participated in the
focus group also volunteered to participate in the survey potion of the study.

Participant Three: Rhonda

Rhonda is currently an elementary principal for a school district
located in the center of the state. The school district is considered to be an
urban fringe district that includes a mix of affluent and economically
disadvantaged families. Rhonda’s building is comprised of the highest
percentage of at-risk students from the district. She has served as the
elementary principal for two years. Prior to becoming a principal, Rhonda
taught for seven years for an urban school district located in the same county
in which she currently works. Then she left the elementary classroom and
taught for two years as an associate professor at a university. Rhonda’s
school is comprised of 38 staff members. Of the 38 staff, 23 were classified as
full-time teaching staff that taught in the school building. According to the
most recent pupil accounting report, there were 365 students enrolled in the school.

When Rhonda began her participation in this study, she noted the current school year presented challenges for her staff and also for her leadership style. Because Rhonda's school was the first building in the district to embrace the implementation of RtI, both Rhonda and her staff believed their school was being used as the example for successful RtI implementation. This caused Rhonda and her staff considerable stress because they were having to manage resistance from the other elementary schools who did not want to implement the same RtI practices as Rhonda's school.

The district is really using her...as the example, so I think that has really put a strain on her responsibilities and I have found that the other administrators are using her as the example of 'this is how a school can be run'...but the problem is she has put herself in a position...to fail publicly. If it doesn't, and us too, if people are watching, unfortunately, for things to go wrong so they don't have to do it (RtI)..and I think she's very aware and so the district calls on her so that doesn't happen at their buildings and meanwhile she has to split her time.

The second challenge Rhonda faced was the changes to her leadership style between her first and second year. During her first year Rhonda spent
much of her time establishing relationships with staff and especially parents. Her interactions centered on “people-pleasing” because of the historical role the parents have played in the functioning of the school: “I have been told that principals get run out of school like mine...and there is a culture that if you don’t make my child happy then I am going to make life difficult for you...”

Ten of Rhonda's teachers participated in the focus group. Focus group participants were comprised of a mixture of teacher leaders who frequently work with her and teachers who do not have a direct leadership role in the building. The faculty was comprised of experienced teachers who have been teaching in a range of 15-30 plus years.

Participant Four: Cindy

Cindy is the middle school principal for a school district located in Southwest Michigan. The school district is classified as a suburban school district that serves an affluent community. This is Cindy’s sixth year as the building principal. Prior to becoming the middle school principal, she was a teacher for seven years in the current school and later promoted to assistant principal of a high school. She remained an assistant high school principal for two years before being appointed to her current position. Cindy’s school is comprised of 61 professional staff and one assistant principal. Of the 61 staff members, 49 are classified as teaching staff, which are employed full-time in
the school building. As of the February 2010 pupil count, there were 594 students enrolled in the middle school.

Similar to the previous two principal subjects, Cindy's school district also had to deal with budgetary constraints. Budget constraints resulted in district officials having to make difficult decisions regarding staffing and resources for the 2010-2011 school year. Consequently, Cindy balanced her time between "keeping tabs" on the RtI work, while at the same time attending to staffing issues. Throughout Cindy's participation in the study, she frequently discussed how fortunate she was to have a staff that was not only supportive of the RtI work, but also worked independently to accomplish the activities:

Actually, being in the second year (of RtI work) takes on a different flavor. And I am just really lucky and blessed to have a staff that's at a place where they can just take the reigns and go with it. I, you know, make every attempt that I can to be in and around and to see things in action but...I have to spend time this year on scheduling. Our teachers are now going to be teaching six out of seven periods, so teaming is gone...but because I empowered my staff, good things happen...

Cindy's excitement and appreciation for her staff underscores her transformation as a leader over the course of three years. She initially described herself as believing her staff should "just think like she does" and as the only person who was driving the bus when it came to implementing
practices or program. Cindy recognized that a top-down approach to leadership was not effective. She continues to encourage staff to “take the reigns” and move forward with accomplishing the work that needs to be accomplished. She mentioned that she works to “empower her staff” because there “were so many people who really wanted to roll up their sleeves and be involved.”

Twelve of Cindy’s teachers volunteered to participate in the focus group. The participants ranged from teacher leaders who worked with Cindy closely over the course of two years to staff that were unsupportive of her leadership.

Research Questions

Research Question 1

What are the similarities and differences in how principals and their teachers describe the principal’s behaviors and practices on a day-to-day basis?

To respond to the first research question, principals in phases one and three of the research study were asked a series of open-ended questions in one-on-one interviews. Questions asked of principals during the open-ended interviews were the same for both groups of cases. Focus groups were conducted with teachers shortly after the first phase of interviews with the four principal subjects. Results are presented for each group of cases. Phases
one and two of the principal interviews are consecutively presented for the two principals who participated in Group 2 of the research study. Principals who participated in Group 1 do not have the findings from their phase two interviews presented until the results for the fourth research question are presented. This is because principals in Group 1 received feedback from their teachers and that feedback impacted how the principals described their daily work and priorities for their work. The principals' descriptions of their daily work and priorities for their work are related to the first and second research questions.

Results are reported for each principal participant and phase of the study. The tables provide a visual representation of the data. Information included in the table is as follows: each of the principal's pseudonyms, one row for each of the 21 leadership responsibilities, a column for the coded descriptions from "Interview 1," a column for the coded descriptions from the focus groups "FG", a column entitled, "Flags" for the leadership responsibilities that received a Responsibility Flag, and a final column for the coded descriptions obtained during "Interview 2." The principals who participated in Group 1 were involved in three phases of data collection. Those phases included: two open-ended interviews which occurred in months one and three of the research study, one focus group with teacher subjects that occurred shortly after the first principal interview, and three months of feedback using the Balanced Leadership Profile survey. Each of those
principals have four columns of data under each of their pseudonyms for Tables 1 and 2. Those columns would be titled and listed in the following order: “Interview 1,” “FG,” “Flags,” and “Interview 2.”

The third and fourth principals listed in Tables 3 and 4, were included in the second group of cases for the project. Each of those tables provides a visual representation of the data gathered for principals who participated in the second group of cases. They were involved in two phases of data collection. Those phases included two open-ended interviews which occurred in months one and three of the research study, and one focus group with teacher subjects that occurred shortly after the first principal interview. The columns listed for each table would be titled and listed in the following order: “Interview 1,” “FG,” and “Interview 2.”

Group 1: Kara, Phase 1

There was similarity between how Kara and her teachers described her leadership behaviors and practices on a day-to-day basis related to the 21 leadership responsibilities. The similarities are depicted in Table 1, listed under Kara’s results as well as differences, and frequency of descriptions around her daily work as described by the teachers who participated in the focus group. Through the interview and focus group process, coded passages were provided by Kara and her teachers related to Kara’s demonstration of those responsibilities.
Table 1 illustrates descriptions of Kara’s daily work related to 17 of the 21 leadership responsibilities obtained during the initial interview. Those responsibilities included: Change Agent, Communication, Contingent Rewards, Culture, Affirmation, Discipline, Flexibility, Ideals/Beliefs, Input, Knowledge of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment, Involvement in Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment, Monitor/Evaluate, Optimize, Order, Relationships, Resources, Situational Awareness and Visibility. During the focus group with teachers, passages were coded related to 16 of

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadership Responsibility</th>
<th>Int 1</th>
<th>FG</th>
<th>Flags</th>
<th>Int 2</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>x</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contingent Rewards</td>
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<td>Culture</td>
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<td>Affirmation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discipline</td>
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<tr>
<td>Flexibility</td>
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<tr>
<td>Focus</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ideals/Beliefs</td>
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<td>x</td>
<td>2*,3*</td>
<td>x</td>
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<tr>
<td>Input</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>xx</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>x x</td>
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<tr>
<td>Intellectual Stimulation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Knowledge of C, I, &amp; A</td>
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<td>1*</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement in C, I, &amp; A</td>
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<td>1*</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitor/Evaluate</td>
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<td>x</td>
<td>1*</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optimize</td>
<td>x</td>
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<td>x</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Order</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x x</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outreach</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>2*,3*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships</td>
<td>x x</td>
<td>x x</td>
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<td>Resources</td>
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<tr>
<td>Situational Awareness</td>
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<td>1*,2*,3*</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visibility</td>
<td>x x x</td>
<td>x x</td>
<td>1,2,3</td>
<td>x</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
the 21 leadership responsibilities. Those responsibilities are also listed under Kara's name, in the column identified as “FG.” There was agreement between both Kara and the teachers that her daily work involves 14 of the 21 leadership responsibilities as indicated by the symbol, “x” that appears in both the first “interview” and “FG” columns. The responsibilities of Change Agent, Discipline, Relationships, and Visibility generated the highest frequency of descriptions from Kara and her teachers that were obtained after coding the interview and focus group transcripts. Visibility was the responsibility most prevalent in the transcripts because each “x” signifies one description coded from the transcripts. There were a total of six descriptions between Kara and her teachers for the responsibility of Visibility.

Marzano, Waters, and McNulty (2005) defined Change Agent as the leader's disposition to challenge the current state of affairs within the school. There were three separate instances where Kara described her daily work as activities that challenged the status quo:

I am always looking ahead...and forward to figure out how it all moves forward...and I am not sure when my staff will be there because I don’t know where ‘there’ is. I think ‘there’ is always a moving target that tends to be always moving.

Kara's staff substantiated her demonstration of Change Agent during the focus group. There was agreement from the teachers that they were, “ready for a change” when Kara was hired to be the principal of their building. Over
the course of their two years together, the staff mentioned how the vision, which is being led by Kara, is, "constantly being reconstructed and modified."

The responsibility of Discipline generated over twice as many comments from the focus group than from the interview with Kara. The aspect of Discipline she described was her ability to guard teachers from internal distractions that occurred within the school. Kara also described an aspect of Discipline by stating she protects her teachers from distractions that occurred at the district-level. Those distractions were outside of the school building. Marzano, Waters, and McNulty (2005) defined this leadership responsibility as the principal acting as a buffer for the teachers against things that detract their attention from classroom instruction. Kara spoke specifically about her role in protecting staff from the budgetary decisions being made at the district level. Although her teachers did not speak directly about Kara guarding them from district budgetary decisions, they described how she provided them protection from parent complaints or concerns: "Teachers talk about how she supports their decisions with parents and buffers them from hearing about the criticisms and complaints. That really protects us because that can be so demoralizing."

The next two responsibilities discussed were notable strengths of Kara's. This is depicted in Table 1, specifically for Visibility and Relationship. These responsibilities are discussed simultaneously due to the connectedness of the two. They are connected because it would be difficult for a principal to
establish relationships with staff if she was absent from or hiding in the
building. Marzano, Waters and McNulty (2005) define Visibility as having
frequent contact with students and teachers through systematic classroom
visits, and also having frequent contact with parents. They also define the
responsibility of Relationship as the leader having knowledge of the personal
lives of the teaching staff. A majority of the time spent during Kara’s
interview and the focus group with her staff was spent discussing how much
of Kara’s day is spent engaging in those two leadership responsibilities. At
one point during the focus group, the words used to describe Kara’s daily
work by the teachers around these two responsibilities mirrored the words
Kara used during her interview:

I do people work during the day, I don’t do paperwork...I do paperwork
after everyone leaves...you can’t do people work when people aren’t in
the building...there have been some people who last year, never came
to talk to me, and the fact that they are this year...made me really
happy. They would come in and sit down in my chair. hey were the
last hold-out.

Her teachers agreed with Kara stating, “Kara’s work is secondary to our
work, or to the students...I am pretty certain her own work gets pushed
aside...and sometimes I just go to share something funny and think, ‘oh, I’ve
so got to tell her this!’”
Even though there was a lot of agreement between Kara and her teachers regarding her daily practices, there were three behaviors Kara described in her interview that were not described by her teachers during the focus group. They were: Communication, Knowledge of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment, and Involvement in Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment. Of those three leadership responsibilities, Kara spoke rather critically of herself related to curriculum and instruction: “...I give myself a ‘C’ in instruction and I have myself a ‘D’ in curriculum...” On the other hand, Communication was something that Kara described when she spoke of engaging in “people work.” She indicated that much of her day was spent communicating because, “you can’t do people work if people aren’t there.”

There was only one behavior that her teachers described Kara engaging in on a daily basis that Kara did not identify during the interviewing portion of the study. It was the responsibility of Outreach. The aspect of this responsibility the focus group spent time describing had to do with the principal complying with state mandates. The teachers specifically spoke about Kara working with the building’s Title I teacher to assist staff in understanding how the Michigan School Improvement Framework was useful and applicable to their work:

School improvement was such a far out kind of thing. Nobody could buy into it because of the fact that it wasn’t anybody’s top priority.
Now because of state mandates and, I think, Kara and Sharon that it has come to the forefront and we all realized that it is something that is important...

Overall, there was agreement between how Kara and her teachers described her leadership behaviors and daily work. Not only did Kara’s interview provide evidence of 17 of the 21 leadership responsibilities, but her teachers also provided evidence for 16 of the leadership responsibilities. Both Kara and her teachers had 66% agreement (14 of the 21 responsibilities) in the way they described Kara’s leadership behaviors and daily work in demonstrating the 21 responsibilities.

Group 1: Kara, Phase 2

Kara’s descriptions of her daily leadership behaviors and practices identified three months after the initial interview are presented during the results for the fourth research question.

Group 1: Tanya, Phase 1

When Tanya described her leadership behaviors and daily work as a principal, the researcher was able to code her spoken words and relate them to six of the 21 leadership responsibilities. Table 2 illustrates the leadership responsibilities Tanya described during the first interview. Those responsibilities were Change Agent, Culture, Discipline, Optimize, Outreach, and Knowledge in Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.
Table 2. Group 1 Responsibility Flags – Tanya

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<tr>
<th>Leadership Responsibility</th>
<th>Int 1</th>
<th>FG</th>
<th>Flags</th>
<th>Int 2</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Change Agent</td>
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<td>1,2</td>
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<td>Communication</td>
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<td>x</td>
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<td>Contingent Rewards</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>x</td>
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<tr>
<td>Affirmation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discipline</td>
<td>x-x-x</td>
<td>-x</td>
<td>1,2</td>
<td>x</td>
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<tr>
<td>Flexibility</td>
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<td>Ideals/Beliefs</td>
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<td>Input</td>
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<td>x-x-x</td>
<td>1,2</td>
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<td>Intellectual Stimulation</td>
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<td>Knowledge of C, I, &amp; A</td>
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<td>Outreach</td>
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<td>Visibility</td>
<td>-x-x-x</td>
<td>-x-x-x</td>
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Table 2 delineates the responsibility of Knowledge of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment generated the most descriptions of this responsibility from Tanya. There were three separate comments that the researcher coded during the interview and identified each with an “x” in the table. She also discussed how her demonstration of Knowledge of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment evolved over the course of the school year:

So at the beginning of the year I was going through a lot of guilt because I was having teachers come to me saying, “just tell me what to
do, just give me what this is because I am worried about these kids,”
and I couldn't give it to them because I didn't know it myself and I still
don't really know it myself...but now we know more and are doing
more...I feel like I am becoming well-versed enough in what they are
doing that I can give some helpful feedback or sometimes just help
them think through some of their misconceptions...

During the focus group, Tanya’s teachers described her leadership behaviors
and daily work related to 6 of the 21 leadership responsibilities. They were:
Communication, Discipline, Input, Knowledge of Curriculum, Instruction,
and Assessment, Order, and Outreach. There was agreement between both
Tanya and her teachers in only three of the responsibilities. This is
illustrated in Table 2 by each of those responsibilities having at least one “x”
in both the “Interview 1” column and the “FG” column. Those responsibilities
were: Discipline, Knowledge of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment, and
Outreach.

Even though there was agreement between Tanya and her teachers in
her demonstration of Knowledge of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment,
Tanya provided more examples related to that responsibility than her
teachers who participated in the focus group. There are three descriptions for
Knowledge of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment depicted in Table 2.
One of those descriptions for that responsibility was coded as an, “-x.” That
type of notation indicates an absence of the responsibility, or an attempt at
demonstrating the responsibility that was a non-example of how the authors intended it to be borne out in practice. In this instance, Tanya stated during the interview that although she feels her knowledge of RtI has increased over the course of the school year, she still wasn’t sure, at times, how to respond to questions posed by her teachers related to RtI literacy practices. Many questions posed by her teachers occurred either during the Child Study Process or during staff meetings.

While, Tanya provided the most descriptions related to Knowledge of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment, her teachers on the other hand, provided significantly more descriptions around the leadership responsibility of Discipline. Although Marzano, Waters, and McNulty (2005) defined Discipline in a proactive, positive way related to protecting the teachers' instructional time and protecting them from distractions, they provide further explanation for the responsibilities by citing authors from the 69 research studies used to conduct the meta-analysis. Elmore (2000), discussed Discipline by saying “there is a role for leaders in moving non-instructional issues out of the way to prevent them from creating confusion and distraction in school systems, and classrooms” (p. 24).

