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Leading for Innovation: A Visual Ethnography of Three Principals that Have Moved Their Schools from Low to High Achievement as Viewed through Transformational Leadership Theory

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LEADING FOR INNOVATION: A VISUAL ETHNOGRAPHY OF THREE PRINCIPALS
THAT HAVE MOVED THEIR SCHOOLS FROM LOW TO HIGH ACHIEVEMENT AS
VIEWED THROUGH TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP THEORY

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Presented to the Faculty of the
Doctor of Educational Leadership Department
George Fox University
In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
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“LEADING FOR INNOVATION: A VISUAL ETHNOGRAPHY OF THREE PRINCIPALS WHO LED THEIR SCHOOLS FROM LOW TO HIGH ACHIEVEMENT AS VIEWED THROUGH TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP THEORY,” a Doctoral research project prepared by CHARAN CLINE in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Education degree in Educational Leadership.

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Abstract

This dissertation describes research where multiple case studies of principals that have successfully implemented innovative practices were conducted and analyzed. The researcher used visual ethnographic techniques to conduct interviews with three principals who have led their schools from Priority or Focus status to a high level of performance. In addition, school improvement coaches were interviewed and school improvement documents were reviewed. The journey of each school is described, and the actions of each principal are analyzed using transformational leadership theory as a framework to establish successful patterns of leadership for implementing innovations. The researcher recommends 18 questions derived from the analysis that a school leader should consider to create an innovative school.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

At the beginning of my tenth year in education, I became the principal of a middle school in Southwest Oregon. By the No Child Left Behind standards of the time, the school was rated as failing in language arts, mathematics, and attendance. The teachers were demoralized and the school was losing its assistant principal due to budget cuts. Because it was in such dire straits the State of Oregon awarded the school a School Improvement Grant (SIG) in order to improve its practice. Along with the funding, we received a state funded school improvement coach to help us plan our improvement work.

The school was located in a typical Oregon timber town. Many of the families were recruited to the area from Appalachia in the 1950s to work in the local lumber mills. As the lumber industry's fortunes ebbed and flowed, so did the social health of the community and its inhabitants. Like many resource-dependent rural communities across America, an economic downturn had increased the problems of poverty (Sherman, 2014). When the lumber industry began to collapse in the 1980's the town went into an extended decline. When I took over the school in 2005, many of the students' families had been living in generational poverty for quite some time.

During the first two years, the staff and I improved the school's performance on every measurable indicator from discipline to writing assessments to improving the facility. The staff had good job satisfaction and the students were taking pride in their learning. During the four years that I served at the school, we created a positive and productive educational environment that enabled students to consistently meet standards. In fact, we outperformed almost every other middle school in our region.

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While I had guidance and experience to draw from to do that work, it seemed like many of the actions I took at that time were simply from instinct. There was no real playbook on how to get the job done. Our coach was helpful, but could only provide us a limited range of strategies. The staff and I put practices in place that we hoped would work, and luckily most of them did.

However, my first year of managing the school was simply triage and even though the school was failing around them, the staff was resistant to change. They perceived their situation differently than the federal and state government did. In early meetings with staff members, it was clear that the staff's priorities were about taking care of their students. They made the comment over and over that they fed, clothed, and helped their kids through difficult times and they should be credited for that. While that attitude was laudable, it also held the teachers back from pushing their students to academically achieve to their potential. The school district superintendent at that time used to say that in order to create change, an administrator needs to create a "burning platform." He meant that staff members often will not change their behavior unless they are in a crisis. I left the experience feeling like we had done good work, yet I was unsure about which actions I had undertaken that actually supported the school's reformation.

Over a decade later, principals are still walking into low-performing schools and accepting the challenge to improve them. Some of the administrators are successful and some are not. The goal of this dissertation is to profile three principals who have had led their schools from poor student achievement to high and tell their stories. After analyzing the strategies this small group of administrators used, I will offer some guidance that may be helpful to the next person who is ready to improve their school through creating innovation.

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If there is one constant theme in the politics of education, it is that it needs to be reformed (Clemmit, 2011; Evans, Thornton, & Usinger, 2012; Karaim, 2017). From the A Nation at Risk report to the Every Student Succeeds Act, the need for national education reform has become a fixed idea in American politics. Politicians and ordinary citizens are convinced that public schools are broken and letting down the youth of the country (Clemmit, 2011).

Yet pockets of success can be found in many places. Stories of schools abound who were able to beat the odds and help students of all ethnic and economic circumstances achieve (Cunningham, 2006; Campbell, 2012). As stated in the journal article, *High Poverty Schools that Beat the Odds*, “there are no successful schools for hard-to-teach children that lack strong leadership” (Cunningham, 2006, p. 384); it is clear that leadership matters. To the layperson it would seem that if education can be improved in one place, it ought to be able to be improved in any place. Unfortunately, that is not the case. Just because innovative practices are successful in one location, it does not mean that they can be scaled up to a new location. Local circumstances must be accounted for and addressed directly (Hung, Lee, & Wu, 2014).

An innovative practice is a loosely defined term. In my own words, for this study it means replacing the old with the new, the development of a new way of doing things and then putting it into practice. Innovation has the power to both inspire and frighten people. It causes people to give up old practices and step into the unknown (Bakır, 2016; Hazzan & Zelig, 2016). “A climate of innovation and principal leadership in schools are regarded as significant factors in successfully implementing school change or innovation” (Park, 2012, p.89). Most school principals feel confident in their ability to manage innovation in their schools (Bakır, 2016), but changes made in school practices have a poor history of accomplishing the goals they envisioned for them (Hazzan & Zelig, 2016; van den Berg, Slegers, Geijsel, & Vandenberghe, 2000).

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However, one such practice, transformational leadership, is often cited in the literature as an effective system for building and sustaining change. Transformational leadership was first defined in 1978 by James Burns, and then extensively studied by Bernard Bass (Bass, 1985). This model of leadership has four distinct parts: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Bass, 1985; Feizi, Ebrahimi, & Beheshti, 2014; Judge & Piccolo, 2004; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006). Idealized influence is the ability of the leader to project self-confidence and competence in order to appeal to the emotions of the people who are the potential followers (Kirby, Paradise, & King, 1992). The second element of transformational leadership is called inspirational motivation, but is also referred to as vision building (Moolenaar, Daly, & Slegers, 2010) or shared vision and goals (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999). The third distinct element is intellectual stimulation. This is the process where a leader works to enhance the capabilities of the followers especially in the area of problem solving (Bass, 1985). The fourth part of transformational leadership is individualized consideration. This is where the leader works to develop team members as individuals. Capitalizing on an individual's strengths, the leader works to create unique opportunities and training to improve the subordinate (Bass, 1985). This four-part theory is used as an analytical framework for this study.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this comparative case study is to examine the actions of three principals who have demonstrated successful implementation of innovative practices in reference to the four distinct parts of transformational leadership theory. The principals were identified through a database of state assessment scores compiled by Education Northwest, an educational consulting firm. Records indicated that these administrators managed significant school improvement on

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state assessment scores in student growth and overall achievement. Specifically, the three principals were interviewed using visual ethnography, in which photographs were used as question prompts. The school improvement coach assigned to each site was also interviewed and the school improvement plan was examined.

Research Questions

- 1) What actions did school leaders take to create meaningful and lasting innovative change in their schools?
- 2) To what extent and in what ways do the four elements of Transformational Leadership Theory (TLT) describe the successful actions of principals in their efforts to improve the performance of their schools?
- 3) Of the four elements of TLT, which stands out as the most significant approach to improving schools?
- 4) What actions did school leaders take to create meaningful and lasting innovative change in their schools that cannot be categorized by TLT?

Key Terms

Comprehensive Achievement Plan (CAP) - The CAP is a plan for improvement of a school in the state of Oregon. It consists of 34 indicators and is developed and recorded on a web based tool called Indistar (“Priority, Focus and Model School Guidance,” 2014).

Focus school - A Focus school is one that is ranked in the fifth to the fifteenth percentile in overall rating and with one of the following characteristics: (a) Within-School Gap: Title I schools with the largest within school achievement or graduation gaps, (b) Low Achieving Subgroup: Title I schools with a subgroup or subgroups with low achievement in reading and mathematics, combined, or a subgroup with low graduation, (c) Low Graduation Rate: Title I

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high schools with graduation rates under 60 percent that were not already identified as Priority schools (“Priority, Focus and Model School Guidance,” 2014).

Idealized Influence - Idealized influence is the ability of the leader to project self-confidence and competence in order to appeal to the emotions of the people that are the potential followers. This idea is commonly known as charisma (Bass, 1985).

Individualized consideration - Where the leader works to develop members of their team as individuals (Bass, 1985).

Innovation - Practices that are new to the organization implementing them (Hazzan & Zelig, 2016).

Inspirational motivation - Where a leader works to develop a widely accepted common vision and mission among the members of the organization (Bass, 1985).

Intellectual stimulation - Process where a leader works to enhance the capabilities of all of the followers, especially in the area of problem solving (Bass, 1985).

Priority school - Oregon’s analysis of student achievement data and graduation rates identifies Priority Schools using a number of schools equal to at least five percent of the number of Title I schools in the state (“Priority, Focus and Model School Guidance,” 2014).