Descriptions of the principal’s work related to managing student misbehavior in a reactive way were coded as a negative demonstration of the responsibility Discipline. In Table 2, notations are made using a, “-x.” The researcher made a decision to code descriptions this way based on how the
authors defined the responsibility. Discipline was coded this way because although removing students who engage in misbehavior does provide teachers and students with protection from distractions, the true essence of the responsibility is about creating proactive systems that protect the teachers from unnecessary interruptions. The systems are supportive of the work necessary to improve student outcomes rather than reacting to things that detract from increasing student outcomes. Both Tanya and her teachers discussed the increase in student misbehavior in the building, which was causing Tanya to spend much of her time engaging with students who were misbehaving. Tanya states: “I am spending more time on behavior than I would have thought I would have been spending...” The descriptions Tanya provided for managing student behavior were also supported by the teachers who participated in the focus group: “I know she takes behavior issues into her office and deals with those to help teachers as much as possible.” Even though non-examples of Discipline were described during Tanya’s interview, there were also appropriate examples provided:

Even though she (Tanya) is so stressed and overwhelmed, she wears her stress well, it never shows...She keeps it under control and I appreciate that because she’s not here to complain, she’s not here to weigh us down, she’s not here to give us all these other burdens, she shares just what she needs to.
Given the fact that Tanya spent much of her time managing student behavior this contributed to an absence of the responsibility Visibility. Each of the descriptions were coded in Table 2 with a "-x" next to Visibility. Tanya described during the first interview how she is unable to be visible in her building. Her teachers also recognized Tanya’s lack of visibility:

I think one of our biggest issues is just where we are as a district right now. What she has to do day-to-day is going to look different this year than it probably ever will again because we don’t see her much. She’s in meeting, after meeting...the priority is the consolidation though, but before that, I still didn’t see her in the classroom that much...I would say that when she walks into our room the kids are at a heightened awareness because she’s not often able to have that time in the classroom...because she’s simply pulled in so many different directions. The principal’s responsibilities have just escalated so her door is closed a fair amount. It is a small environment so I can’t blame her, I couldn’t think well when everything is going on in the office so you can’t just pop in sometimes. The door is closed often and I’m not going to knock on it...

Possible reasons why Tanya struggled to demonstrate Visibility included her obligations to work with central office administrators and her principal colleagues on planning for the consolidation of elementary buildings. Tanya noted many of her principal responsibilities were still waiting for her back in
the building. Although Tanya’s reasons for not being visible in the building were plausible, she and her teachers noted that the consolidation work was unique to this school year.

Overall, Tanya and the teachers who participated in the focus group demonstrated agreement in Tanya’s daily work related to 3 of the 21 leadership responsibilities. There was also agreement that Tanya is not very visible in the building. Tanya’s teachers also described her work related to two additional leadership responsibilities: Communication and Order. Tanya described her work related to 6 of the 21 responsibilities while her teachers described 6 of the 21 leadership responsibilities.

Group 1: Tanya, Phase 2

The information Tanya provided during the second interview about how she allocates her time and prioritizes her daily work are presented during the results for the fourth research question.

Group 2: Rhonda, Phase 1

There was agreement between the way Rhonda and her staff described her leadership behaviors and practices for her daily work (Table 3).

Rhonda and the teachers who participated in the focus group each described the same five responsibilities, which included: Communication, Flexibility, Input, Knowledge of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment, and Monitor/Evaluate. Rhonda provided the most description around Monitor/Evaluate. During the interview she provided five separate
Table 3. Group 2 Responsibility Flags – Rhonda

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descriptions of her work related to this responsibility. This is noted in Table 2, with one “x” for each description provided. Marzano, Waters and McNulty (2005) defined the core of this responsibility related to providing feedback on the effectiveness of school practices in improving student outcomes. Further definition of Monitor/Evaluate is provided from research studies included in the meta-analysis. Those studies included the teacher evaluation process as a part of the definition of Monitor/Evaluate (De Pree, 1989; Kaagan & Marckle, 1993). Absent from the definition of this responsibility was any mention of
supervising hallways and student behavior. Given the fact that the
traditional definition of the words “monitor/evaluate” tend to lead people
towards thinking of supervising (monitoring) of behavior, it was important
for the researcher to be clear in the author's definition of this leadership
responsibility. Consequently, re-coding occurred to revise the descriptions
principal subjects and teacher subjects provided around what the researcher
originally thought constituted practices associated with the responsibility of
Monitor/Evaluate. In Rhonda’s case, she provided descriptions of this
responsibility that aligned with the intent of the authors:

I have these evaluations due for teachers after spring break sometime
or after April is over with, and I have not been able to really give
attention to them because of all the RtI training and all of the
professional development planning.

The responsibility of Communication was the second most frequently
described responsibility by Rhonda. Due to the emphasis on RtI
implementation, leadership team trainings associated with RtI, district-level
RtI work, and frequent administrative team meetings causing Rhonda to be
absent from the building, she spoke about the importance of ensuring
communication was occurring between her and the building leadership team:

My day involves working closely with the school improvement team
and making sure that there is a lot of communication going on day-to-
day regarding our processes in implementing the RtI
initiative...making sure that we are planning for how we are going to
give information to staff regarding what we are learning...RtI is
helping us create a communication plan where now I won't feel like I
have to always be the one communicating things but now, I can
communicate out to teacher leaders who can then communicate in
their professional learning communities and then information can flow
through the PLC groups.

The teachers also mentioned an aspect of Communication that directly
related to Mazano, Waters and McNulty's (2005) definition. One facet of the
definition involves the principal developing ways for teachers to communicate
effectively with one another. Admittedly, Rhonda spoke about how she
created the system for teachers to be meeting weekly in Professional
Learning Communities (PLCs). Due to the circumstances surrounding
district funding and not having enough money for roaming substitutes to be
used on a weekly basis, Rhonda and the school counselor worked together to
serve as the substitute for the grade level teachers while they met in PLCs.
Her teachers noticed that throughout the school year Rhonda was unable to
attend the PLCs and wondered:

I am not entirely sure about this, but it seems to be that Rhonda is
using the PLC work as a way, and maybe its not an appropriate
surrogate, but it's one way I think she is trying to have an impact on
what's happening in the class even if she can't get in.
Because of her involvement in large quantities of district work, Rhonda not only noted how important it was for her to have the communication system in place but she also began to present a similar challenge as Tanya in having to struggle to keep ahead of the problems that were occurring in the building while she was gone. Student misbehavior was a large area of concern for both Rhonda and her staff. It was evident in the interview and focus group that the emphasis was on reacting to student misbehavior. The descriptions of Rhonda's work that were related to managing student behavior in a reactive way were coded as "-x." Rhonda noted that student misbehaviors caused the students to be removed from the classroom environment because they were disrupting the learning environment. Similar to Tanya's circumstances, student misbehavior needed to be dealt with in order to prevent the situation from worsening as opposed to developing systems to support the work that needed to occur in the classrooms to improve student outcomes. Rhonda recalled how "a big bulk of the day is dealing with discipline issues that come up and also responding to parents about the issues that are coming-up." Her teachers agreed with her assessment by saying:

She is dealing with a lot of behavioral issues throughout the day. The reality of it is that sometimes those behavior forms do pile up and then all of a sudden I've heard her say, "I've got a day of behavior referrals...I think that really honestly exists, it's not a panacea."
The high volume of district-level work, the necessity to manage student misbehavior, the obligation of covering teacher's classrooms while they participated in PLCs all worked together to create a situation where there was agreement between both Rhonda and her teachers that the leadership responsibility Visibility was absent from her day-to-day work. The absence of this responsibility occurred six times during “Interview” 1 with Rhonda and eight times during the focus group with her teachers. Rhonda had been experiencing the pull of district-level work from her obligations as the building principal. Her teachers felt the pull too: “As a teacher I feel a little frustrated that the district is pulling her away from us a lot.” The district-level demands that were being placed on Rhonda were too much for her teachers to bear. Although they felt that she had the knowledge to assume those additional responsibilities, they felt she was unable to manage one more thing:

They actually want her to do one more thing. They want her to head up the English Language Arts committee AND District Professional Development Committees. And I understand it is her vision that those two should merge and so that was one way she could think of doing that and it made sense doing that in ELA, and it should drive professional development… it’s just many things do get pushed down from a district or curricular standpoint and she’s ELA head and she’s
doing this RtI work, and she’s doing presentations to the administration and the staff, X needs her and—she’s a mom.

There was agreement between Rhonda and her teachers when they described her principal behaviors and practices that occurred on a daily basis. They described 5 of the 21 leadership responsibilities as a part of her daily work and both agreed that Visibility and Discipline were absent from her daily work. District work, managing student misbehavior, participation in RtI trainings and meetings were all pulling on her time. Because of the multitude of demands Rhonda had to manage, she struggled to complete the annual teacher evaluations on time and also viewed having to get into the teacher's classrooms in order to complete the evaluation process as a burden on the other things that demand her attention.

Group 2: Rhonda, Phase 2

The follow-up interview conducted with Rhonda three months following the first interview yielded a few minor differences in how she described her leadership behaviors and practices on a day-to-day basis. Rhonda provided descriptions that were coded for 3 of the 21 leadership responsibilities. They were: Communication, Input, and Monitor/Evaluate. Unlike the first interview, Rhonda did not describe her daily practices as involving Flexibility or Knowledge of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment. There was also an absence of Discipline and Visibility during the
second interview. Rhonda provided the researcher with a plan for how next year she was going to increase her visibility and presence in the classroom.

During the second phase of the research study, Rhonda also continued to identify district-level work, meetings, planning for meetings, managing student misbehavior, and parent meetings as the things that occupied her daily work as the building principal. These examples of work that occupied her time were also prevalent in the first interview and were also described by her teachers during the focus group. The difference though between the first and second interview was the reflective tone of the second interview. Because the second interview was conducted during mid-June after students and teachers had dismissed for summer break, Rhonda was reflective of her work as the building principal throughout the school year. She indicated she spent most of her time on the discipline problems plaguing the building and as a result, accompanying parent issues stemming from their children's misbehaviors, and other demands for her time as principal. Rhonda reflected on the large amount of time she spends working as a principal in order to try to be the instructional leader of the building:

I spend a lot of my time planning professional development and instructional practices, data and learning. But that means I come in at 4 o'clock in the morning because I feel like I am having to get a lot of the communication work in and...if I want to stay strong as an instructional leader than I just have to put the time in until we can get
our discipline referrals down; until I can create a culture where everybody understands scheduling because right now, everybody wants a piece of me so everybody is pulling on me throughout the whole day and nobody understands that 25 other people are pulling on you...so if people are pulling on me for six hours of the day which could be kids, parents, or teachers, I am going to put probably a good 3-4 hours in planning for the instructional piece.

There were very few differences between the first and second interview in how Rhonda described her leadership behaviors and practices on a day-to-day basis. She provided fewer descriptions of her daily work that could be coded as relating to the 21 leadership responsibilities. The same tasks that Rhonda identified during the initial interview that were competing for her time and attention continued to compete for her time during the second interview. Rhonda indicated that they would remain priorities that would occupy her time through the next school year.

Group 2: Cindy, Phase 1

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During the initial interview process, Cindy described her daily principal behaviors and practices around 6 of the 21 leadership responsibilities (Table 4). The responsibilities included: Input, Knowledge of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment, Monitor/Evaluate, Optimize, Order, and Outreach. The teachers who participated in the focus group described her day-to-day work related to 4 of the 21 leadership responsibilities. The responsibility of Optimize was the only responsibility the teachers did not describe during the focus group whereas Cindy provided a description for it during the initial interview. The most prevalent responsibility Cindy described was Input. This was because Cindy described how her leadership style had evolved over the course of the past 3-4 years.
I had this ridiculous thought that everyone thought like me...so now I listen very carefully and I gave up my whole authoritarian kind of process because it doesn't work, because you have to empower your staff and when you do that, good things happen...but I used to think that it took up too much time to get everybody on board and I just wanted to say, “just do what I say and it will be okay, just trust me on this one.”

Input and collaboration were very important to Cindy because she saw how a lack of input prevented the building to move forward in focusing on what improves student outcomes. At the time of this study, Cindy spoke very highly of the level of commitment from her staff and leadership team and recognized “there were some people who really wanted to roll up their sleeves and be involved.”

Cindy’s staff did not describe her demonstration of Input in the same way. Although the teachers were pleased that there was staff involvement, they felt Cindy was “too hands-off” and relied too heavily on the leadership team to continue the implementation of the RtI work:

I think that she’s kind of behind the scenes as she has probably multitudes of tasks to do that probably don’t even deal with education, just on keeping the building running on a day-to-day basis. I know she used to take an active role in RtI and that she takes an active role in getting the structure up and running and then she has the individuals
she's selected kind of run it once she's structured the framework for them...It's more like she creates the idea and the plan and then she delegates the implementation to others rather than being out and about and involved in it.

Teachers also began to allude to another troubling underlying theme that emerged and ultimately dominated the majority of the time spent during the focus group. Repeatedly, the teachers described situations in which there was a clear absence of the responsibilities of Visibility and Relationships. Table 2 demonstrates the absence of both of those responsibilities. The district-mandated budget meetings caused Cindy and her administrative assistant to develop policies and procedures for the school around efficiency. Marzano, Waters and McNulty (2005) would classify the establishment of policies and procedures as a demonstration of the responsibility of Order. The authors define this responsibility as the “extent to which the leader “establishes a set of standard operating principles and routines” (p. 43). Cindy shared how she struggled to accomplish the tasks given to her by central office as well as the tasks expected of her as the building principal. Consequently, Cindy established a policy whereby all staff mailboxes were removed from the office and taken to a more centralized location of the school. Cindy described how this was more convenient for not only her staff, but also it also allowed her to accomplish more tasks that demanded Cindy's attention. She in essence described how efficient she was trying to be with her time. Her teachers
discussed these administrative decisions around “efficiency” during the focus group:

It is very interesting this year because personality wise, Cindy is very personable so you feel comfortable just going into the office and popping in to talk to her. But yet, the system this year has just not been set up to do that, and you’re kind of caught in between, you don’t know what to do...

I think that this new administrative program that they’re working on this year is to improve efficiency...we do miss out on the personal piece. I think Cindy misses that as well...I think it was actually mentioned to me that the mailboxes were moved out of the office area to limit teacher contact not that it was done on purpose, and I understand why they would do it but you would come by and stop and talk to Cindy for five minutes and that’s five minutes out of her time that she wasn’t doing what she needed to be doing which meant she was here until 7:05, from 7:00 to 7:05 instead. And if all of us would take those five minute chunks, well it was good for us but she was probably being bogged down by it.

The passages listed above describe the negative impact the policies and procedures around “efficiency” had on the teachers who participated in the focus group. Consequently, the negative impact the policies and procedures had on the teachers who participated in the focus group were coded as a “-x”
for the responsibility of Order. The absence of the responsibility Relationship was not only evident in the passages listed above, but it was evident how interconnected the teachers viewed the responsibility of Relationship to that of Visibility. When coding the data the researcher needed to identify specific words that tended to connote relationship-type verbs and phrases as opposed to words and phrases that spoke directly to seeing the principal in the building. When the researcher asked the focus group to describe Cindy’s day-to-day practice the teachers stated:

To be quite honest, I really couldn’t begin to tell you what her day looks like. I probably see her once every two weeks out and about. I used to pop-in more last year to say, ‘hi’. I know she’s extremely busy...it seems like when you think about what Cindy’s day looks like, to me, it seems like there is just meeting after meeting after meeting...I would love to see her out in the building a lot more...and we don’t see her at team meetings. She has not attended our team meeting yet, so getting to a grade level meeting has been extremely difficult for her.

There was overlap in the comments provided by Cindy’s teachers during the focus group because they admitted that they would “pop-in” to see Cindy in her office while they were already in the office checking their mailboxes. Because the mailboxes were removed from the office, the teachers stated that they no longer had a reason to enter into the office on a daily basis. Instead,
they came to the office to get things like tissues from the secretary. Further complicating matters, the policies surrounding efficiency dealt with expectations for electronic communications to Cindy:

Our secretary has been told the plan is for efficiency in order to make our school run smoother so that things don’t fall through the cracks as much when it is strategically planned out...so this is something they are experimenting with this year, we were told we could not pop-in and that we needed to make an appointment for anything, and a lot of times it would take a week or so before we could get that appointment. And secondly, we weren’t supposed to ever e-mail her directly that we had to e-mail the secretary. The hard part with that was that we never knew whether they ever got to see the e-mail or not. Then her in-box filled up and the e-mails got sent back to us undeliverable. So they are letting us sneak through a few more e-mails now than we used to be able to because I don’t think it worked really well. But it was something new they were trying this year to streamline the efficiency in appointments...

The efficiency procedures around electronic communication Cindy and her secretary put in place were coded as another example of the responsibility of Order. Order and the absence of Visibility and Relationship ebbed and flowed during this portion of the focus group.
There was agreement between Cindy and her staff in describing four of the 21 leadership responsibilities while describing her day-to-day practices as a principal. Input and Order resonated negatively with the teachers who participated in the focus group. This was ironic because Cindy provided substantially more conversation during the interview session around Input and Order than any of the other responsibilities. She was proud of the work she had done around those two responsibilities. The teachers provided descriptions that suggested an absence of Visibility and Relationship as noted by, "-x." This was due in part to district obligations that were frequently pulling Cindy out of her building and policies around the removal of the mailboxes from the office causing the teachers to no longer have a reason to go into the office on a daily basis.

Phase 2

The second interview conducted with Cindy yielded some differences between the number of leadership responsibilities she described during her first and second interviews. During the second interview, Cindy described her daily work relating to 2 of the 21 leadership responsibilities. They were: Input and Order. This was less than what she described during the first interview. In the initial interview, Cindy was able to describe daily work in 5 of the 21 leadership responsibilities. The responsibilities absent from the phase 2 interview included: Knowledge of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment, Monitor/Evaluate, Optimize, and Outreach. Unlike in the first
interview, Cindy described an absence of the responsibilities of Relationships and Visibility.

During the second interview, Cindy was reflective on the work and demands that were competing for her time throughout the school year. She chose to discuss her daily work that occurred the last few weeks of school. Given the budgetary constraints facing the district and the decisions that impacted her building, Cindy spent a large percentage of her time working on the schedule for the following school year:

We were anticipating a huge loss in staffing because teachers were going to be teaching five of seven periods to teaching six of seven periods, so that was a natural loss... and I spent a lot of time over the last three months and especially last few days of school just trying to do staffing because it changed so frequently. I think we are settled now...