School Improvement Grant (SIG) -School Improvement Grants, authorized under section 1003(g) of Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (Title I or ESEA), are grants funded through State educational agencies (SEAs). They are given to local educational agencies (LEAs) for use in Title I schools identified for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring. The schools must demonstrate the greatest need for the funds and the strongest commitment to use the funds to provide adequate resources in order to raise substantially the

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achievement of their students so as to enable the schools to make adequate yearly progress and exit improvement status. (“Priority, Focus and Model School Guidance,” 2014).

Transformational Leadership Theory - A set of attitudes and actions that a leader takes to appealing to the emotions and increasing the capacity of their followers to cause their organization to continuously improve their practice. (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006).

Limitations

By choosing to utilize a qualitative case study design I have limited my research to a small number of schools. While I compared three schools to a theory of educational leadership in an effort to enhance the relevance of the findings, qualitative studies, due to their small sample size, are not generalizable (Creswell, 2013). I used schools that have improved their practice over time as a construct for the implementation of innovative practices. While improving a school may be about developing and implementing innovative practices, the action one takes may not always lead to the other. Innovation in this study is being defined as the implementation of a new practice to a particular school and not necessarily about the creation of practices that are new to the educational profession.

I triangulated my research with two interviews per subject school and a review of the school’s improvement documents. I also reviewed the state system of identifying schools to create context for the selection of sites. However, this line of data collection limits the point of view that will be examined. The crucial viewpoint of the school staff on the school improvement process was not included in the study, nor the perspective of the school district. Both views are important to developing the whole story regarding implementation of innovative practices, but would make information gathering and data analysis unwieldy for the scope of this project.

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A problem with the use of schools that have been selected as Priority and Focus schools is that the schools and participants in the case studies had access to school improvement grants (SIG). This gave the school leader extra resources and options for action that other school administrators may not have. As part of the SIG each school was given a state-funded school improvement coach to help with academic progress. Consequently, these schools had more resources and expertise to work with than their peers. However, I chose schools from a small group of institutions that have improved their ranking at least 50 percentile points from all Focus or Priority schools with a SIG, so the playing field was a little more even than circumstances would suggest. Due to SIG and coaching, participant schools had more resources and leadership expertise than a typical school, but they did not have more than another school designated Focus or Priority.

The education consulting firm Education Northwest was hired by the Oregon Department of Education to train and support the coaches that serve Focus and Priority schools. These coaches gave similar advice to each school principal who worked to help designated schools improve. This may have had the effect of limiting many of the possible choices that a school leader may take to improve the school.

Transformational leadership is only one model of leadership out of many relevant models that have been developed. However, it has been widely applied in schools and used worldwide as a basis for studies on educational leadership. By using this theory as a base of analysis, it is possible that I misinterpreted the meaning of some of the principals' actions in their efforts to bring new practices to bear on the problem. In the literature portion of this dissertation, I examined a number of leadership theories and discussed their qualities, but transformational theory was my lens for analysis. I thoroughly examined the data and found some themes that

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emerged that were not well described by transformational leadership. I analyzed and explained those ideas by the leadership theory that best fit the theme.

Delimitations

The nature of school administration is that people who are successful in completing their assigned tasks often end up moving to new challenges. Locating principals that worked through the entire school improvement process and remained in their positions was difficult. It had the effect of limiting research candidates and disqualifying several schools that had made good progress. Even so, the participant schools were from a small group of organizations that had made significant improvement, and high quality data were collected.

I selected my participant schools from the state of Oregon. Like all states, Oregon has unique laws for school systems, and for which local school administrators have to comply. This creates limitations on educational choices. Oregon's funding for their school system ranks 35th among all states in the US. Poor funding equates to fewer resources which create options for students. School administrators in other states may have more or fewer options for action than those in Oregon.

Subject schools were selected from elementary schools. Therefore leadership techniques that work with teachers and students at those grade bands may not translate well to an institution that serves different ages of students. I identified schools that were located in a variety of geographic areas in the state so that the study was able to focus on leadership actions and not environmental factors. I was able to identify a school located in a rural area, one located in an urban area, and another located in a medium-sized community in the less-populated eastern part of the state.

Bracketing

I have been a professional educator for twenty-two years. I started out as a high school teacher of social sciences. While teaching, I earned a Master's degree in Geography focusing on geographic education. My master's project was based in action research and focused on how to apply geographic techniques to community problem solving. After six years of teaching, I went into administration in a different high school. I spent three years as an assistant principal working in a school that served students who experienced generational poverty. I was promoted in that district to become the principal of a middle school that was failing in math, language arts, and attendance. Currently, I work as the superintendent of a small rural school district.

My personal convictions have been shaped by my own professional experiences, and they must be acknowledged and considered in the creation of this dissertation. The first conviction is this: I believe in the power of leadership. Even when the circumstances are difficult a competent leader can help people improve their situation. When the situation is not improving, the wrong leader may be assigned to the job. That being said, a leader who is not successful in one position may be outstanding in another. It is about matching the right set of skills to the correct position.

I enjoy the creative process. Innovation is more exciting to me when it is a new idea, rather than replicating someone else's work in a new place. However, time-honored researched techniques must be employed to develop a common understanding and set of actions for a staff. I believe that a healthy school is a school where teachers feel supported in taking some risks with their instruction. Risky instructional practices invite and demand a level of acceptable failure. Failure must be examined for lessons learned and instructional practices must improve to promote more successful outcomes.

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I believe in teachers. Good teachers change the lives of the students they teach. Good educational leaders empower their teachers to succeed.

This set of convictions tends to make me see innovative practices positively and traditional practices neutrally or negatively. This is true even when the traditional practices are effective. I react positively to leadership that empowers a staff to strive to do better. A clear vision must be communicated clearly and consistently by leadership so people can act confidently and with purpose. I favor active over inactive or laissez faire leadership styles.

Tufford and Newman (2012) suggest three methods for suspending the beliefs and values of the researcher during the course of creating a research study. All of their methods of bracketing help the researcher to surface and stay aware of his or her implicit biases. The first is to engage in reflective journaling before the development of the research question. This process helps the researcher to ask questions about their motivations and values early in the process. Next, they propose that the researcher write reflective memos during the course of the research process. When the researcher is interviewing or performing an experiment, creating memos allows the researcher to deal with their inner voice as the work is progressing. Memo writing helps with later analysis and gives the researcher the opportunity to separate her or his opinions from the information that is being collected. Finally, it is suggested that the researcher submits himself or herself to a series of interviews with a third party during the research process. Similar to psychoanalysis, the researcher discusses his reactions to the data he is collecting and talks about how he feels about it in relation to his own beliefs and experiences. This active method allows the researcher to really come to terms with her own biases. If the research topic is emotionally charged, this method will help the researcher maintain his or her objectivity (Tufford & Newman, 2012).

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I engaged in memo writing during my interview and data collection process. This helped me consider how I would have done the work of improving their schools and then set my opinion to the side. As I recorded my reactions to the stories I heard, I reserved my judgement. As I worked to analyze the data, I attempted to put my biases aside and listened deeply to the methods and success of other leaders. It was important that I heard their voice and not my own as I examined their successful practices. Visual Ethnography helped me present the school's improvement story from the point of view of the participant principal. While I used other data to augment and clarify much of what each person told me, the story that I presented was a faithful rendering of the stories the principals told.

While doing the research on this dissertation, I occupied many roles. For the sake of this project, I am a doctoral candidate at George Fox University in Newberg, Oregon. As a professional educator, I am interested in how quality education systems can improve the communities where they are located. I have observed educational leadership practices over the course of my career and have learned a great deal about the effects of different styles of leadership on the organizations in which they lead.

I am also the superintendent of a rural school district that serves about 1100 students. Our district is in the middle of a capital building project, so a normally difficult job is further complicated by the duties necessary to work with project managers and citizen committees. It is my privilege to lead an excellent team of administrators and teachers who are working hard every day to improve the lives of their students. I have worked in various size organizations in my career which give me insights into the challenges of the principals in my study.

All of these roles reinforce my interests in learning more about innovation and leadership in education, and how this new knowledge can make my work and the work of my colleagues

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more productive for the sake of students, parents and teachers, However, my most important role during this time and all other times is that of the father to my three children (ages 17, 20, and 22) and the husband to my wife of 25 years. I am a servant of Jesus Christ and I hope that by doing the work of this dissertation, I will glorify his will in some small way.

Significance of the Study

While there is a clear need for schools to be able to innovate so they can effectively deal with the changing conditions of the students, and to give them the skills needed to prosper in the 21st century, there is no clear consensus of how those innovations should be achieved (Clemmit, 2011). From legislative mandates changing school structures to dictatorial superintendents firing anyone that disagrees with them, the top-down approach has been attempted and produced only marginal results (Ravitch, 2010). Leaders who utilize a transformational leadership style tend to be much more successful in achieving a successful implementation of an educational innovation (Kirby et al., 1992). While people tend to rate the effectiveness of their leadership as highly favorable based on the perception of that person's charisma (Kirby et al., 1992), it is the leaders who focus on communicating a clear vision and building the capacity of their staff as individuals who tend to produce innovative schools (Dove & Freely, 2011; Hockett, 2015). In fact, if school leaders create favorable conditions in their schools, teachers will create innovative programs on their own (Eyal & Yosef-Hassidim, 2012).