She also discussed the how student misbehaviors occupied more of her time this year than last year: “we had a huge increase in discipline issues and this year, we had more expulsion hearings than ever...” Managing the misbehavior would also interfere with the budget meetings Cindy attended and occasionally caused her to have to leave those meetings: “So there were a couple of times when we had to leave the meeting because we got a call that there were some really serious discipline things going on.” The circumstances surrounding Cindy’s involvement in the responsibility of
Discipline continued to be focused on reacting to the issues that were detracting from instruction in the classrooms as opposed to being involved in protecting the teacher's time in supportive ways that were proactive.

Overall, Cindy provided descriptions of only two of the leadership responsibilities during the second interview. This was less than half of the leadership responsibilities Cindy described in the first interview. The circumstances surrounding the things that focused her daily work were the same for both interviews. The absence of Relationships and Visibility were described by the teachers in the focus group and only by Cindy during the second interview. The differences between the two interviews included more of a reflective tone of the second interview because Cindy turned her attention towards planning her leadership for the next school year. Although Cindy's focus on next school year described the responsibilities of Contingent Rewards and Relationships, her descriptions from the second interview did not relate to the research question being asked and as a result, could not be coded and included.

Research Question 1: Common Participant Themes

Across all four principal subjects some common themes emerged regarding how the principals and their teachers described their day-to-day work. In three of the four cases, the responsibility of Discipline tended to be focused on the principal's involvement in the containment of student misbehavior. Kara was the only major exception because the six occurrences
for Discipline from the interviews and focus group centered on protecting teachers from distractions that would detract from their work in the classroom. Those descriptions aligned with the intended definition of Discipline. Kara and her teachers cited district budgetary issues and parent concerns or complaints as some of the things that were kept away from the teachers. It is important to note that Kara has an assistant principal whose responsibility was to handle the behavior problems that occur. While this is also true in Cindy's case, as her involvement in managing misbehavior was necessary as student behavioral problems could not be handled solely by her assistant principal.

Input was another common responsibility described by principals and teacher participants. All of the occurrences of Input centered on the use of the Building Leadership Team or School Improvement Team for the planning and execution of the RtI work. The descriptions of Input provided by Kara, Tanya and Rhonda, were framed around teachers who were participating on either the Leadership Team or School Improvement Team, their principals had established necessary lines of communication in order to ensure the work that needed to occur happened. The leadership teams were necessary for accomplishing what needed to occur and ultimately allowed the principals to be able to focus their energy on the district-level work, meetings, and other factors detracting from their building level responsibilities.
The absence of Visibility was also common amongst three of the four principal subjects. Reasons cited for the lack of visibility were similar as well. District-work that involved budgetary decisions, district-wide committee meetings, and planning meetings were common for Cindy, Rhonda, and Tanya. The only exception to this was Kara who focused her daily work on being visible to students, staff, and parents. The absence of Visibility had, by far, the most descriptions from the interviews and focus groups. There were a total of 26 descriptions extracted from the participant transcripts related to the absence of Visibility.

In summary, there was much agreement between the principal subjects and their teachers who participated in the focus groups around the first research question for this study. There were also common themes that emerged across cases with both the principal subjects and teacher subjects. Of the four principal subjects, Kara and her teachers provided more descriptions of her daily practices and leadership behaviors around the 21 leadership responsibilities than did the other three principal subjects and their teachers. Kara described 16 of the 21 leadership responsibilities during her interview compared to 6 of 21 leadership responsibilities for two of the principal subjects and 5 of 21 leadership responsibilities for Rhonda. Kara’s description of her daily work yielded nearly three times as many descriptions of the leadership responsibilities than the other principal subjects. Kara’s teachers who participated in the focus groups were also able to provide more
descriptions of her daily work that were related to the 21 leadership responsibilities. Her teachers described Kara as engaging in 14 of the 21 responsibilities. This was compared to the teachers from the other three principal subjects who provided descriptions of their principal’s daily work that averaged 5 of the 21 leadership responsibilities. This was less than two thirds of the descriptions provided by Kara’s teachers.

Even though there were differences between principal subjects in the quantity of descriptions related to the 21 leadership responsibilities, there was agreement between the principal subjects and their teachers who participated in the focus groups. There was even agreement in the three cases that involved an absence of leadership responsibilities. Visibility and Relationships were the two responsibilities most frequently described as being absent from the principal’s daily work.

Research Question 2

What are the similarities and differences in how principals and their teachers describe the priorities for the principal’s work that impact the implementation of the change initiative?

Group 1: Kara, Phase 1

During the first interview with Kara she identified four priorities for her work that impacted the implementation of the RtI work: building trust, communicating with students, staff, and parents, engaging in “people” work, and being visible to students and staff. Kara acknowledged that answering
this research question was difficult, “I don't have a good answer to that question and that is probably why I am working too many hours a day.” After she paused to think for a moment, Kara provided four priorities. She felt that communication occupied most of her time but felt that trust was her main priority because “in order to get change, ...there has got to be trust.” “People work” was another priority she identified, which was coupled with being visible in the building.

In implementing a change initiative like RtI, Kara equated trust with the ability to effect change. When coding the data for this study related to the priorities for Kara’s work, it was evident she had described the responsibilities of Culture, Communication, Change Agent, Relationships, and Visibility. Establishing an environment where there was trust between the staff and Kara was essential for her to be able to effect change: “Sometimes I don’t think I have trust with my staff and that is the way it is going to be, and that’s okay because if you have trust all the time then you are not shaking it up.” Marzano, Waters and McNulty (2005) defined the responsibility of Culture as the leader having to foster a shared purpose between not only the principal and staff, but between individual staff members as well. Kara stated that it was necessary to “shake” things up within the building. In doing so, she was describing the responsibility of Change Agent where the leader is not only willing to challenge the status
quo, but also actively seeks newer and better ways of doing things in order to improve student outcomes.

Kara also described how communication was a priority for her work as principal. That was evident in the descriptions of the systems she put in place for things like department meetings, RtI leadership team meetings, and school improvement team meetings. She expected the meetings to occur with agendas that were prepared ahead of time, minutes submitted to all staff, and regular meetings between Kara and the committee chairpersons to ensure things were happening as they were intended to be happening. The leadership responsibility Communication is defined as the extent to which the leader creates opportunities for teachers to collaborate with one another regarding issues that will improve student achievement. The information Kara provided substantiating why communication was a priority of hers aligns with the authors' definition.

In regards to her priorities of Relationships and Visibility, Kara stated that she is focused on "doing people work while people are in the building." Specifically, she described how responding to the needs of staff and intentionally "walking around the building grabbing moments" is a priority for her work. The frequent contact with teachers and students was pervasive throughout Kara's interview:

I welcome kids and help them to start their day the right way and then I hang out in the hallway so I can see teachers and different kids while
they are all getting ready to go in their classes. Then I walk into every single classroom every single day.

Kara uses those opportunities while she is visible in the hallways to communicate with students, teachers, and parents as they are arriving. She uses frequent visits to the classrooms to leverage demonstrating the responsibilities of Contingent Rewards and Affirmation. Marzano, Waters and McNulty (2005) defined Contingent Rewards as the leader recognizing and rewarding staff for hard work based on performance as opposed to seniority. Affirmation is similar to Contingent Rewards in that the leader does account for the successes of the school; however, what is different between these two responsibilities is that there is a balanced account by the leader for both successes and failures. The authors refer to the responsibility of Affirmation as an accountability practice for what is occurring in the school. Kara’s response:

As I am walking through the building I always have this mental list running through my head...it can be somebody who I noticed is really giving some energy to kids during lunch for doing the right thing, and letting them know how important that is...or I notice if someone is responding inappropriately to the kid who continues to pound his pencil on the desk...I do have to say some hard things to them. They are not hard for me to say but hard to listen to I’m sure and I do that real privately too.
When Kara’s teachers were interviewed, there was agreement between Kara and her teachers regarding all four of the priorities for Kara’s work. They unanimously agreed that trust, communication, people, and being visible to students, staff and parents were priorities for her work. As previously stated earlier in this chapter, Kara’s teachers reported they were “ready for a change” when they heard Kara was going to be the principal of their school. They “were tired of being in Negative Land because it was stressing (everyone) out.” They described how Kara creates time for them to “share opportunities from professional development offerings, strategies with the whole group, and being excited about trying the things that their colleagues have showed them.” The descriptions that Kara’s teachers provided align with the definition of the responsibilities Culture and Communication.

In regards to Kara’s demonstration of Visibility, teachers reported, “I see her in the hallways and in the classrooms a lot...Lots of student/teacher contact, I think. Every morning I see her kind of do the rounds in the building. It is like she is visible.” Coupled with descriptions of the responsibility Visibility, Kara’s teachers also saw, “people work” as the number one priority for her. They worried though that her emphasis on “people work” and leaving all of her other work for after staff and students left the building was eventually going to take a toll on her:
She puts in unbelievable hours, and I worry. I worry. I would almost say that is a negative, if we want to talk about a negative, she’s going to burn out long before we want to give her up...She’s doing the flowerbed, she’s trimming the trees, she’s fixing the fence, and she’s here at 6:00 in the morning....and on the weekends.

Overall, there was 100% agreement between how Kara described the priorities of her work and how her teachers who participated in the focus group prioritized her work. The priorities Kara and her teachers described during the interview and focus group were coded as examples of the leadership responsibilities that received some of the highest number of descriptions. Kara’s teachers worried though that the long hours Kara works as principal, coupled with her priority of “people first” might wear her down to the point where she might “leave” her staff “before they are ready to let her go.”

Group 1: Kara, Phase 2

Kara’s descriptions of the priorities for her work will be presented when the results for the fourth research question are presented.

Group 1: Tanya, Phase 1

Unlike Kara, Tanya’s priorities were not priorities that impacted the implementation of the RtI. Tanya often discussed how this school year was like no other because of the consolidation of elementary schools. The implementation of RtI was occurring simultaneously with the conversations
and planning to consolidate from five elementary schools down to three schools. Tanya listed four priorities for her work: e-mail, district consolidation planning, managing student misbehavior, and creating the monthly special education schedule for the building. Her teachers agreed with three out of the four priorities except e-mail.

E-mail was a topic that Tanya spent a considerable amount of time discussing during the first interview. She struggled to find balance between sorting through and answering the high number of e-mails she would receive on a daily basis. When trying to identify her priorities, Tanya felt uncomfortable listing e-mail as one of her priorities:

I really feel silly even saying it, I sound stupid but I feel like e-mail takes priority over so much other stuff. Even though it is just an e-mail it is an expectation from somebody else...and I feel like it has such a convenience factor, so when someone e-mails you a two page e-mail at 2:00 in the morning because they were stewing about something, then I see that as my priority. I just feel like the communication exchange rolls and rolls...I have tried to tally the number of e-mails I got in a day and e-mails that I send on any given day just out of curiosity, and I literally cannot keep up with the tally...I find myself just talking out loud right now-I don't even know what I would do with the extra time if I just banned e-mail...I would just build so much time back into my day where I could actually be face
to face with people instead of being face to face with my computer, and  
I can easily say that e-mail at work has created such a distaste for me...It plagues me. It plagues me.  
Electronic communication was not directly stated in Marzano, Waters,  
and McNulty’s definition of the responsibility Communication.  

Communication was defined as the extent to which the principal creates opportunities for teachers to communicate with one another on a frequent basis. This portion of the definition speaks directly to teacher-to-teacher communication. The second part of the definition includes being easily accessible to teachers and staff and maintaining effective lines of communication with staff. This would be where electronic modes of communication, like e-mail, could be included. Nonetheless, Tanya finds herself engaging in reading, sorting, and responding to e-mail on a constant basis.  

District Consolidation work was the second priority she identified and one that could not be coded with any of the specific leadership responsibilities. As mentioned in the first section of this chapter, the meetings and work associated with the district consolidations was causing Tanya and her teachers to describe the absence of the responsibility Visibility. The district-level work was also identified as work that was specific to only this school year.
Tanya identified managing student misbehavior as her third priority. This was also something Tanya and her teachers discussed when describing her daily work. Tanya enjoyed “dealing with the behavior stuff” because it kept her connected to the students. Since managing student misbehavior is not how Marzano, Waters and McNulty (2005) intended to define Discipline, this priority Tanya identified is considered to be a non-example of the demonstration of that responsibility.

The final priority Tanya identified was having the responsibility of creating the special education schedule for the building. This schedule included all the dates for the IEP meetings, initial evaluation process and other important timelines pertaining to students who are being tested to determine eligibility for special education services. Understanding how to organize the special education schedule is something that has taken Tanya a few years to get acclimated to because of the difficulty in sorting through everyone’s calendars to attend the IEP meetings, timelines for the evaluations, and other related deadlines.

One task that I have in this district that was new to me is with special education work because in my previous district there were like special trained people that did that stuff, and when I came here I found out that I was the ‘special trained person’...so I schedule all the special education meetings in my building, all the IEPs, all the re-evaluations, I handle all of that paperwork and watch the timelines. This was a
whole new learning curve for me...and it is literally like rocket-science....

Tanya’s work in coordinating the monthly special education schedule for her building can be coded to relate to the responsibility of Outreach. Marzano, Waters and McNulty (2005) defined one aspect of Outreach as ensuring that the school complies with district, state, and federal mandates. Timelines for obtaining appropriate consent for testing associated with determining eligibility of special education services is mandated by the Individual With Disabilities Improvement Act (IDEIA), 2004.

In summary, Tanya and her teachers had agreement in three out of the four priorities Tanya identified during the interview. Two of her priorities were coded to the leadership responsibilities of Communication and Outreach. The third was coded as a non-example of one of Discipline. The only priority not directly associated with a leadership responsibility was the work Tanya had to do to prepare for consolidating elementary buildings. The district consolidation did however, cause there to be an absence of the responsibility of Visibility. Out of the four priorities that Tanya listed, e-mail received the most attention during the interview process.

Group 1: Tanya, Phase 2

Tanya’s descriptions of the priorities for her work are presented with the results for the fourth research question.
Group 2: Rhonda, Phase 1

When Rhonda was asked how she prioritizes her work in the first phase of this study, she responded that some of it was intuitive as things were unfolding. Rhonda felt bad about identifying her intuition as the process she uses to prioritize her work as the principal: “and I know that is probably horrible to say but as things are unfolding I am always evaluating from my experience of what needs evaluating.” After speaking about how intuition helps her prioritize her work she identified four priorities. They were: deadlines, like those for teacher evaluations, district-RtI work, managing student behaviors, and various forms of communication. The modes of communication Rhonda identified included: e-mail, communicating with parents following their child’s misbehavior, and communication that occurs through the PLC work. Rhonda and her teachers had agreement in three of the four identified priorities. The only priority her teachers did not identify was deadlines related to completing teacher evaluations. Two of the four priorities Rhonda identified could be coded as descriptions of 2 of the 21 leadership responsibilities. Deadlines associated with completing teacher evaluations describe Outreach because it is a district mandate. The PLC work and e-mail correspondence can be classified as Communication. The priority of managing student behavior was coded as a non-example of Discipline.
The district RtI work was more complicated to code because within that priority comes several tasks and activities that detract from Rhonda’s time in the building. During the focus group with teachers it was evident that there was an absence of Visibility due to the district level work Rhonda was being asked to lead. This priority will continue to be coded as an absence of Visibility because Rhonda’s role is to be the building principal and leading within her building.

Rhonda and her teachers expressed how the district-level work was detracting from her building level responsibilities.

Group 2: Rhonda, Phase 2

Three months after the first interview, Rhonda was asked again how she prioritizes her work. During this phase of the research study she identified three of the four same priorities when the initial interview was conducted. They were managing student misbehavior, communication, and district work. Rhonda also identified monitoring student behavior in various locations of the building as the number one priority. When coding the priorities she identified, only Communication emerged along with a negative demonstration of Discipline. Even though Rhonda stated that monitoring student behavior was a high priority, Marzano, Waters and McNulty (2005) defined that responsibility as the extent to which the leader creates systems to support feedback provided practices that improve student learning. The
way Rhonda described, “monitoring” would not fit the intended definition of the responsibility.

Overall, there were very few differences between the way Rhonda prioritized her work in phases one and two of the research study. Absent from the second interview was adhering to deadlines for completing teacher evaluations. Managing student misbehavior, communication, and district work remained priorities for her work. Each of the priorities were also mentioned in her daily practices and leadership behaviors.

Group 2: Cindy, Phase 1

Cindy identified four priorities for her work during the first interview. She identified the Title I Report, scheduling/staffing for the 2010-2011 school year, keeping running tabs on MiBLSi, and managing student misbehavior. During the focus group, her teachers accurately identified two of the four priorities Cindy identified. They were planning for staffing for the following school year and managing student misbehavior. The priorities Cindy described are related to the leadership responsibilities of Outreach and Order. Managing student misbehavior is a non-example of the responsibility Discipline. The priority related to “keeping a running tab on the RtI work” could loosely be coded as Input because Cindy provided descriptions of how she has created the system for the building leadership team to find time to meet on a regular basis; she has coordinated responsibilities; and led the RtI work with the staff. While answering the first research question, Cindy
frequently provided descriptions of how leadership is distributed to her teachers. Her comments were related to how independent the team was and as a result, she was able to “check-in with the team to make sure everything was running smoothly with RtI.”

While her teachers were managing the RtI work, Cindy was working on the Title I report submission. This is a requirement for Michigan schools that wish to receive at-risk funding and consequently, would be coded as an example of Outreach. As previously stated, Marzano, Waters and McNulty define an aspect of the responsibility of Outreach as the extent to which the principal complies with state, district, and federal mandates. The authors’ definition and Cindy’s description of this priority match.