Successful innovation is about creating a vision and organizing and supporting people to achieve it. It is clearly the responsibility of the building principal to organize the school on a practical level and to demand excellence of the staff so that innovative teams can emerge (Eisenbeiss, van Knippenberg, & Boerner, 2008).

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From the leader's point of view, it is difficult to make lasting changes happen in any circumstance. Yet, there are ways that educational leaders help their teachers and their organizations grow and thrive. Innovative cultures do not happen by accident, but by the intentional and disciplined actions of a person working to improve the outcomes of both teachers and students. This study will uncover the work of what some successful leaders did that affected real change. By analyzing the actions of three successful leaders, I will add to the body of knowledge that school administrators use to improve the lives and academic outcomes of students.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

On December 5, 2014 the British Broadcasting Company (BBC) ran an article entitled “Innovate or die: the stark message for big business” (Wall, 2014). In the article, Wall talked about how big businesses often lose their innovative edge due to organizational structures they put into place to manage the maturing company. They begin to focus on the quarterly profit and not the long term success of the organization. Company stability and the predictability of product and profit become the guiding stars. In short, the business becomes risk adverse. In order for it to survive the changing conditions of the market, it has to intentionally create structures that allow an entrepreneurial environment to flourish and embrace risk-taking (Wall, 2014). The BBC published a related story on February 28, 2017 titled “This is Why the Boss will Crush all of your Good Ideas.” The article was not an expose on bad bosses; it simply made the point that real innovation tends to threaten people who have done well in the existing system. Both colleagues and superiors are not liable to accept an innovation unless they can see how likely it is to improve their lives (Constable, 2017). In this way, many people are not risk takers and consequently, neither are the organizations they work for.

Educational institutions are not businesses, but as organizations they also have trouble affecting meaningful change (Hazzan & Zelig, 2016). It is the role of educational administrators at all levels to manage and improve the organizations that they lead. Yet, like workers in industries, teaching staff are also entrenched in the status quo. A condition that affects colleges as much as primary schools, administrators and progressive staff members teaching at the university level have often found their colleagues resistant to change (Tagg, 2012). It is an understandable resistance as many people experience a change in their culture or behavior as a

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significant psychological event, akin to suffering a significant emotional loss (J. R. Bailey & Raelin, 2015).

In this review of the literature, I will briefly discuss some aspects of the politics of education as it relates to innovation, then provide an overview of six general theories of leadership for innovation. The reader will notice there are many theories, some drawn from settings other than education. Then, we will look more closely at one particular leadership theory for innovation, transformational leadership (TLT). TLT will be used as an analytical framework for this study. And finally, I will review some of the current research on innovation in education to provide a context for understanding this study. The reader will notice that many of the successful actions of educational leaders can be clearly described by TLT. TLT can create both a context for understanding leadership actions that create innovative practices in organizations and can provide an educational leader a roadmap of how to structure his or her behavior to change the system that he or she leads.

General Theories of Leadership for Innovation

There is a prominent political viewpoint that the reason schools are not innovative is that teachers' unions and school boards protect the status quo and will not allow real change to occur (Clemmit, 2011). The current Secretary of Education, Betsy DeVos, has been a long term advocate for private companies running charter schools across the nation (Karaim, 2017). Scott Walker, the governor of Wisconsin, has made one of his goals to diminish the teachers' union in his state (Toch, 2011). This perspective points to the idea that it is the operating structure of educational organizations that limits their ability to create meaningful change. Several treatments have been attempted to remedy this diagnosis.

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One view of innovation for schools is that they need to change through market pressure (Giersch, 2014). The theory is that schools will have to innovate or adapt if they are subjected to competition and student choice (Preston, Goldring, Berends, & Cannata, 2012; Toma & Zimmer, 2012). The belief is that the operating structures of the typical educational institution limit innovation. Because of this point of view, charter schools have become a popular vehicle of educational innovation in the United States (Karaim, 2017). Many lawmakers believe that educational bureaucracy and union control of schools are an obstacle to successful educational innovation (Preston et al., 2012). Consequently those politicians believe the whole system must be redeveloped in order to become innovative. After Hurricane Katrina, Governor Blanco and the Legislature of Louisiana converted most of the schools in New Orleans to charter. Pre-hurricane, New Orleans schools had a 50-point gap between the average achievement of white and minority students (Holly-Walker, 2007). Governor Blanco believed the hurricane offered a “historic opportunity” (Levy, 2005) for the legislature to fundamentally reform the city’s schools.