Cindy also mentioned staffing for the following school years as a priority because of the district’s decision to reduce the number of periods secondary teachers teach during the course of a school day. This was coded as an example of Order. Even though Marzano, Waters and McNulty do not specifically mention staffing within the definition, they do provide further definition of the responsibilities from the authors whose studies where used in the meta-analysis. In the case of Order, Lashway (2001) discusses the responsibilities of school leaders in standards based education as having to deal with what seems as mundane issues like staffing, but actually can have a major impact on the school’s ability to meet the standards set forth.
The emphasis on managing student misbehavior was also listed as the last of Cindy's four priorities. Her teachers stated during the focus group:

Cindy seems to get called for everything else that seems to be going on here regarding a lot of behavioral issues, and there has also been a lot of issues with parents and certain kids that are continual...she's just tied up even with the police.

The researcher coded this as a non-example of Discipline because it was an action from the principal that was more about reacting to issues that were distracting the learning environment rather than establishing proactive systems and procedures to support the work happening in classrooms to raise student achievement. Cindy's teachers recognized this, and during the focus group expressed their concern for the amount of emphasis students who demonstrate behavior problems receive by both Cindy and the assistant principal:

They are dealing with once again with the 5% and aren't out to get the 95%...and that's a real shame. It's cool to see she has our back but it's also very difficult, I imagine, for her not to get out there and spend any time with those kids who really have earned the right to interact with their school principal.

Group 2: Cindy, Phase 2

When the follow-up interview was conducted three months after the first interview, rather than identifying four priorities for her work, Cindy
identified two. They were staffing and discipline. These were also two of the priorities she identified in April during the first interview. The tone of the interview was reflective because school had ended the day before the interview took place. Cindy spent a great deal of time discussing staffing and budget implications for her building:

We were anticipating a huge loss in staffing because teachers were going from teaching five of seven to teaching six of seven. So that was a natural loss and it turned out that we did okay. There were a few who actually requested to go to the elementary level, but then overall, we were able to keep most of the staff. We also had a huge number of retirements from this building that impacted us. So all of those pieces you know you have to live during the time that it is going on but you also have to think about what it is going to look like next year. How will this look next year? So, I spent a lot of time over the last three months of school just trying to do staffing because it changed so frequently...

The planning Cindy mentioned was done through frequent meetings with central office. The changes to the circumstances were not only a result from staff that chose to retire but also from central office administrators as well, "it just became more intense because changes were just constant. You would get ready to do one thing and then it would change and there were a lot of e-mails about it. Meetings, meetings, meetings..."
On the heels of Cindy's remarks about staffing, she moved into reflecting on the increase in not only frequency of behavioral problems but also severity of the problem behaviors. Cindy attributed the behavioral problems to, “kids making poor choices; poor choices that would lead to suspension and then possibly expulsion.” The conversation turned from the priories of her work the last few days and weeks of school to the priorities she was going to focus on the following school year. Cindy lamented the lack of relationship building she had been able to do this school year due to the issues facing the school district and her building:

You can’t do anything without giving support to people, you know? And we started doing that. We did coffee trays and went around and served coffee just to do something fun and to show people we appreciated them...we would hear staff say, ‘when are you going to do that again?’ and I felt like saying, ‘well you tell me’ but it is about relationship building, and that has got to start with me.

Overall, Cindy's priorities did not necessarily change between the first and second phases of the research study. Two of the four priorities she identified in phase one of the study, remained priorities in during the second phase of the research study. Staffing issues were related to the budget constraints facing the school district. They were unable to be finalized until just before the school year ended because variables impacting the staffing decisions were constantly changing. Behavioral problems also pulled on
Cindy's time. All of these detracted from the relationships she had with her staff. Consequently, before ending the second interview, Cindy identified relationship building with her staff as a priority for the next school year.

Research Question 2: Common Participant Themes

There were also common themes that emerged across the four cases related to this research question. Each of the principal subjects identified four priorities for their work. In two of the four cases, the teachers accurately identified three out of the four (75%) priorities that their principal identified during the open-ended interview. Cindy's teachers accurately identified two of the four priorities. In Kara's case, there was 100% agreement between she and her teaches regarding the priorities for her work. In three of the four cases, district related work and managing student misbehavior were identified as priorities for the principal. In all of the cases, except for Tanya, at least one of the priorities related to the implementation of the change initiative, RtI.

Research Question 3

After three months of receiving feedback from teachers on the Balanced Leadership Profile survey, is there a change in the profile of the principal's work according to the instrument? What are the most significant areas of change in that profile?
Tables 5 and 6 present Kara and Tanya’s data from the Balanced Leadership Profile survey. For the purpose of answering this research question, a condensed table was created to illustrate only the responsibilities that received Responsibility Flags during the course of the three months of feedback. The first column lists the specific leadership responsibilities that were flagged. The table is divided into three months. They are titled, “Month 1,” “Month 2,” and “Month 3.” For each month, three columns appear. The first column listed under the month includes the average of the principal’s responses for the flagged leadership responsibilities. It is important to note that a score of 5.00 for each leadership responsibility is the highest score that can be obtained on the survey. The second column lists the average of the teacher’s responses from the survey for the flagged responsibilities. Finally, the third column includes a check mark if the responsibility was flagged either of the three months. It is important to note that a Responsibility Flag could appear if the principal either self-assessed higher or lower than one standard deviation from the teachers’ average responses. In the cases in which a Responsibility Flag appeared because of a lower self-assessment average from the principal, an asterisk was added next to the checkmark. The complete listing of data for all of the 21 leadership responsibilities for each of the two principal subjects is included in Appendices A and B. Kara’s data will be listed in Appendix A, followed by Tanya’s data in Appendix B.
Group 1: Kara

Ten teachers from Kara’s staff agreed to participate in completing the Balanced Leadership Profile survey electronically for three consecutive months. This represents 39% of Kara’s teaching staff that were eligible to participate in the study. When the survey window closed for the first month of feedback, there was a 90% survey return rate, meaning nine out of ten teachers completed the survey electronically by accessing McREL’s website. As shown in Table 6, during the first month of feedback, Kara received six Responsibility Flags. They were for the responsibilities: Input, Knowledge of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment, Involvement in Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment, Monitor/Evaluate, and Visibility. Of the six responsibility flags, four were identified because Kara self-assessed at least one standard deviation lower than her teacher’s assessed her demonstration of the responsibilities. The leadership responsibilities flagged due to a lower principal self-assessment rating received an asterisk following the check mark in the column entitled, “Flag” (Table 5). Those responsibilities that had an asterisk included: Knowledge of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment, Involvement in Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment, Monitor/Evaluate, and Visibility.

The survey return rate for the second month of feedback was 60%, meaning 6 of 10 teachers completed the Balanced Leadership Profile survey prior to the close of the survey window. The second month of feedback
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Table 5. Principal Kara
yielded three Responsibility Flags in Ideals/Beliefs, Outreach, and Visibility as demonstrated in Table 3. All three of the flagged responsibilities were because Kara self-assessed one standard deviation lower than her teachers rated her demonstration of the particular leadership responsibility and are noted in Table 2 with an asterisk next to the check marks included in the “Flag” column. Visibility was the only responsibility that remained flagged between months one and two of feedback.

There was a reduction of Responsibility Flags between the first and second months of teacher feedback. The data demonstrates that Kara increased her self-assessment score in order to be more aligned with her teachers' responses. In the responsibility of Knowledge of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment, Kara increased her average score from 2.75 to 3.50. For this responsibility, Kara increased her score by 0.75 and the average teacher responses related to this responsibility slightly increased as well from 4.00 to 4.04. Kara also increased her average response for Involvement of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment from 2.00 to 3.00. This was a full point increase while the average responses from her teachers related to this responsibility slightly decreased from 3.19 to 3.00. In the responsibility of Monitor/Evaluate, Kara's score increased from 2.50 to 3.50, which was another full point increase while her teacher's scores slightly decreased from 3.89 to 3.58. Related to the responsibility of Visibility, Kara
decreased her score from 4.33 to 4.00. The average responses from her teachers related to this responsibility also decreased from 4.74 to 4.61.

The responsibilities of Input and Order that generated a Responsibility Flag because Kara self-assessed at least one standard deviation higher than the average of the teacher's responses were no longer flagged after the second cycle of feedback was released.

Kara's average related to that responsibility was lower than the first month she completed the survey. For Input, Kara's average score was reduced from 4.33 to 3.67 and for Order; Kara's average score was reduced from 4.33 to 4.00. The average responses from the teachers fluctuated anywhere between one point to one tenth of a point. For Input, the average score increased from 3.74 to 4.06 and for Order, the average teacher score decreased from 3.56 to 3.50.

Survey return rates for the third and final feedback cycle were 70%, meaning 7 out of 10 teachers completed the electronic survey prior to the close of the survey window. Following the third month of feedback, the same three leadership responsibilities flagged following the second month of feedback. They were Ideals/Belief, Outreach, and Visibility. Identical to month two, all three of the responsibilities were flagged due to Kara's average response being at least one standard deviation lower than the average responses of her teachers. The average scores from Kara and her teachers were identical from the previous month for Ideals/Beliefs and
Outreach. Visibility was one-hundredth of a point lower from the teacher responses even though Kara's average response remained the same.

The responsibilities that seemed to have the greatest fluctuations in score were the responsibilities of Involvement in Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment and Monitor/Evaluate. Kara increased her average score by 1.00 in order to narrow the gap between her average responses and the average responses from her teachers.

In summary, there was a change in the profile of Kara's leadership over the course of the three months. The greatest changes in Kara's profile occurred primarily between months one and two of the feedback cycles. Initially Kara received six Responsibly Flags following the first month of feedback. Only two of those flags were generated because she self-assessed higher than her staff. They were the responsibilities of Input and Order. Those two responsibilities were only flagged following the first month of feedback. After that, Kara reduced her average score so that it was more in agreement with how her teachers perceived her demonstration of Input and Order. All but two of Kara's Responsibility Flags were due to her self-assessing lower than how her staff perceives her to demonstrate the specific leadership responsibility. A reduction of the number of Responsibility Flags occurred between months one and two but the number of flags and the responsibilities that received a flag, remained constant between months two and three.
Group 1: Tanya

Thirteen teachers agreed to participate in completing the Balanced Leadership Profile survey for three consecutive months. This represents 59% of Tanya's teaching staff that were eligible to participate in the study. There was a 62% survey return rate following the first month of the feedback cycle. Table 6 illustrates Tanya's leadership profile over the course of the three months of feedback. Of the 21 leadership responsibilities, 15 received Responsibility Flags. They were: Change Agent, Communication, Culture, Affirmation, Discipline, Flexibility, Ideals/Beliefs, Input, Intellectual Stimulation, Optimize, Order, Outreach, Relationships, Resources, and Visibility. Of the 15 responsibilities flags, Affirmation received a flag because Tanya self-assessed lower than the average of the teacher responses. An asterisk follows the responsibility flag for Affirmation.

The second month of feedback yielded a survey return rate of 92%, which meant 12 out of 13 teachers submitted their survey prior to the window being closed. Tanya received six Responsibility Flags compared to 15 from the previous month. The six responsibilities flagged were: Change Agent, Contingent Rewards, Ideals/Beliefs, Input, Optimize, and Resources. Five of the six responsibilities flagged following the second cycle of feedback were also flagged after the first month. The only responsibility that received a flag following the second month of feedback that did not appear after the first was the responsibility of Contingent Rewards. There was an increase in
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her average self-assessment score from 3.50 to 4.25 while the average responses from her teachers slightly increased as well from 3.03 to 3.12. The responsibilities of Change Agent, Ideals/Beliefs, Input, Optimize, and Resources that remained flagged between month one and two did show a reduction in how Tanya self-assessed; however, the discrepancy was still at least one standard deviation greater than her average scores. Tara reduced her average response for Change Agent from 4.25 to 3.75. Input was reduced from 5.00 to 4.67; and Relationships was reduced from 4.25 to 3.75. For each of the six responsibilities flagged, the average responses provided by Tanya’s teachers slightly increased. Change Agent increased from 2.84 to 3.08. Contingent Rewards increased from 3.03 to 3.12. Ideals/Beliefs increased from 3.16 to 3.29. Input increased from 3.87 to 4.03. Optimize increased from 3.53 to 3.65 and Resources increased from 2.72 to 2.98.

The flagged leadership responsibilities from the first feedback cycle that were no longer flagged after the second month of feedback were do to a lowering of Tanya’s self-assessment average as opposed to a large increase in the average of the teacher’s responses. Tanya’s self-assessment average for Communication was reduced from 3.67 to 3.00, while the teachers’ average responses slightly increased from 2.46 to 2.67. Tanya scored herself at 4.83 for Culture after the first month and then reduced her average score to 4.33. The average response from her teachers slightly increased from 3.67 to 3.85. Affirmation was the responsibility that Tanya self-assessed one standard
deviation lower than the average responses from her teachers. Following the second month of feedback, Tanya’s average score for Affirmation increased from 3.00 to 3.67. Even though Tanya increased her score for this responsibility, the average responses from her teachers slightly decreased from 3.50 to 3.36. The increase in their average scores and the decrease in Tanya’s score was enough to narrow the gap between the groups to lower than one standard deviation. For that reason, Affirmation does not include a Responsibility Flag for the second month of feedback. The average score for Flexibility and Intellectual Stimulation also decreased between months one and two from 4.50 to 3.75 and 3.75 to 3.25. The average teacher responses increased slightly for Flexibility from 3.22 to 3.39, while the average responses for Intellectual Stimulation slightly decreased from 3.03 to 2.82. Outreach was decreased from 4.50 to 4.00 and the teachers’ responses slightly increased from 3.44 to 3.66. Tanya’s average score for Relationships decreased from 4.25 to 3.74 and the teachers’ responses slightly increased from 2.72 to 2.98.

The Responsibility Flags that yielded the greatest reduction in how Tanya self-assessed were Discipline, Order, and Visibility. There was a 1.00 decrease in all three of those leadership responsibilities. Although there was also a slight increase in the average responses from Tanya’s teachers, it was likely that Tanya’s reduction in score was the reason for the elimination of the Responsibility Flag.
A comparison between the first and second months of feedback reveals that during the first month of feedback 71% of the leadership responsibilities were flagged due to the difference in responses between Tanya and her teachers. The second month of feedback yielded a decrease in the number of responsibility flags from 15 to 6. This was a 42% reduction in responsibilities that were flagged. The responsibilities flagged following the first month of feedback that did not have a Responsibility Flag following the second month, was due to a larger reduction in how Tanya self-assessed. Even though the teachers' average scores yielded a slight increase between month one and month two, the difference in their scores was not as large as the difference in Tanya's average self-assessment score.

Following the third feedback cycle, Tanya received three Responsibility Flags. They were for Contingent Rewards, Discipline, and Outreach. Contingent Rewards was the only responsibility that remained flagged from the second cycle of feedback. The other two responsibilities, Discipline and Relationships had received Responsibility Flags following the first feedback cycle but they were not flagged following the second month of feedback.

In summary, Table 6 illustrates how Tanya's profile changed over the course of the three months. There was a steady decrease in the number of Responsibility Flags over the course of the three feedback cycles. The decreases in flags went from 15 to six, and then from six to three by the end of the third month of feedback. Compared to the first month of feedback
where 71% of the responsibilities were flagged, by the third month only 7% were flagged. This yielded a 64% decrease over the course of three months. It is important to note the reduction in Responsibility Flags appeared to occur because of a larger reduction between how Tanya self-assessed rather than how her teachers assessed her leadership related to each of the 21 responsibilities. An analysis of how the principals in Group One described the influence of feedback on their daily practice will be presented in the next chapter.

Research Question 4

After three months of feedback from teachers on the Balanced Leadership Profile survey, how does the principal interpret any changes in their day-to-day practice and describe the influence that receiving feedback via the instrument has made on their day-to-day practice?

Kara

Shortly after the second interview started, Kara began talking about the impact the feedback from the survey had on her, “I am probably going to answer all the questions in the same way because the survey really made me think about things.” When Kara described her daily practices she described 17 of the 21 leadership responsibilities. This was the same number of leadership responsibilities Kara described in the first interview. Input was the responsibility that Kara provided more descriptions for during the second interview. There were two coded descriptions for that responsibility, which
are noted with an “x.” Input was also identified as one of the two priorities for her work since she began receiving teacher feedback. Kara discussed why Input was more prevalent in her both her daily work and priorities for her work since receiving the first month of teacher feedback:

The Input leadership responsibility really resonated with me because I feel as though I have worked on that this year. It was one of my goals to create a more connected communication system where there weren’t just a few key people making decisions...so when that flag showed up, I went, ‘wow’!

Consequently, Kara made a decision to focus on more “inquiry...regarding RtI and especially regarding people’s knowledge of where we were, what we are, and what we have done, so I can see their responses because the survey really made me think about that.”

When asked how the feedback changed her day-to-day practices and priorities for her work, Kara acknowledged:

I considered things differently and I will continue to, I think for a long time. Even to just have the feedback broken down by different areas, responsibilities, it is just nice and it helped me reframe myself, and my role in a number of ways. Definitely, when I would approach something there were times when even at the end of the day I would look at it again to remind me myself of things...
Kara commented: “the results were not indicative of much because it was all related to what was going on at that moment.” She mentioned how looming district budget cuts were an issue the last few months of school year. The cuts were not as much of an issue at the time of the first interview conducted in April. Nonetheless, the circumstances surrounding the budget decisions made it difficult for Kara to interpret why the teachers’ average response generated Responsibility Flags:

It was during the time of all the budget cuts and all of the re-staffing decisions and retirements...I had a lot of secrets going on and I had a lot that I didn’t want everyone to know that they were going on. I just didn’t want anybody to worry...so it had been a funky time to be going through receiving feedback because it was a time of change that was so outside of the RtI work.

Shortly after Kara described her struggle with receiving feedback during a time of uncertainty, she identified “protecting staff” as her second priority for her work:

There was a lot of just trying to get them through because there was a whole lot of fear which there always is when there is staffing and budget stuff is going on, but I just didn’t want them to worry because worrying doesn’t accomplish anything...that is why I carried the burden of the secrets.
Examples, like this one, were coded as a description of the responsibility of Discipline because Kara actively attempted to buffer, or protect, her staff from issues that distracted them from instruction. Kara tried to carry the burden of the budgetary decisions by herself along with the potential implications for her staff.

Kara and the researcher also discussed how a majority of the Responsibility Flags she received over the course of the three months were due to a lower self-assessment average than the average responses from her teachers. Kara discussed how she interpreted that data:

I would look at those averages and say 'would you ever be a five in anything because what is a five?'...and their higher score of me was honestly, because they don't know what it should be...they don't have the vision, and so that was something that made me say 'oh, shoot' because they didn't get that. I have to help them get the fact that I am deficient and that is not something I beat myself up over because it is something I am working on all the time.

Throughout the study, Kara continually discussed her need to do more, to do better, and to learn from her staff. Kara's response, listed above, further demonstrates her belief that she needs to do more, to do better, and to learn from her staff.

When asked about the influence of teacher feedback Kara was quick to respond that it caused her to be reflective of her work as the building leader
because it provided her with “useful information.” She equated the usefulness of the survey data with the information teachers receive by using formative assessments. Kara planned on continuing to use the survey since she has access to the website for one calendar year. She wished the survey included “a narrative because it would have been more helpful” but she also added that the “anonymity of it was nice because she could not dismiss the data like she could have if teachers been able to submit comments related to her demonstration of the leadership responsibilities. Her final piece of feedback related to the survey was that it was “un-inclusive of ALL the responsibilities of the principal:

- I am still trying to figure out what this really is and who knows what the heck this job really is...it is unclogging toilets and it’s making sure you are putting the letters on the marquee on Sunday...and those things are not a part of the survey.

In summary, after receiving three months of feedback from her teachers on the Balanced Leadership Profile survey, Kara interpreted changes to her work around gathering more input from staff. She was surprised to see a Responsibility Flag for Input and consequently, spent a great deal of time over the course of three months doing more “inquiry” with teachers. Not only was the emphasis on Input described as a part of Kara’s daily work, but she also identified it as the number one priority. Although Kara used the monthly feedback often, she did not believe the results were
"indicative of much." Instead, she felt the feedback related to what was going on "in the moment." Nonetheless, Kara identified she still used the feedback often. Kara described how the feedback changed her priorities and daily practices related to the responsibility of Input.

Other factors besides the feedback from the survey also influenced her work. Circumstances surrounding district-level budget decisions also dictated how she allocated her time and prioritized her work. This was one of the reasons why Kara attributed the feedback as relating to whatever was occurring during the time in which the teachers completed the survey. She also observed that extraneous tasks required her to engage in practices that were absent from the survey. Some of the examples she cited included unclogging toilets, weeding the flowerbeds, and putting the letters on the marquee. Still, Kara noted the feedback caused her to be reflective and found it to be useful. She not only expects to continue using the data from the survey but she also expects to be asking all of her staff to complete the survey next school year.

Tanya

During the second interview, Tanya described her daily work related to five of the 21 leadership responsibilities. She described Communication, Contingent Rewards, Culture, Relationships, and Situational Awareness. This interview demonstrated a different focus for her daily work. In particular, during the initial interview Tanya did not describe daily practices
related to the responsibilities of Communication, Contingent Rewards, or Situational Awareness. Of the five leadership responsibilities she described during the interview, Contingent Rewards was the leadership responsibility she reported focusing on improving following the first and second months of feedback received by teachers. Consequently, Contingent Rewards, as defined by acknowledging and rewarding staff for the work they have done, was also identified as one of her four priorities.

When asked how she interpreted the feedback and the influences that it had on her work, Tanya described how the feedback caused her to feel:

There was something nice about the way that feedback was presented...it came to me in a way that somehow didn’t make me defensive...it doesn’t feel evaluative. It felt helpful...I had a lot of flags on the first one, which surprised me, but it didn’t hurt my feelings. It just really felt informative.

Tanya admitted to “purposefully” using the feedback specifically before the building professional development day in order to “make a mark with some of the responsibilities. She chose to focus on Culture and Relationships since she was using staff meetings to work with her current staff as well as the staff whose building was being consolidated and now were a part of Tanya’s staff.

I really think the feedback was a reality check because I think I was moving away from really my comfort level about how I like to run a
building and how I like to be, and I was getting so caught up on the task-end of things...I just wanted to connect with people going into that PD day. I was just like, ‘I am going to be me again’...I just wanted to have fun and laugh with people again...and I feel like that was almost the first time in the year since probably December that I felt like that. I am pretty sure the feedback was a piece of it, along with the fact that we had the PD time.

Tanya described a Road Rally that she and the staff participated in to help build relationships between not only Tanya and her current/new staff but also between the new staff members and the current staff members. When Tanya reflected on the event, she indicated that she “never expected to see her staff in such a different way that day.”

The other area of focus for Tanya was in the area of Affirmation and Contingent/Rewards. She described how after looking at the first month of feedback, she was surprised by how high her teachers scored her for the responsibility of Affirmation:

One thing I saw in the data, and I know I have never been great at, or sure how to tackle this, is acknowledging people. I always feel a little nervous, not about acknowledging or celebrating, but the risk of failing to celebrate or acknowledge someone.

Tanya decided to use the teacher feedback related to Affirmation and Contingent Rewards by celebrating the staff's successes in the
implementation of the RtI work. She described the activities and games in which the staff participated. There was confetti, individual speeches by staff about a new RtI practice they tried this year, and a game of charades related to RtI terminology. Tanya was amazed by how much fun the event turned out to be. Shortly after her final statement describing the activities for the event Tanya became quiet.

And then everyone got up to go and then one of my staff members got up and came to me and said, ‘the music teacher is really, really upset because she was not included.’ And I just felt deflated. I was like, ‘see, I told myself so; this is the danger that you were going to leave someone out.’...it just sets me back when I have to do that kind of stuff because I don't want people to feel left out...

Even though Tanya’s fears were confirmed, she acknowledged the benefits of the event outweighed the negative incident. She also attributed her decision for having the celebration to the feedback from the teacher survey.

Even though Tanya was not surprised by the feedback around Affirmation and Contingent Rewards, Tanya was surprised by the Responsibility Flag she received for Input: “I really, really include people so I was surprised when there was a discrepancy between measures.” Tanya began thinking out loud about why she might have received a Responsibility Flag for Input and tried to rationalize the data. She hypothesized that she actually asks for too much input and wonders if “maybe sometimes people
want to be just told.” She wondered if she asks staff too often for their feedback. Even though the Responsibility Flag for Input baffled Tanya, it was not something she actively tried to improve; partially because she felt she does too much of that responsibility which caused the flag from the teachers. Incidentally, Input was the only responsibility where Tanya self-assessed at the highest obtainable score for the survey, 5.00.

Although some of the priorities for Tanya’s work were chosen because of the feedback from the survey, others were not. Preparing staff for the impending consolidations was a big priority for Tanya, as was managing student misbehavior. Both of those priorities were also mentioned during the initial interview with Tanya. The work regarding consolidation changed its focus though causing Tanya to be in the building more as opposed to the central office building in meetings and planning.

It first took a lot of time just to plan it (for the consolidation) but then we came right down to the final six to eight weeks and then it became an emotional thing, then we were back in our buildings. We were not in those meetings anymore but we were back in our buildings. Then the emotions started running through people.

Tanya’s response during the second interview to the high level of emotion from her teachers described the leadership responsibilities of Communication and Situational Awareness. It was evident from how she described her daily work and priorities for that work that both of those
leadership responsibilities were occupying a large portion of her time and attention. Communication was the responsibility that had the largest number of examples coded from the transcripts from this interview. There were four separate conversations related to Communication during the second interview. Tanya cited Communication as the means she used to manage the emotional energy within the building. The emotional energy was due to fear and anxiety about the ramifications from the consolidation.

People didn’t know what their jobs were going to be and then people who did find out were unhappy because it wasn’t the one that they wanted, so then they were still trying...to move all the chess pieces. This was hitting on an emotional level too so that took a different kind of energy that I managed with just giving them any kind of information that I could give them. I tried to be honest with them because none of us could predict how things would end up...sometimes it would even border on telling them things I knew I probably shouldn’t be telling them but if I knew it would reassure them, I would plant those seeds with them.

The examples like the one Tanya provided caused her to increase the demonstration of Situational Awareness. She reported how she “just needed to keep a pulse on things” by listening to staff who were coming to her about angry colleagues or by her secretary reporting comments to her from angry staff.
In addition to the high level of emotions Tanya attempted to control, she also indicated that managing student misbehavior was another priority and daily practice in which she engaged. Since the consolidation meetings came to a close and allowed Tanya to be present in the building more, she recognized student misbehavior consumed a great deal of her time and attention. This was another example of her daily work and priorities that guide the work unrelated to the feedback from the survey.

Before the interview came to a close, Tanya described how the three months of feedback influenced her work as the principal. She indicated it was presented in a way that was safe, helpful, informative, and provided her with a “reality check.” Tanya also indicated that moving forward, she was going to focus on the leadership responsibilities where she scored the lowest: Visibility and Relationships. She felt that given the circumstances of having new staff, students, and families she needed to take a more active role in having a “presence in the building” rather than being pulled out of the building for other things.

In conclusion, Tanya described how feedback she received from the survey changed some of the priorities for her work and the practices she engaged in on a daily basis. She recognized that she received many Responsibility Flags after the first month of feedback and chose to use professional development time to begin “making a mark” on some of the flagged responsibilities. She chose to focus her efforts on Affirmation,
Contingent Rewards, Culture, and Relationships. Other variables also contributed to Tanya's daily practices as the principal and the priorities for her work. District-level work along with managing student misbehavior were items requiring her time and attention. Both of those priorities were identified during the initial interview in April. The specific leadership responsibilities Tanya provided descriptions of during the second interview included a total of five responsibilities. Three of those were new to her daily work compared to the initial interview in April. The feedback she received from her teachers assisted her in changing her day-to-day work.

Research Question 4: Common Participant Themes

Both principals used the feedback they received and intentionally focused on specific responsibilities. This was evident in how they described their daily work and priorities for their work. Even though they were able to use the feedback, district-level work related to budget drew on their time and attention. Both Kara and Tanya identified the end of the school year as time periods when the emotions of their staff were high due to the budget issues. In Tanya's case, the budget constraints facing her district were being addressed by consolidating two elementary buildings. In Kara's case, they were being resolved by staffing decisions and retirements. When asked about the process of regular feedback from their teachers related to the 21 responsibilities, both Kara and Tanya reported that the experience was helpful and informative. They also reported they intended to use the
Balanced Leadership Profile survey with all staff throughout the next school year.

Summary

Research Question 1: What are the similarities and differences in how principals and their teachers describe the principal’s behaviors and practices on a daily basis?

RQ 1: Group One Participants

Kara provided 17 out of 21 descriptions of her work related to the 21 Balanced Leadership correlates. Her teaching staff described her work related to 16 of the 21 correlates during the focus group session. There was agreement between Kara and her teachers related to 14 of the 21 Balanced Leadership correlates. Tanya provided descriptions of her daily work that was related to 6 of the 21 leadership correlates. During the focus group session, Tanya’s teachers also provided descriptions of Tanya’s daily work related to 6 of the 21 correlates. Tanya and her teachers had agreement in 3 of the 21 Balanced Leadership correlates.

RQ 1: Group Two Participants

During the initial interview, Rhonda provided descriptions of her daily work related to five of the 21 Balanced Leadership correlates. Rhonda’s teachers who participated in the focus group session also described her daily work as a principal related to five of the 21 correlates. There was agreement
between Rhonda and her teachers in all five of the correlates. During Rhonda's second interview she provided descriptions of 3 of the 21 leadership correlates. Cindy was able to provide descriptions of her daily work as a principal related to 6 of the 21 leadership correlates. Her teachers who participated in the focus group provided descriptions of her work related to 4 of the 21 leadership correlates. There was agreement between Cindy and her teachers in 4 of the 21 leadership correlates. During the final interview with Cindy, she provided descriptions of her work related to 2 of the 21 Balanced Leadership correlates.

Research Question 2: What are the similarities and differences in how principals and their teachers describe the priorities for the principal's work that impact the implementation of the change initiative?

RQ 2: Group One Participants

During the first interview with Kara she identified four priorities for her work. They were: trust, communication, people work and visibility to students and staff. Kara's teachers who participated in the focus group also identified the same priorities as Kara. Tanya identified four priorities for her work. They were: e-mail, district consolidation work, managing student misbehavior and creating a special education schedule. There was agreement between Tanya and her teachers related to three of the four priorities –
district consolidation work, managing student misbehavior and creating the
special education schedule.

RQ 2: Group Two Participants

Rhonda identified four priorities for her work during the initial
interview. She identified managing deadlines (e.g. teacher evaluations),
district RtI work, managing student misbehavior and communication
through grade level professional learning communities (PLC’s). During the
focus group, Rhonda’s teachers identified two priorities for her work. They
also identified district RtI work and managing student misbehavior. Cindy
identified four priorities for her work during the initial interview. They were
deadlines (e.g. Title I report), scheduling/staffing, RtI work and managing
student misbehavior. During the focus group session, Cindy’s teachers
identified two priorities for her work: scheduling/staffing and managing
student misbehavior.

Research Question 3: After 3 months of receiving feedback from
teachers on the Balanced Leadership Profile survey, is there a change in the
profile of the principal’s work according to the instrument?

RQ 3: Group One Participants

Over the course of receiving three months of feedback from the
Balanced Leadership Profile survey Kara received 6 responsibility flags after
the first month of feedback, then 3 responsibility flags after second month
and 3 flags following the third month of feedback. Tanya’s profile included 15 responsibility flags after month one, six flags following the second month and three responsibility flags after the third month of receiving feedback.

Research Question 4: After three months of feedback from teachers on the Balanced Leadership Profile survey, how does the principal interpret any changes in their daily work and describe the influence that receiving feedback via the instrument has made on their daily practice?

RQ 4: Group One Participants

Kara reported that the teacher feedback caused her to consider things differently as she approached her daily work as the building principals. She reported the teacher feedback was useful, allowed her to be more reflective in her work and was not inclusive of all the responsibilities principals must engage in on a daily basis. Kara also wished that there were more qualitative features to the feedback tool. Examples of how teachers were rating Kara’s work against the 21 Balanced Leadership correlates would have provided additional information to substantiate their score. During the second interview Kara provided descriptions related to 17 of the 21 leadership correlates. The priorities for her work included: gathering more input from staff related to the RtI work, budget, staffing and retirements.

Tanya reported the teacher feedback was presented in a way that did not make her feel defensive. She felt it was helpful, informative and provided
her with a reality check. During the second interview, Tanya provided descriptions related to five of the 21 Balanced Leadership correlates. The priorities for her work included: managing student misbehavior, communication with staff, maintaining a pulse on the emotions of the staff, working to integrate new staff with current staff to the building, building relationships with all staff and celebrating the accomplishments of the staff in regards to the implementation of the RtI work.
CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

Chapter V includes a summary discussion of the results presented in Chapter IV in response to the four study research questions. Following the summary of findings, this chapter discusses how the findings relate to the literature reviewed for this study. This chapter also includes sections on the implications of this study as well as the limitations of this study. A summary concludes the chapter.

Discussion of Results

The purpose of this study was to explore how principals use teacher feedback on the 21 Balanced Leadership Correlates (Marzano, Waters, & McNally, 2005) to reflect upon and make modifications or changes in practice. Four research questions guided this study:

1. What are the similarities and differences in how principals and their teachers describe the principal’s behaviors and practices on a day-to-day basis?

2. What are the similarities and differences in how principals and their teachers describe the priorities for the principals’ work that impact the
implementation of the change initiative, Response To Intervention (RtI)?

3. After three months of receiving feedback from teachers on the Balanced Leadership Profile Survey, is there a change in the profile of the principal's work according to that instrument? What are the most significant areas of change in that profile?

4. After three months of receiving feedback from teachers on the Balanced Leadership Profile survey, how does the principal interpret any changes in their day-to-day practice and describe the influence that receiving feedback via this instrument has made on their day-to-day practice?

How Previous Studies Influenced This Study

Prior to collecting data for this research project, a thorough review of the literature was conducted and revealed only one study that was specific to this research topic. The Daw and Gage (1967) study, albeit dated, was the only study that related to the effect of feedback from teachers to principals. A few other studies were found that related to this research topic, but they, too, dated back between three and four decades. Consequently, prior to beginning this final chapter, the researcher went back to the literature in order to determine if more recent research articles have emerged related to this topic. This further literature review did not reveal any additional studies or articles. Therefore, the next section of this chapter discusses how the findings
from this study relate to the research on this topic that dates back approximately 43 years.

The purpose of the study was to determine how a system of regular feedback from teachers on principal's work influenced the attention principals gave to the 21 leadership correlates into their daily practice. This study focused on feedback from teachers because teachers are daily observers of a principal's work as well as direct recipients of the principal's work. As such, teachers are key informants on the principal's work and, thus, an authentic source of feedback to principals, especially pertaining to observed behaviors and actions in the daily practice of their principal role.

Daily professional practice is shaped by a myriad of contextual, experiential, and personal factors, all of which may be elements that make it difficult for principals to make significant change in their work patterns (Guthrie and Reed, 1991). Given that numerous studies have noted how educational environments are resistant to change and that gaps occur between knowledge, intention, and practice within those environments, it is important to determine if providing principals with authentic feedback helps them reflect on their daily practice and self monitor their employment of evidence based strategies that translate to increased student learning becomes clear. Now that federal and state educational legislation make improved student learning high stakes for principals, it is important to better understand how principals can achieve the changes in daily practice that
empower them to impact the success of the schools they serve in raising student achievement.