In a charter school approach, not only can students chose the schools they attend; that school can focus its efforts on an educational theme. Because charters are schools of choice they are able to offer experimental programs that are meant to focus on a specific educational goal instead of a comprehensive education. However, numerous studies are not seeing an overall trend of greater student achievement in charter schools compared to their traditional counterparts (Ni & Rorrer, 2012; Toma & Zimmer, 2012). But it is difficult to measure an innovative charter school compared to a public school. There is no standard charter format; some schools are trying new practices while others are hard to distinguish from their comparative public school (Harwood, 2009; Preston et al., 2012). While some charter schools are innovative, the economic

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driver of choice is not reliably producing innovation in American charters outside the norm of innovation in all schools (Preston et al., 2012; Toma & Zimmer, 2012). But even so, American policy makers continue to pass legislation that expands the charter movement (Giersch, 2014).

Another approach to overcoming perceived restrictive educational administrative regulations by policy makers has been the establishment of innovation zones inside their states. The theory is that schools are too overburdened with the laws passed by the legislature, they often apply for waivers so they do not have to comply with regulations passed by the legislature. This will create an environment where educators will be free to innovate (Patrick & Gentz, 2016).

Another tactic to overcoming the perceived problem of the ineffective education bureaucracy is to hire a strong leader. As one political pundit explained, a strong executive was necessary for “creating the political space for innovation and driving cultural change across the bureaucracy” (Goldsmith & Burke, 2011, p.15). Michelle Rhee, the former Chancellor of the D.C. school system is held in high regards by people who believe in the power of a strong leader to implement reform. During her four years leading the D.C. schools, she fired half of the school principals, half of the central office staff, and some 700 teachers (Maranto, Wolf, Management, & Hargrove, 2013). She focused on data driven assessment and management for staff members, and ruthlessly eliminated anyone who was not driving up student achievement. Student assessment scores did improve through this process, but not dramatically so. Obviously, this kind of behavior earned her as many enemies as friends and she resigned after a new mayor came to power. Yet the idea of a “hero” leader who is able to come in and shake up the establishment remains a powerful myth (Drysdale, Bennett, T. Murakami, Johansson, & Gurr, 2014).

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In another example, Alan Bersin was hired by the San Diego School District in 1998. He was a favorite of the business community that believed school reform must be top down, swift, and without the consent of the teaching staff. During his four years in San Diego, he replaced 90% of the principals in the school district. He pushed an ambitious change agenda that demanded formulaic professional development and absolute compliance to the master plan. While being intensely disliked by the educational community in San Diego, he won wide praise for his approach from business leaders and educational reformers (Ravitch, 2010). Like Rhee, Bersin was pushed out when the political wind shifted.

While charter schools, innovation zones, and hero leaders take aim at organizational structures perceived to limit educational innovations, others who study innovation and change are focused on the actions of leaders in each school. For example, Fullan (2002) identified six specific factors that principals must do. These themes help build capacity to achieve cultural change so that innovations may flourish in a school regardless of school structure (Fullan, 2002a). First, a principal must create moral purpose for the staff. Teachers need to understand why their hard work matters. In one study, this factor was found to be the difference for both the successes and failures of innovations to improve instruction for higher ability children in kindergarten (Dijkstra, Walraven, Mooij, & Kirschner, 2016). Next, a principal must understand the change process. Innovation is difficult and complex and tends to meet with a great deal of resistance along the way. Third, the effective principal must work to improve relationships. It may be the single most important factor in improving schools; when relationships improve, schools improve (Fullan, 2007). Klinger (2013) reached the same conclusion when she studied effective scaling up of special education practices (Klingner, Boardman, McMaster, 2013). A principal who is creating cultural change helps his staff experiment with new ideas and share that

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learning with their peers. The fourth factor is creating and diffusing innovations. Professional learning communities that help staff members build themselves as a team of learners and leaders and who use a participatory leadership style tend to encourage innovation (Rossberger & Krause, 2015). Complex systems naturally become fragmented and overwhelming to those working in them, so the principal must help the school develop coherence in their mission and methods. Strategically examining outside opportunities and ideas, the principal and the staff must use innovations that fit with their goals (Fullan, 2002b).

For the individual who can accomplish all of those requirements to get the change process moving, the leader must then figure out how to sustain the innovative environment. Fullan (2002) lists another three factors that must be accomplished. First, the principal must realize that the school does not exist in isolation; it depends on a good social environment in the school district and it needs resources to help students who lag behind. Next, both teachers and principals must be trained in the context of the environment in which they work. A school district must intentionally focus on cultivating the talent of their staff. Finally, leadership roles must be created at every level in the organization, and leadership must be cultivated in the school's staff (Fullan, 2002b; Rossberger & Krause, 2015). Fullan is plainly stating that innovation does not come from a leader creating change; it comes from a leader creating the capacity for change to occur in the school and cultivating the people who will create and implement the innovation.