Since there is evidence in the literature (Hegarty, 1974; Daw & Gage, 1967) that feedback on practice can be of assistance in making changes to behaviors, this study looked at what happened when principals used a source of feedback from teachers to assist them with the process of reflecting on their practice and targeting areas for change, adaptation or improvement. The findings of this study suggest that teacher feedback can be an important source of feedback to principals. The teacher feedback in this study prompted the two principals who received that feedback to reflect more deeply on their work than the principals who did not receive teacher feedback. Over the three months the two principals received feedback on the 21 Balanced Leadership Profile (McREL) the principals paid greater attention to the areas rated lower on the profile and to the areas where their teachers' ratings differed enough from their own to merit a "responsibility flag".

Although there is evidence in the research that shows feedback is one of the major influences on learning and achievement, the type of feedback and the way in which it is provided to the recipient can have differing effects (Hattie & Timperly, 2007). Hattie (1999) reviewed evidence related to feedback and its impact on learning and student achievement. His 1999 meta-analysis of studies that isolated variables associated with student achievement revealed feedback has an effect size of .79 for influences on
learning. Compared to other findings related to factors that influence learning, the variable of feedback ranked in the top five of ten of the highest influences on learning and achievement. In this same meta-analysis, however, Hattie also found that some forms of feedback were linked with greater effect sizes on student learning than others.

In 2007, Hattie and Timperly conducted a further synthesis of the literature on the effects of feedback on student learning in an attempt to further describe how feedback works to assist learning and proposed a conceptual framework around the common features they found to be associated with the most effective forms of feedback. They translated those features into a set of three questions that can serve to categorize various forms of feedback and link those forms of feedback to one of three major components of what Hattie and Timperly propose as a model for effective feedback. This synthesis work will be further discussed in the Implications section of this chapter, but is referenced here to establish the basis upon which this research examines the potential for feedback to become a useful source of learning and adaptation for principals.

This study examined how the variable of feedback around the 21 Balanced Leadership correlates influences the way principals conduct their daily practice and identify priorities for their work. The feedback instrument was designed around the 21 leadership correlates and served as the basis for how principals would begin to focus their time and attention.
Previous research that investigated the effects of feedback from subordinates to their supervisor has returned positive results. In a study regarding using subordinate ratings to change supervisors' behaviors, the major finding was that providing supervisors with feedback improved their performance in the opinions of their subordinates (Hegarty, 1974). Another study related to the education field examined the effect of feedback from teachers to principals. Similar to the findings from the Hegarty study, it also showed positive results (Daw & Gage, 1967). In that study, teachers completed a questionnaire that allowed them to describe their current principal and their ideal principal on 12 items concerning principal behaviors at the onset of the study and then again, at the end of the study.

This study differed from the Hegarty (1974) and Daw & Gage (1967) studies in that the feedback provided by subordinates (in this study, teachers) to the supervisor (in this case, the principal) was based in research supported correlates between principal practice and student outcomes. For example, in the Daw and Gage study, the pre and post questionnaire teacher subjects completed concerning principal behavior was developed based on “ideas” (p. 184) from a variety of researchers and elementary school teachers. The items were intended to deal with behaviors principals could be expected to engage in on a frequent basis. Absent from those items was the research supporting the assumption that, if the principal engaged in those behaviors on a regular basis, (s)he would have been engaging in leadership behaviors
known to improve student achievement. This study accounted for that issue by using a validated instrument based on findings from a meta-analysis that identified specific leadership behaviors that supported improved student outcomes (Marzano, Waters & McNulty, 2005).

In addition to accounting for the items on the instrument used for providing feedback, this study was also able to address some of the considerations Daw and Gage (1967) posed for future research. The first consideration dealt with whether other not methods of measuring the principal's behaviors would reveal the same kinds of behaviors as identified on the questionnaire. Since this study engaged and elicited feedback from teachers who work directly with the participant principals in two phases of the research study, it was possible to code the daily practices and priorities for the principals' work by using the transcripts from the individual principal interviews and focus groups from each of the principal's teaching staff. This allowed the researcher to not only identify if what the principal was describing was accurate in the eyes of the people who observe and interact with her on a daily basis, but it also allowed the researcher to code the descriptions to the leadership correlates assessed on the survey.

The second consideration for future research posed by Daw and Gage (1967) was whether interviews with principals would reveal the process by which teacher feedback operated in altering the principals' behavior and whether or not the principals consciously attempted to change their
behaviors. Since this study utilized open-ended interviews with principals following the three months of teacher feedback, principals were asked to describe the influences that feedback had on their work and priorities for their work. Descriptions provided by principals for their daily work and priorities for their work were coded as they related to the 21 leadership correlates. Given the fact that similar research regarding the effects of feedback dated back over three decades, it was important to determine if feedback from teachers around research supported leadership behaviors would change the way in which they engage in their daily work. This study addressed some of the limitations and future research considerations posed by Hegarty (1974) and Daw and Gage (1967).

**Discussion of Results**

After three months of receiving feedback from teachers, there was a change in the principals' leadership profiles; however, the changes in the principals' profiles demonstrated a change in the way each of the principals self-assessed their demonstration of the leadership responsibilities. In the first round of data from the Balanced Leadership Profile survey, there were Responsibility Flags denoting a discrepancy between how the principal self-assessed and the teachers assessed the principal's observed daily practice. The Balanced Leadership Profile survey revealed incongruence between how the principals saw their work and how their teachers interpret that work. Principals responded to this incongruence by amending their own assessment
of their work in subsequent responses on the survey and reflecting on the
incongruence in the follow-up interview.

In several instances both Kara and Tanya were surprised by some of
the Responsibility Flags because they each indicated they were in areas they
had spent considerable time and attention. For example, Kara noted how she
had spent the past year and a half working on creating systems to gather
input from all staff, rather than only gathering input from a select group of
people who were members of the leadership team. When Kara saw a
Responsibility Flag for Input, she responded with, “Wow!” Consequently,
Kara amended her own assessment of Input therefore eliminating the
Responsibility Flag. Tanya was also shocked to see a Responsibility Flag for
Input. She had self-assessed her demonstration of Input as 5.00 following
the first survey. This was the highest score a principal could receive on the
survey. When the discrepancy between Tanya’s self-assessment and the
teachers’ score appeared, Tanya responded, “I really, really include
people...and thought, ‘God, how much more can I include them?’ I already
ask like 9,000 people...” Consequently, in subsequent surveys Tanya
amended her self-assessment of Input.

Reflection on the Responsibility Flags also resulted in principals
actually altering or planning to alter their practice. Kara reported during the
second interview, “one of the things I did differently was more inquiry... by
asking more questions of people to get more input...because the survey made
me really think about a lot of things.” Because the Responsibility Flag for Input surprised Kara, she wished the survey provided her with additional information to qualify the teachers’ scores. In Tanya’s case, even though the Responsibility Flag for Input baffled her, she rationalized it by saying, “maybe I include people more than they want me to include them.” She altered her practice related to Contingent Rewards, Culture, and Relationships. Devoting staff meeting time and building-level professional development allowed Tanya and her teachers to engage in activities around the three leadership responsibilities.

An explanation for the response of the principals in this study to the evidence of incongruence between their own assessment of and their teachers’ average assessment of their practice can be found in the research conducted by Gage, Runkel and Chatterjee (1960). The authors found that, when feedback contradicts how individuals perceive themselves, the contradiction causes incongruity and disequilibrium. Attempts to reduce or eliminate the incongruence occur; therefore, restoring balance and making the recipient of the feedback feel comfortable again.

This appeared to be true of the principals in this study. Because there was incongruence between the principals’ and teachers’ average responses on the Balanced Leadership Profile survey (as evidenced by the areas where the data analysis produced Responsibility Flags, e.g. Input, Order, Relationships), the principals reflected on the discrepancies and altered their
own assessment of their practice in subsequent responses to the instrument. In some cases, this involved increasing the principal's assessment of specific behaviors where their teachers had given them a higher average response than their own self assessment; e.g. Affirmation, Knowledge of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment, Monitor/Evaluate. In other cases, upon reflection, the principal acknowledged that their actual practice may not be as aligned with a specific practice as they had originally assessed (e.g. Input, Affirmation, Order).

The decision to seriously consider teachers' assessments of their practice from the first feedback cycle to further assess and reflect upon their own work in the second feedback cycle in this study, illustrates how the principals in this study made adjustments in their assessment of their work and their plans to alter their daily practice in order to eliminate the incongruence, and, thus regain equilibrium with their teachers' assessment of their work. As in the Gage, Runkel, and Chatterjee (1960) study, the principals in this study were inclined to seriously consider external feedback and respond when that feedback created incongruence with their own self-assessment. Additionally, the findings of this study replicate the findings from the Daw and Gage (1967) study that feedback regarding behaviors where teachers viewed the principals less favorably caused the principals to change those behaviors in order to restore balance or congruence.
An important difference between this study and the two previous studies with similar findings, is that the principal behaviors and practices assessed in this study are supported by an extensive meta-analysis of principal behaviors and practices that correlate to improved student outcomes (Marzano, Waters & McNulty, 2005). This difference is important when considering the nature of principals’ responses to the teacher feedback in this study.

In Kara’s case, she felt her teachers were “missing the vision of a knowledgeable and involved principal because if they had the vision they would not have given such high scores.” Kara does not view herself as a great principal. In fact, she wanted to stop receiving feedback on the areas in which she knows she excels, like Relationships. Her attention, however, was focused on changing the trajectory of the school. The challenge, as stated by Kara, was her lack of knowledge in the sixth and seventh grade curriculum. While Kara has found ways to compensate for her lack of knowledge through the use of an external RtI coach provided by the Intermediate School District, she noted that there are not enough hours in the day for her to read all the books related to RtI practices. She attributed the lack of time to spending most of her day being Visible in classrooms and hallways while engaging in “more inquiry” following the feedback from the survey. Kara concluded the interview by speaking very frankly about how “things had to change for the
school because too many of the students are suffering and the students cannot wait until the school figures out what to do.”

Tanya had a different perspective than Kara that was less focused on the role the 21 leadership correlates had on improving student outcomes. Although Tanya said her time was mainly focused around the consolidation work and the implementation of RtI, she felt that until the current school year was over, her leadership related to improving student outcomes would be compromised. Tanya did discuss, though, how her knowledge had increased in the area of reading RtI practices. Consequently, she said she enjoyed being able to assist teachers in problem solving around their classroom early literacy data. She also felt as though her teachers viewed her differently since she had become more knowledgeable in RtI. The struggle for Tanya is that she was not visible frequently enough to engage in a number of conversations around improving student outcomes. Tanya ended the second interview discussing how important it would be for her to demonstrate the 21 leadership correlates beginning the next school year.

Vignettes from Kara’s and Tanya’s second interview illustrate the conundrum of how a principal makes sense of feedback within the context of their specific school. Even when the feedback is directly tied to research supported elements of a principal’s work that show positive correlations to improved student learning in the aggregate, those same elements may or may not be the critical levers for improving student results in their own
school at any given time and in any given set of circumstances. Both Kara’s and Tanya’s reflections on their teachers’ feedback suggest that they are struggling with interpreting the importance and relevance of that feedback against what they have already assessed as critical areas that need or demand their attention in the school. For instance, Kara is not sure what to make of the fact that her teachers assess her work as illustrative of 71% of the 21 Responsibilities, since she is not seeing the gains in student achievement she feels she should be accomplishing. Kara is looking beyond the raw data of her teacher feedback and asking the deeper questions.

In cases where the principals in this study did not change their personal assessment of their daily practice even after the teacher responses produced a Responsibility Flag, it tended to be because the principals viewed their own behavior less favorably than their teachers. In Kara’s case, she had a mixture of this occur where initially she attempted to gain congruence by adjusting her lower self-assessment scores to align more closely with her teachers’ scores. Following the second feedback, three of the four Responsibility Flags were eliminated. However, between the second and third feedback cycle, three flags identified the second month remained flagged due to Kara’s continued lower self-assessment average. Kulhavy (1977) provided a plausible explanation as to why the same three flags remained for Kara due to her lower self-assessment. His research demonstrated that feedback does not always act as a reinforcer because it can either be rejected, modified, or
accepted. In Kara’s case, she rejected the positive feedback from her staff and, consequently, continued to self-assess less favorably than her teachers.

The principals’ leadership profiles changed over the three months they received feedback. This was due to the principals amending their self-assessment scores rather than the teachers’ steadily increasing their average responses. During the follow-up interviews, however, principals were asked whether or not the three months of feedback from teachers influenced their daily practices and priorities for their work. After coding and analyzing the transcripts from the final interviews, it was found that the feedback provided by the teachers had some influence on the principals’ daily work and priorities for their work. When principals were asked during the final interview, to describe the priorities of their work, both subjects identified priorities related to the feedback they received from the survey.

In Tanya’s case, she intentionally accessed her survey data in an effort to identify some of the leadership responsibilities that she would be able to “make a mark” with during an up-coming staff development day. She selected the responsibilities of Affirmation and Relationships and planned specific activities to engage in with her staff that would support the demonstration of those responsibilities. To help her with brainstorming, Tanya stated she used the Guidance Document provided by the developer of the survey. The feedback from her teachers led Tanya to further tap into a source of guidance regarding principal practices that correlate to improved student outcomes.
Daw and Gage (1967) suggested future research use interviews with principals in addition to an analysis of the feedback instrument. In this study, if the data obtained only from the survey were analyzed and used to determine the influence of feedback on principals, the conclusion would have been that teacher feedback did not influence the principals' behaviors even though it did influence the principal's self ratings. This determination would have been made in part because the average teacher responses fluctuated over the course of the three months, in addition to the fact that the principals reduced their own assessment of their behaviors in order to align with their teachers.

It is also important to note the differences in the teachers' average responses between the three months were, in many cases, only one hundredth or a few hundredths of a point different. Often times, the average teacher responses actually decreased between months. If each of the principal's profiles is analyzed, in Kara's case 14 of the 21 leadership responsibilities yielded lower average teacher responses following the third feedback cycle compared to the teacher's average responses when they first completed the survey. Even though this reduction between the first and third months occurred, Kara still identified the responsibility of Input as a priority, not only because it was flagged, but also because she was able to qualify her sense of the importance of this practice element based on specific actions she took throughout the course of the school days with her staff in relationship to demonstrating Input.
By the end of the third month, the average teacher response for Input had decreased to an average score of 3.48 from 4.03 following the second survey, and an average of 3.87 following the initial survey. A plausible explanation for this is because even though teachers were providing Kara with monthly feedback, Kara did not acknowledge the influence the feedback was having on her daily practices to her teachers. If the teachers knew Kara was intentionally trying to adjust her practices related to the Responsibility Flags, then the teachers might have been aware of her effort and may have rated her accordingly. This did not occur; perhaps because the teachers were never privy to which responsibilities were flagged and the principal's plan for improving her demonstration of those responsibilities.

Hattie and Timperly (2007) noted that one of the essential elements of effective feedback is the ability of that feedback to "feed forward" (p. 86). By this, they mean the ability of the feedback to be useful in charting a way forward to future learning. In Kara's case, she was attempting to interpret and use the feedback to help her plan her way forward (in becoming a more effective principal), but there was no sharing of this interpretation with the teachers who provided the feedback; thus, the teachers could not assist her in planning the way forward. Kara's results did not "feed forward" (2007, p. 86) to the providers of the feedback.

Tanya had a similar experience as Kara regarding changes in her leadership profile. According to the survey data, her teachers reported lower
average responses on 14 of the 21 leadership responsibilities between the first and third months the teachers completed the survey. During the final interview, Tanya identified Affirmation, Contingent Rewards, and Relationships as the responsibilities she was focusing on improving. She planned a Road Rally and end of the year staff celebration to try to spend more time engaged in those responsibilities. Despite all she did to help improve her demonstration of the responsibilities, the teachers’ scores did not appear to reflect those things.

The average teacher response for Affirmation was 3.50 after the first survey, 3.36 the second month, and 3.11 following the third survey. Contingent Rewards received an initial average teacher response of 3.03, then 3.12 following the second survey, and 3.11 after the third survey. The average teacher response for the responsibility of Relationships was 2.72 after the initial survey period, 2.98 for the second, and 2.53 after the third.

These scores do not demonstrate that teachers saw any appreciable change in Tanya’s practice in these three areas over the three months even though she specifically chose to employ new strategies to better align her practice with these three responsibilities. The same explanation for lack of appreciable change provided in Kara’s case can also be applied to Tanya. Both Kara and Tanya took their teacher’s feedback seriously and attempted to interpret what it meant for any changes they should make in the ways in which they went about their work as principals. In both cases, they were
doing the interpretation in isolation from the people who provided the feedback and, thus, were denied the benefit of how the teachers could have assisted them in making sense of the feedback within the context of the work of their school. By the same token, the teachers were not privy to how their principals were processing the feedback, so they did not know what areas their principals had targeted for improvement. In light of the slight decline in teacher ratings for both principals over the three months, this study raises the question of how the teachers' assessment became somewhat more critical while the principals were attempting to address areas of less favorable feedback.

Based solely on the survey data, it would be plausible to conclude the feedback from teachers did not change either Tanya's or Kara's behaviors and priorities for their work, since no improvement was evident in the teacher assessments on the Balanced Leadership Profile. However, a different conclusion could be made because of the addition of the phase three interviews with principals in which they were able to discuss the feedback, their interpretation of the feedback, and their responses to that feedback. The interviews allowed the researcher to gather additional information about the principals' daily work and priorities in order to determine if the teacher feedback influenced their work as principals.

As previously stated, the interview data suggests the teacher feedback did influence the principals' behaviors. Kara spent more of her time focusing
on Input while Tanya spent more of her time focusing on Contingent Rewards, Affirmation, and Relationships.

Implications

The lingering question that remains, though, is why the feedback around the 21 leadership correlates did not have more of a measurable influence over the principals’ work and priorities for their work as reflected in the teacher assessments on the Balanced Leadership Profile. To unpack this question, the findings of research conducted by Kluger and DeNasi (1996) regarding how feedback works in relationship to changing behavior will be discussed. The authors found that prior to receiving feedback on a particular skill, people need to apply more effort in order to learn a new skill. This happens when high commitment is secured for it, when the intended goal “is clear, and when belief in eventual success is high” (p. 260).

In relationship to this study, the issue related to commitment will be discussed followed by the necessity of having clear goals. On issue of commitment, during the three months duration of this study, both principals experienced a large amount time devoted to district level work, e.g. budget cuts, district reorganization, etc. This appeared to be more of the case for Tanya than Kara, because she spent countless hours at the administrative building working with her fellow elementary principal colleagues to plan for the district consolidation process. Some of the activities Tanya was engaged in included planning for how teacher materials would be moved from
buildings for staff who were changing teaching placements, attempting to
determine a fair way to assign teachers to new teaching assignments, and
developing consistent messaging between herself and the other four
elementary principals when they needed to communicate something of
significance back in their buildings.

During the third and final interview, Tanya was asked whether or not
her superintendent and assistant superintendent knew about how
overwhelmed and stretched she was feeling. Tanya responded by stating that
both her superintendent and, in particular her assistant superintendent,
were also stretched thin because of the consolidation work.

Given the complexity of the circumstances around the district work
and the implications on Tanya, her staff, and fellow colleagues, one possible
explanation for why feedback did not have more of a measurable influence on
her behavior (as assessed by the Balanced Leadership Profile survey), is that
changing her behavior to align with the 21 leadership responsibilities was not
a big priority compared to the other things she had to manage. The same
explanation can hold true for the central office administrators who provided
consent for Tanya to participate in this research study. Although providing
Tanya (and eventually, the other administrators) with some additional
guidance regarding leadership was important to the assistant superintendent
at first, the work pressing for her attention and everyone else's was far too
great.
Another interpretation might include central office administrators unaware of the impact the principal's involvement in the district work was having on how staff perceived their leadership related to the 21 leadership correlates. Visibility, in particular, was the leadership responsibility where Tanya received the largest amount of criticism; but she also received a lot of criticism associated with the responsibility of Relationships. Might the impact of her absence from the building have ramifications that extended beyond the current school year?

It is also possible the central office administrators did not fully grasp the 21 responsibilities and the implications for how their building principals are expected to lead if they are going to support leadership behaviors that improve student outcomes. While the district level work was important, so too is ensuring students are improving their learning rates over time. Unfortunately, Pellcier's (1988) findings that principals tend to spend most of their time engaged in activities like district work were true in Tanya's case and (as it will be discussed next) to a limited extent, this was true in Kara's case as well.

Unlike Tanya, Kara had only referenced district work related to budget and staffing as a main priority during the final interview. Nonetheless, Kara admitted to feeling stretched in her ability to lead towards the end of the year due to the budget meetings, reductions in staff, retirements, and participating in the hiring of a new high school principal. It
appeared as though she was able to balance the district level work with the
demonstration of the 21 leadership responsibilities, because when she
described her daily work during the both the initial and final interviews she
related that work to approximately 66% of the 21 leadership responsibilities.

When this is compared to Tanya’s data from the initial and final
interviews, Kara presents as a stronger principal who focuses her time and
attention on the specific leadership behaviors proven to improve student
outcomes. Interestingly enough though, although Kara describes behaviors
associated with 70% of the leadership responsibilities, the student
achievement data for her building is not improving. In fact, there was a 13%
decrease in the 2009-2010 eighth grade proficiency rates for the Michigan
Education Assessment Program (MEAP) in English Language Arts. Kara
discussed the decline in MEAP scores and stated:

All of the high scores on the survey means nothing if it doesn’t
translate into higher student achievement. I am going to give myself
three years and if the scores have not improved then I will walk away
from here. This is not a job for me. Being a principal is a responsibility.
I take that seriously. So if in three years, all of this work hasn’t
translated into higher student achievement, it will be time for me to
move on.

Also, Kara was not without Responsibility Flags. Many of them were
due to Kara self-assessing lower than her teachers, while only two of the flags
she received, over the course of the three feedback cycles, were because she self-assessed higher than the average responses from her teachers. Kara's self-assessment might have been more accurate than her teachers'. Nonetheless, Kara identified district-work related to budget as being her main priority during the final phase of the research study.

As a demonstration of support for helping principals in the district attend to leadership practices and behaviors that support improved student results, Kara's superintendent provided consent for Kara to participate in this research project and actually volunteered "all of the district principals in the study." It would appear as though the superintendent was committed to providing support to her principals so they can focus their work on the leadership practices known to make a difference in student achievement. In spite of this demonstration of support and commitment, however, and similar to Tanya's central office administrators, it appeared as though the district budget issues were pulling on everyone's time and detracting from the work they seemed to actually value.

The issue related to clear intended goals that Kluger and DeNasi (1996) addressed in their study might have also contributed to the reasons why the feedback from teachers did not have more of a measurable impact on influencing the principals' behaviors as evidenced by the assessment feedback. Although the principal subjects had knowledge of the 21 leadership responsibilities, the researcher was unable to account for their depth of
knowledge regarding them. The results from the Balanced Leadership Profile survey provided a definition of each of the 21 responsibilities to the principals, but each of the definitions was vague.

When a Responsibility Flag appeared, the principal could click on the words, “Guidance Document” listed below the specific leadership responsibility. The purpose of the Guidance Document was to, as the title suggests, provide direction for principals for how to increase demonstration of the responsibility. The problem was that the Guidance Document included a series of vague questions the principal might wish to ask herself in order to formulate a plan of action related to the flagged responsibility. Furthermore, the results from the electronic survey provided some vague “considerations” for principals given the data generated.

For example, if the principal received five or more Responsibility Flags, then it was suggested they consider three actions and five questions. One of the questions was: “Have you and the staff worked together to understand the value, beliefs, and skills that may be challenged?” One of the considerations was: “Meet with the school leadership team to better understand the knowledge, skills, and practices staff members have in relation to the initiative.” Both of these examples are vague and do not provide a “clear intended goal” for improvement as Kluger and DeNasi (1996) found to be a necessary component to feedback in order for it to be effective.
Hattie and Timperly (2007) conducted a synthesis of the research on feedback and learning to isolate features of effective feedback. From this synthesis, the authors offer “a model of feedback that is used as a framework to understand why particular kinds of feedback promote learning effectively and why some others do not” (p. 86). Hattie and Timperly’s review of literature extended Kluger and DeNasi’s (1996) findings by discussing the importance of answering three essential questions related to feedback in order to understand how feedback works with individuals.

In their synthesis of the research, Hattie and Timperly (2007) concluded that effective feedback answers three important questions from the perspective of a student. (In the case of this study, the ‘student’ was the principal, and the teachers, were the teachers who worked with the principal.) Those essential questions are: Where am I going?; How am I going?; and Where to next? Hattie and Timperly go on to propose that answering those three questions “corresponds to the notions of feed-up, feedback, and feed-forward” (p. 86).

Hattie and Timperly’s analysis revealed that, in order to influence student learning to the maximum extent possible, it was important for teachers to provide feedback to students that helps them ask and answer, “where am I going,” “how am I going,” and “where to next.” When this three-part frame of questions is applied to the feedback principals received from their teachers in this study, it can be concluded that the survey used in this
study provided principals with the necessary information to inform them where they were going. The principals knew a score of 5.00 for each of the 21 responsibilities was what they wanted to eventually achieve. It also communicated progress and provided some direction regarding how to proceed.

The feedback question, “How am I going?”, based on Hattie and Timperly’s (2007) synthesis and conceptual framework, would not have been sufficiently addressed by the results and reports generated from the survey used for this study. Because the Guidance Documents embedded in each of the responsibilities listed on the survey results were comprised of questions for the principal to consider, there was no way to account for how the principals would answer those questions and whether or not their answers to those questions would have yielded them better results.

The third and final question Hattie and Timperly discussed addressing feedback is “Where to next?” The survey provided very limited information to principals to guide their decisions about areas they should prioritize for focusing their efforts to improve or better align their practice with the 21 responsibilities. The “considerations” provided in the principals’ data report would be the closest thing resembling “Where to next”. For example, one of the considerations provided on the first page of their results suggested they “attend to 3 leadership responsibilities (Monitor and Evaluate, Ideals and Beliefs, and Knowledge of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment)” that
are important to emphasize, regardless of the type of change they are attempting to lead in their school.

Although, this general guidance on setting priorities provided the principal subjects some direction as to which of the responsibilities they might select as priorities for adjusting and better aligning their work, there is little direction provided regarding how to actually adapt their practice to achieve a stronger demonstration of those responsibilities.

The important conclusion from the 2007 Hattie and Timperly’s synthesis and conceptual analysis regarding how feedback works for individuals is that each of the three questions does not work in isolation. In fact, the integration of those three questions provides the greatest source of power. Because the instrument used in this study to provide principals with monthly feedback was missing key elements related to each of the three feedback questions Hattie and Timperly discussed, it is not surprising the teachers’ feedback didn’t have more of an influence on the principals’ daily work and priorities for their work, at least in a way that was discernable in repeated rounds of survey feedback from the teachers.

The results from Tanya’s and Kara’s three month assessment on the Balanced Leadership Profile suggests that feedback alone may not be sufficient guidance for a principal, even when that feedback is provided by teachers as key informants on the principals’ work and based on research supported principal responsibilities. Perhaps other factors need to be taken
into consideration including the nature of the feedback, timing of the feedback, and how the recipient of the feedback interprets the feedback (Hattie & Timperly, 2007). The next section will explore the factor of accounting for how the recipient interprets the feedback and how the absence of this factor might have contributed to why the feedback did not have more of a measurable influence over the principals’ behavior.

Research conducted by Joyce and Showers (1982) explored the rate of transference of a skill teachers were learning into classroom practice following professional development, feedback, and peer coaching. Joyce and Showers found that professional development aimed at increasing the knowledge of the skill, coupled with the theory behind the skill, modeling and practice of the skill during the professional development, coupled with feedback and systematic peer coaching within the classroom, increased the teacher transfer rate of the skill from below 10% to 95%. The principal participants in this study had knowledge of the 21 leadership responsibilities, but study data did not account for the depth of that knowledge, nor did the data provide any insight into the amount or nature of any professional development the principals received (or did not receive) related to the 21 leadership responsibilities.

Although they received feedback from their teachers for three months, this study did not include attention to specific professional development on the 21 responsibilities; modeling of the leadership responsibilities in the
context of leading RtI; guided practice by the principals on the responsibilities; or coaching for the principals around the feedback they received from their teachers. The principal subjects all said they wanted to be “instructional leaders” but identified how the daily demands of the job prevented them from engaging in those behaviors related to instructional leadership. Additionally, during the three months of receiving feedback on the 21 responsibilities, nothing else occurred for either of the principals that would have contributed to any of the above referenced aspects of professional development or other supports designed to help the principals focus on and achieve changes in practice that align with the 21 responsibilities.

Mertz (1999) discussed the difficulty in principals being instructional leaders. He discussed how instructional leadership, while substantiated well in theory, is not always borne out in practice. In the midst of the chaos principals encounter on a daily basis, they are still functioning on three levels: everyday management, putting out fires, and having to find time to deal with an array of interpersonal things that prevents leaders from engaging in practices they thought the job was about. Even though Marzano, Waters and McNulty (2005) extended the research around instructional leadership by operationalizing specific leadership behaviors that correlate to student achievement, there are still 21 leadership responsibilities that have broad interpretations depending on the lens the principal is using to lead a particular initiative. Connecting the Joyce & Showers (1987) findings with
this study suggests teacher feedback on the Balanced Leadership Profile might have a better chance of influencing principal practice to a larger extent than shown in this study if a few additional things occur along with the process of feedback: (1) focused professional development around the 21 leadership responsibilities through the lens of leading RtI; (2) demonstration of the responsibilities with examples and non-examples; and (3) coaching during the three months of teacher feedback.

The principal’s job is complex and, even more so, with the increase of high-stakes accountability required through federal and state educational mandates. This requires leaders to sift through priorities, respond to crises, and still allocate their time and attention to focus on improving student outcomes. Unfortunately, some of the principals’ priorities involve work outside of their building. Those priorities are dictated by circumstances that are sometimes out of their control. Although the principals who participated in this study discussed how they are constantly being pulled in several different directions, the principals are not alone. Their central office administrators are experiencing it too, which might explain why the principals divert their attention from critical building level work in order to engage in district level work, even though they are expected to lead their building in ways that foster high levels of learning.

The qualitative methods used for this study provided valuable insight into what the principals in the study were feeling and thinking in response to
and in conjunction with the quantitative feedback generated by the survey. The conversations between the principal and researcher appeared to be reflective and even cathartic for the principal subjects. Near the conclusion of the study, the principals treated the researcher as a listening ear and, following the conclusion of the study, began to contact her for advice on how to lead in the face of some of the building and district challenges. This seems to suggest that they both wanted and needed opportunities to discuss their work in an open and safe environment.

The principals responded to being participants in this study with a high level of honesty and candor that remained constant during all the interview phases of the research study. Participants did not seem to brag about themselves as leaders or attempt to put a positive spin on how they were leading their buildings and prioritizing their work. The opposite occurred; they were extremely honest about their strengths, weaknesses, and problems with teachers, parents, and central office administrators. Additionally, the teachers were equally as honest about their principals and their candor and raw emotion during the focus group was notable.

The use of qualitative methods also provided the researcher with insight into the stressors, demands, and emotions of the principalship that are often times kept secret. It was obvious, at times, how much the principals were struggling with the decisions they made as evidenced by the expressions of emotion displayed by participants as they reflected on the feedback from
teachers. Daw and Gage (1967) recognized that interviews should be used in future research to support or add value to the quantitative data generated by the questionnaire teachers used to rate their principal in an effort to change their principals behaviors. This study found that the interviews and focus groups did add depth to the overall study and it also provided many considerations for future research related to this topic as discussed in the next section.

Considerations for Further Study

The first consideration the findings of this study can offer for further study includes providing intensive professional development around the leadership responsibilities during the first phase of the research design. This would have assisted principals in more fully understanding the 21 leadership responsibilities in the context of leading RtI. During that period, the facilitator of the professional development sessions could have helped principals anticipate barriers that could potentially impede their demonstration of the 21 leadership responsibilities and helped them identify if the practices associated with leading RtI were going to be perceived by staff as second order change. Things like district-level work, proactive systems to manage student misbehavior, meetings, and managing resistance to change could have been discussed and problem-solved around which would have provided the principals with more clarity around the goals for increasing their demonstration of the 21 leadership responsibilities.
In addition to intensive professional development, solidifying commitment from central office administrators and the principals themselves should also be considered for future research. It would have been an opportune time to speak to the principals and central office administrators following the phase one interviews with principals and focus group sessions with teachers. Once the transcripts were coded to the 21 leadership responsibilities, similarities and differences between how the principals perceived themselves and how the teachers perceived their principals engaging in their work and priorities for their work could have been shared in the aggregate form with both the principal subjects and central office administrators.

One of the questions posed within this chapter was whether or not superintendents and assistant superintendents realized how the district-level work was negatively impacting the teachers’ perceptions of their principal’s leadership. In some of the cases, the district-level work appeared to be negatively impacting the principals’ relationships with their teachers as well. The dialogue between the teachers in the focus groups in some of the cases, underscored a dependency on their principal. The researcher found the teachers to be making excuses for the leader’s absences and poor decisions around how to be more efficient with their time when they were in the office. They even went so far as to blame themselves for why the leader would have to remove the mailboxes from the office in the name of efficiency, for example.
Providing this level of qualitative feedback to principals and central office staff might have altered the course of the leadership decisions both the principal and superintendent/assistant superintendents were making. Sharing this data might have also increased commitment from the principals about changing their daily work and increased commitment from central office administrators about being mindful about the amount of presence their principals needed to have in their building. One of the principals identified how she wanted to have more qualitative information from her teachers. During the final interview with Kara, she explained how she thought qualitative information from her teachers would have been very helpful. Although she liked the anonymity and “safety” around the feedback the survey provided, she wished the survey included more information and examples from teachers. She felt this information would have helped her to understand where the teachers were coming from in how they perceived her leadership around the 21 responsibilities.

Another future consideration would include expanding the length of the study for an entire school year. Because the data for this study began to be collected in April and ended in June, the seemingly hectic end of the year activities at both the building level and district level became too much for the principals to manage in such a short period of time. Kara mentioned that she thought the feedback she was receiving from the survey was reflective of the negative feelings around the district’s budget decisions rather than her
leadership style. Since most districts begin to make staff aware of the budget difficulties that will result in cuts for the following school year around February or later, it might have been more beneficial for the principals to begin participation in the study in August so their focus on the leadership correlates could have been expanded from three months to 10.

Gage, Runkel and Chatterjee (1960) explored this in their experimental study about the interval, form of feedback, and other variables that influenced behavior change and attempted to determine if a longer interval of time between the feedback and post-test produced more of a behavior change. They assigned subjects to either a 6 or 12-week interval group and found the effect of the feedback was not the function of the interval of time in which it was measured. In this study, however, since both of the principals who received feedback discussed how the survey data would guide their leadership work for the following school year, it might be possible that they were waiting for a "fresh start" to begin changing the way they prioritize their work around the 21 leadership correlates. In other words, this is something worth exploring since both of the principal subjects seemed very overwhelmed during the study.

The final consideration for future research would be to couple coaching for principal subjects with the teacher feedback they would receive over a longer period of time. As previously discussed, the reports from the survey principals received on a monthly basis did have considerations and questions
for the principal to review in order to adjust practice; but, because these things were vague and did not provide what Hattie and Timperly (2007) described in their review of the research related to feedback as answers to the feedback questions, “How am I going?” and “Where am I going?”, utilizing trained leadership coaches to work with the principal subjects in understanding and acting upon their feedback might have generated more of a behavior change from principals. Similar to this idea would be the data regarding skill acquisition for teachers in impacting classroom practice that was conducted by Joyce and Showers (1982). Joyce and Showers provided compelling data for how feedback, coupled with peer coaching, significantly increased the implementation of the skill being learned into the teachers’ classrooms.