Fullan bases much of his theory on studies that come from the work of business leaders. While leadership is a similar process in any organization, schools do not and cannot function like a business. For instance, a business will often reduce functions that are not contributing positively to the bottom line while a school cannot. Nevertheless, educational reform theory is

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often a reflection of business reform theory. Businesses proactively develop their innovation in response to market forces or a perceived market niche. Educational institutions tend to reactively imitate business innovations as a model to adapt for their own circumstances (Hazzan & Zelig, 2016).

Hazzan & Zelig (2016) claims there are two reasons many educational innovations fail. The first is that educational institutions introduce too many innovations without providing enough control for them to succeed. The second is that attempted innovations often do not produce results, therefore staff members are disappointed with their efforts and are less likely work hard on the next initiative. There are five stages of innovation implementation: “collaboration, customization, diffusion, control, and continuation” (Hazzan & Zelig, 2016, p. 22). Collaboration involves introducing the innovation to the team. In a business this is often done through a brainstorming process where employees discuss the idea, predict problems, and develop solutions to solve future issues. In education, the innovation decision is often made far from the teachers and principals who will implement it and the ideas are simply presented to the staff. Thus, the people who will do the work have no commitment to the new procedures and may ignore them as soon as they are able. Each site that implements a new idea is different, thus an innovation must be customized to fit in that location. Businesses tend to focus on the objectives, measures, and processes necessary while an innovation is put into place in a regular and methodical way. Schools tends to look at the success or failure after the year ends.

Education systems usually attempt to fit the new innovation to existing structures as opposed to replacing practices. Training for personnel tends to be less intensive in educational institutions and there is no reward for implementing the change well. A teacher gets paid the same and continues with employment whether or not the innovation is effective. Once an

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innovation is determined to be beneficial, it must be diffused to the rest of the organization. To spread that relevant information, a business tends to train and support employees in a proactive manner while a school will often just train the teachers one time. An innovation must be evaluated to see if there is a difference between the plan and the reality. In business, the process is called control. Real time data that allows the operation to be adjusted for efficiency is collected. In education, there is very little real data collected on a day-to-day basis that can be used to adjust a process. Finally, there is the continuation phase of innovation. This is where the innovation is no longer a new practice; it is simply the way the organization operates. Very few innovations make it to this phase in the education system. Most come and go without making lasting impact (Hazzan & Zelig, 2016).

These ideas speak of educational reform and innovation by focusing on developing the capacity of the school staff to implement the new idea. Schools rarely have the ability to simply shut down and create new processes that can be implemented effectively. In a traditional calendar, it is difficult to give teachers effective training and then monitor and measure their progress in the implementation of the innovation. Schools rarely have the resources to manage a change to the extent that a business does. How then can it be done?

While school systems do not have the ability to control implementation as well as a business, they do have the advantage of being staffed by highly trained professionals who are motivated to improve the lives of children. Generally teachers are interested in being part of the process. The school leader is challenged to harness the energy of the staff. They need a planning framework that can help an average administrator move the staff forward in continuous improvement.

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Edward Deming is the father of data driven management (Stensaasen, 1995). He pioneered his work with Japanese companies after WWII and helped create an efficient manufacturing system that become known for quality products (Cole, 1992). The 14-point management system presented a clear path for a manager to improve the performance of a company through the application of statistical data (Deming, 1981).

Deming's ideas are translated into educational practice by first setting a clear vision for the organization and the desired outputs (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006). He believed that if the processes of the organization were well monitored then there was no need to do a final measurement on the product. In education, it means that principals should focus on training their staff members on a continuous basis (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006). A student data feedback system should be established. Teachers should form professional learning communities where they examine student data and adjust their instruction based on student growth. As professionals they should be able to make decisions based on the results they are achieving. Leadership on instruction and assessment should be shared by teachers and principals. The teaching staff should monitor the process for quality while principals should focus on improving the capacity of the staff. Deming summarizes his process of continuous improvement with the motto: Plan, Do, Study, Act (Evans, Thornton, & Usinger, 2012; Cole, 1992).