The considerations for future research discussed here, like more focused professional development around leading RtI, modeling of some of the responsibilities, and practice by participants would seemingly replicate what Joyce and Showers’ (1982) study except the emphasis would be on principals demonstrating leadership behaviors known to improve student outcomes.

Additional Study Limitations

Chapter 1 discusses limitations for this study inherent to the study design. This section will address additional limitations considered in the actual completion of the study. Traditionally, case study research has been “stereotyped” as a weak sibling among social science methods (Yin, 2001, p.
xiii). Although the researcher in this study had taken steps to formalize many aspects of this study's research design, the qualitative data collected for this multiple case study was subjective. The analysis of the interview and focus group data was coded by the researcher and potentially might have been interpreted differently than main researchers who identified and defined the 21 leadership responsibilities that emerged from the meta-analysis.

In this study, the researcher attempted to minimize as much subjective analysis and interpretation as possible by creating a table that included the definitions for each of the 21 leadership responsibilities and further definitions for the responsibilities provided by Marzano, Waters and McNulty (2005) from the authors of the studies they used to conduct the meta-analysis. During times when the researcher needed clarification regarding how to code a participant transcript, she utilized the principle investigator listed for this research study. An example of this included a discussion around the responsibility of Discipline. The researcher had coded examples from participant transcripts that included managing student misbehavior as a non-example of this leadership responsibility. Even though the definitions provided by the researchers and authors of the other studies included in the meta-analysis around the responsibility could have loosely been coded as descriptions of Discipline, the researcher discussed her interpretation with the principle investigator and dissertation chair for this study by way of
soliciting an informed corroboration during the coding process. The researcher was fortunate to have a principle investigator who was well versed in her understanding of the 21 leadership responsibilities so she was able to assist in some coding when needed.

The role of researcher bias should also be addressed. The researcher is currently employed through the Michigan Integrated Behavior Learning Support Initiative (MiBLSi), which was responsible for providing the training and support to the principal subjects and their building leadership teams in learning how to implement an RtI framework. All four of the principals knew the researcher from her involvement in the project. Additionally, they developed a collegial relationship with her, because she had provided extensive training and support to not only their buildings during the RtI trainings, but also to their central office administrators. As a result, the researcher had a great deal of context around the dynamics of the school districts, and their areas of strength, weaknesses, and challenges. Consequently, the researcher needed to carefully construct the interview and focus group protocols in an effort to decrease the likelihood that the follow-up or probing questions would be based on what participants said during the interview or focus group, as opposed to what the researcher knew about the districts and subjects prior to the study.

The researcher also needed to maintain objectivity when it became evident that the MiBLSi training and external coach assigned to their
building were not assisting two of the principals in establishing proactive systems for managing student misbehavior. The conditions related to promoting positive, proactive behaviors that each of the principals should have had in place either were not in place or were not working effectively as evidenced by the high volume of behavior problems the principals were having to manage on a daily basis. Although these things provided the researcher with some internal conflicts, the researcher bias to a large extent was minimized by avoiding any commentary about the areas where the principal did not have the core components of the MiBLSi program working effectively in the building.

Another limitation of this study was the timing of the study. Because data collection began in April and the first round of teacher feedback to principals didn't begin until the end of April beginning of May, the final cycle of feedback was not provided to the principals until mid-June. The intent was to have 30 days between each cycle of feedback; however, the researcher had difficulty gaining access to the principals' teaching staff so recruitment could occur. Reasons for this included spring break, already full staff meeting agendas and district-level commitments. Had the researcher found a way to recruit participants the first week of April, it would have been possible for principals to receive their first cycle of feedback during the middle of April. That would have allowed feedback for the final month to be provided prior to the teachers leaving for summer vacation. Although the Balanced Leadership
Profile survey allows the survey window to be set and the data to be viewed prior the close of the survey window, it was unclear how accurate the results would have been if there had only been a small percentage of participants having taken the survey.

The fluctuations between surveys return rates for each of the three months of feedback resulted in another limitation. Because the Balanced Leadership Profile survey requires the survey window to be set, the teachers to be electronically invited, and assures anonymity for teachers who have completed the survey, the researcher could not provide individual reminders to teacher subjects who had not completed the survey prior to the close of the window. Instead, the researcher sent out an e-mail where all of the participant e-mail addresses were listed in the Blind Carbon Copy (BCC) line of the e-mail, and they were asked to complete the survey if they hadn't done so already. Confounding matters was the short timeframe in which the study was being conducted due in part to the difficulty gaining access to teacher subjects during the month of April. It would appear that in any other profession, the decision to extend the study could have been made so data collection and teacher feedback could have resumed under less time constraints. Unfortunately, this would not have been possible given the fact that summer break was occurring during the months of June through August and all of the principal subjects were experiencing a large percentage of retirements or staffing changes.
Relating to the issue of staffing, since this study recruited teachers who were willing to participate in the study, it is plausible to believe that many of the teachers were already supportive of the principal's work. In the case of Kara, this might have been true. Many of the participants in both the focus group and those who agreed to complete the survey served a leadership role within the building. Since Kara works closely with those individuals and also had either chosen or recruited many of them to serve in a leadership role, it is possible that Kara's elevated self-assessment scores and the strong agreement between her and her teachers regarding her demonstration of the 21 leadership responsibilities coded from the focus group and interview might be explained by the closeness in their relationships. It would be interesting to see if Kara's survey data would yield the same average responses if all teachers completed the survey or if there would be lower average responses and an increase in the number of Responsibility Flags.

This study was also not able to account for the principal's true knowledge of the meta-analysis conducted by Marzano, Waters, and McNulty (2005). While all the principal subjects stated they were familiar with the leadership responsibilities and had access to the book, the researcher could not account for their true level of understanding. The potential lack of knowledge regarding the 21 responsibilities might have also contributed to the reasons why the teacher feedback did not have more of an influence on the principals' behaviors. Nonetheless, the survey did account for this by
providing definitions of each of the responsibilities, guidance documents, considerations based on their data, and questions to ask themselves based on the number of responsibility flags they received. Had the researcher been able to control for this limitation by either sending all of the principal subjects to McREL for the Balanced Leadership training prior to the study or provided them with training from an individual who fully grasps the understanding of the leadership responsibilities, the results might have been different.

One final limitation that will be discussed for this study was the researcher not being able to control for the years of experience among the principal participants. Tanya and Cindy each had the highest number of years experience in being a principal or having administrative experience and Rhonda had the fewest number of years experience. Although it might have been nice to control for this factor, it did not appear to make a difference in the data generated with both groups of cases. In many instances, there were common themes across at least three of the four principal cases. The only exception typically was Kara, who had the second lowest experience in the principalship across the participants.

Discussion Summary

Principals are the front line of school reform. Even when a school commits to an improvement effort that is well grounded in research such as Response to Intervention (RtI), the principal plays a key role in leading the
change of adapting the school processes, culture, roles and responsibilities, norms, and systems to support implementation. To play this role effectively, the principal often finds it necessary to examine and adapt his or her own practices and make adjustments in attention and focus. Marzano, Waters, and McNulty’s (2005) meta-analysis of the research on principal responsibilities identified 21 distinct responsibilities for areas of principal focus and attention that correlate with both improved student outcomes and leading the process of second order (deep) change.

Marzano, Waters and McNulty’s analysis and the body of research from which they derived the 21 responsibilities gives principals a broad array of options for guiding how a principal adapts his or her day to day practice, routines, and strategies to achieve improved student results and guide school improvement efforts. What requires further study, however, is how principals actually go about making decisions regarding where they need to spend their time and attention. Additionally, given that established practices are resistant to change, even when the practitioner has access to a guiding frame such as the 21 Balanced Leadership Responsibilities, further study is needed to identify specific levers for change that a principal can employ in guiding his or her own efforts to adapt and alter day-to-practices to achieve more effective leadership.

This study looked at how a systematic and repeated process of feedback from teachers to principals pertaining to their demonstration of the
21 Balanced Leadership Responsibilities (a) assists principals in identifying areas for attention to or adaptation of their daily practice; (b) how principals make sense of that feedback; and (c) the decisions principals make regarding changing or adapting their practice, attention, and focus based on their teachers' feedback. This study illustrated how principals respond to teacher feedback with deeper reflection on their practice, focus, and attention. The principals who received monthly feedback for three months on the Balanced Leadership Profile demonstrated a deeper questioning of their own work, an interest in understanding any differences between how they and their teachers assess their work, and an interest in isolating areas for greater attention, focus, and even change in practice.

This study did not follow the principals who did and did not receive teacher feedback long enough to determine the degree to which this type of feedback becomes instrumental in shaping the principal's behavior, focus and attention long term, but early indications from the two principals who received the feedback suggest the potential for teacher feedback to be a meaningful element in helping a principal assess, interpret, and adapt their practice, focus and attention to achieve better results. This study also illustrates how external demands on the principal are another important factor in shaping a principal's decisions regarding how they incorporate leadership practices associated with improving school results into their day to day practice. This was true for both the principals who received teacher
feedback and those who did not. For those who did receive that feedback, however, the competing demands on the principal’s time and attention became a stronger area of concern in the interviews with the principal.

The studies that influenced the design of this study dated back approximately forty years. The key difference between this study and previous studies that referenced similar findings is that principal behaviors and practices assessed in this study are supported by an extensive meta-analysis of principal behaviors and practices that correlate to student outcomes. The availability of a broad, multi-faceted lens for assessing principal practice supported by an extensive body of research, suggests that teacher feedback can not only be an influence on how principals understand and make decisions about their work, it can help a principal determine how their work aligns with research supported practices and set priorities for change.

Even in a larger study, where specific changes in principal practice could be tracked over longer periods of time with a broader sample of principals and teachers, using qualitative methods to understand how principals interpret and make decisions with the teacher feedback from the Balanced Leadership Profile or other research validated instruments, qualitative methods would still provide rich information beyond what could be collected and analyzed using a quantitative instrument.
A plausible explanation for the conflicting evidence between the quantitative and qualitative results of this study can be found in the research related to the effects of feedback on learning and achievement. Although feedback has an effect size of .79 on student learning and achievement, the type of feedback and way in which it is provided to the recipient has differing effects (Hattie & Timperly, 2007). In a synthesis of the research literature, Hattie and Timperly concluded that effective feedback answers three important questions: Where am I going?, How am I going?, Where to next? An important conclusion from their synthesis and conceptual analysis regarding how feedback works for individuals is that each of the three questions does not work in isolation. In fact, the integration of those three questions provides the greatest source of power.

The teacher feedback from the Balanced Leadership Profile, combined with the opportunity for principal reflection in the interviews with the researcher provided an opportunity for the principals in this study to examine the answers to the first two questions (Where am I going and how am I going?) By connecting the teacher feedback with their goals for the school, the principals were able to take stock of how their practice, focus, and attention was or was not in alignment with where they want to go. They were also using the teacher feedback to check their own perception about how their work is or is not in alignment with where they want to go. The essential feedback question “Where to next?” however, was not adequately addressed
in this study. Hattie and Timperly observed it is necessary for the provider of the feedback to receive information relative to that question. In the case of this study, the teachers were providing the principal feedback and were not privy to principals’ survey results. Instead, the principals attempted to interpret the teacher feedback in isolation from the people who provided the feedback. Consequently, the principals were denied the benefit of how the teachers could have assisted them in making sense of the feedback in terms of setting a direction for adapting their practice, focus, or attention.

This study also found a subtle element of how feedback is received and understood when not co-analyzed by the providers and receiver of the feedback and not connected with other evidence or information to either corroborate or expand the assessment of performance or practice. One of the principals was attuned to the fact that the 21 leadership responsibilities were supported by an extensive meta-analysis of principal behaviors and practices that correlated to improved student outcomes (Marzano, Waters & McNulty, 2005), but she was unclear as to which of the responsibilities were key levers for improving student outcomes. She recognized that while she received feedback regarding her demonstration of 70% of the leadership responsibilities, it was not translating into improved student outcomes. In fact, the opposite occurred. Her building’s state assessment data was declining.
While teacher feedback suggested a strong profile of practice against the 21 Balanced Leadership correlates, her demonstration of 66% of the responsibilities was not translating into higher levels of student achievement. This information appears to be conflicting to the research on which the 21 correlates are based. Does this mean that this principal just has not reached critical mass in aligning her work with the 21 responsibilities, or does this suggest that there are key levers among the 21 responsibilities that can or should be emphasized? It appears as though the responsibilities she is demonstrating on a daily basis are not the key levers necessary for her school’s data to improve. As this study concluded, this principal was left in a quandary. She had not had or created the opportunity to engage her staff in helping to interpret their feedback on the 21 Balanced Leadership correlates or join her in examining where, among the 34% of the correlates she demonstrated with less frequency, she might find the important leadership lever for her school. Also, as this study concluded, the principal had not questioned how the feedback on her own work intersected with other data about teacher practice, school processes and student results.

This study stopped short of delving into processes and strategies that principals can use in combination with teacher feedback to more effectively target strategic areas of change in their day-to-day practice, focus, and attention that will help them lead their schools to better student results. The aspect of co-constructing the meaning of self assessment and teacher
feedback on research validated principal leadership assessments, like the Balanced Leadership Profile is one important area for further study. Another is the use of multiple data sources or measures to make decisions about areas of principal practice, focus and attention that may or may not be the important levers for improvement in any given school. In her book, *Data Analysis for Comprehensive Schoolwide Improvement*, Victoria Bernhardt (1998) identifies four important streams of data for making evidence based school improvement decisions in schools. Since performance improvement is an element of organizational improvement, her frame for interpreting school (and student) results and finding important “interactions or intersections” (p. 123) may be an important means by which principals can find the key levers for change in their own schools among such a wide array of options as the 21 Balanced Leadership Responsibilities.

The final subtle aspect of the findings from this study can be found in the interactions between the researcher and the principals as principals reflected on their practice, focus, and attention as school leaders. The researcher in this study provided the principals with an opportunity to examine the ways in which they might find a link between research on principal practice, their own work, their teachers’ perceptions about their work and the student results of the school. The principals who did the self assessment and received the teacher feedback on the Balanced Leadership Profile and had the opportunity to examine the results with the researcher
expressed appreciation for the interaction with the researcher/interviewer and suggested that ongoing opportunities for this type of data informed engagement with another colleague or informed person would be desirable and useful.

Future research that builds upon this finding could create a research design that includes professional development and leadership coaching around the 21 responsibilities. Adding the variable of coaching to the feedback principals receive around their demonstration of the 21 leadership correlates would align with Hattie and Timperly’s (2007) model of feedback. The three essential questions: Where am I going?, How am I going?, and Where to next? could be better addressed with more intensive training and coaching around the feedback teachers will provide to their principals. The duration of the study and frequency of training, feedback, and coaching should also be considered in order to avoid the specific times during the school year that might detract from the principal’s ability to focus on the feedback and create opportunities for focused adaptation and change in day-to-day practice, focus, and attention.
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Appendix A

HSIRB Approval Letter
Date: May 12, 2008

To: Patricia Reeves, Principal Investigator
   Kimberly St. Martin, Student Investigator for dissertation
   Mark St. Martin, Student Investigator

From: Amy Naugle, Ph.D., Chair

Re: HSIRB Project Number: 08-03-20

This letter will serve as confirmation that your research project entitled "The Knowing-Doing Gap: The Influences of Teacher Feedback on Changing Principal Behavior: A Mixed Methods Study" has been approved under the expedited category of review by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board. The conditions and duration of this approval are specified in the Policies of Western Michigan University. You may now begin to implement the research as described in the application.

Please note that you may only conduct this research exactly in the form it was approved. You must seek specific board approval for any changes in this project. You must also seek reapproval if the project extends beyond the termination date noted below. In addition if there are any unanticipated adverse reactions or unanticipated events associated with the conduct of this research, you should immediately suspend the project and contact the Chair of the HSIRB for consultation.

The Board wishes you success in the pursuit of your research goals.

Approval Termination: May 12, 2009
Appendix B

Principal Kara
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Appendix C

Principal Tanya
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Appendix D

Interview Questions
Group 1

Phase 1 Interview Questions:

1. Given that you are a principal of a building involved in a major systemic change initiative describe your day to day work as a building principal.

2. Given the fact that you are a principal of a major change initiative, describe how you prioritize the work that you do as a building principal.

Phase 3 Interview Questions:

1. Given that you are a principal of a building involved in a major systemic change initiative describe your day to day work as a building principal.

2. Given the fact that you are a principal of a major change initiative, describe how you prioritize the work that you do as a building principal.

3. Throughout the duration of this research project, you have been engaged in a process of receiving systematic feedback from your teaching staff related to your fulfillment of the 21 leadership responsibilities. Describe the influences the feedback had on the work that you do as a building principal.

Group 2

Phase 1 Interview Questions:

1. Given that you are a principal of a building involved in a major systemic change initiative describe your day to day work as a building principal.

2. Given the fact that you are a principal of a major change initiative, describe how you prioritize the work that you do as a building principal.
Phase 2 Interview Questions:

1. Given that you are a principal of a building involved in a major systemic change initiative describe your day to day work as a building principal.

2. Given the fact that you are a principal of a major change initiative, describe how you prioritize the work that you do as a building principal.
Appendix E

Focus Group Questions
1. As you think about your principal's conduct or day to day conduct during the implementation of MiBLSi describe the behaviors you observe on a day to day basis.

2. Given that your school is participating in a major systemic change initiative (MiBLSi), how would you describe how your principal prioritizes his/her work? What priorities should drive his/her work and what would that work look like?