The theory of *organizational learning* was developed by Chris Argyris and Donald Schön. In their model, an organization learns in a similar way to an individual. Both individuals and organizations must learn and spread that knowledge throughout the whole corporate body. It is more important for an organization to focus on individual learning than on solving problems (Buchanan, 2008). They authors describe three ways an organization learns. The first is single loop learning. This is where an individual or a number of individuals make a mistake. The leader

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of the group retrains the team so that each has knowledge of how to correctly perform the specific task. The next way is double loop learning. This is learning that exists when desired outcomes are consistently not being achieved. People in the organization may need to reexamine policy and practices to determine if something needs to change. The final way of learning is deuterio-learning, where the organization specifically sets up systems so that it can proactively learn. The focus of this theory is the learning of the individual (Evans et al., 2012).

Peter Senge created a model of organizational change rooted in the idea of systems thinking (Senge, 2012). He identified four disciplines to focus on for an organization to become attuned to its environment. The first is personal mastery. This is the idea that every person in the organization must be continually improving in their work, both through professional development and through adjusting to the data they receive as feedback from their actions. The second discipline is mental models. Every member of the organization must uncover their beliefs and values and examine them in reference to the mission of the organization. For instance, “all children can learn” is a mantra often spoken in education, but does every person believe it to be true? Shared vision is the third component. The group must develop or buy into a single vision so company resources and human effort can be deployed in a logical and focused application. The fourth is team learning. Most of the learning in the organization should be as a team, thus diffusing the knowledge throughout the group. The fifth discipline is the systems thinking that binds the other ideas into a shared whole (Evans et al., 2012).

The *appreciative inquiry model* was developed by David Cooperrider. Like the Socratic Method, this framework has the members of the organization dig deeply into its values and beliefs to find the answers within itself. Focusing on what the organization already does well, this model seeks to build on strengths instead of solving perceived problems. Inquiry is used as

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part of the intervention (Doggett & Lewis, 2013). Transforming a school through this system is a four part process. The first is Discovery. This is where members of the organization discuss what they are proud of and, talk about what they do well. In the second part of the process the members of the team begin to Dream about what they could achieve. In the third phase, the staff begins to Design the plan of how to achieve their dreams. The last step is Destiny. This is where the team starts to consider how they will learn what they need to know and gather the resources they must have to achieve their goals (Evans et al., 2012).

Transformational leadership theory (TLT) was first defined in 1978 by James Burns and then extensively studied by Bernard Bass (Bass, 1985). This model of leadership has four distinct parts: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Bass, 1985; Judge & Piccolo, 2004; Feizi, Ebrahimi, & Beheshti, 2014; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006). TLT emphasizes the emotional and personal commitment of the members of the organization to the success of its mission. It focuses on improving the capacity of all of the individuals in the organization and not just the leadership (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005). Leithwood and Jantzi organize TLT into three groups of leadership strategies: Setting directions, developing people, and redesigning the organization. In setting directions, the leader works to build purpose and vision among the members of the organization. This helps create high expectations of performance and allows the leadership to monitor the quality of the work being done. People are developed through the relationship the leader establishes with the employees and both the group and individual attention that leads to both individual and group training. Organizations are redesigned to help create a more positive culture, using collaborative decision making, and improving administrative practices.

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In summary, as to be expected, this sampling of leadership theories has some common themes, but each adds its own distinct flavor to the recipe. By comparing each theory covered in this review to transformational leadership theory (Table 1), it is possible to develop an understanding of what each was developed to achieve.

Table 1

Components of Leadership Theories

Burns (TLT)	Fullan	Hazzan	Deming	Argyris & Schon	Senge	Cooperrider
Idealized Influence	Leadership roles at every level	Collaboration Continuation	Top management pushes 14 points daily Improve supervision		Systems Thinking	
Inspirational Motivation	Understand change process Moral purpose Develop coherence in mission	Collaboration Diffusion	Learn Philosophy Create consistency of purpose Eliminate goals, slogans, posters urging people to increase productivity Drive out fear		Mental Models Shared Vision	Discovery Dream
Intellectual Stimulation	Improve relationships Creating and diffusing innovations Examine outside opportunities	Diffusion Control	Break down barriers between departments Use statistics to find trouble spots Require evidence of process Look carefully at work standards	Single loop learning Double loop learning Deutero-learning	Systems Thinking Team Learning	Design Destiny
Individualized Consideration	Training in context	Customization Continuation	Train on the job Retrain people with new skills		Personal Mastery	
Areas not addressed well by TLT	District support		Control of supply Reduce vendors			

Each theory of organization is broadly applicable to a variety of circumstances, but may not translate well to the unique environment of education. Transformational leadership, on the other hand, seems to provide a leader a set of themes that can serve to guide productive actions.

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In the next section, the effectiveness of both the four parts of TLT and the application of the theory as a whole will be discussed.

Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership is often cited in the literature as a system for building and sustaining change. It is not the only effective leadership strategy, but tends to be broadly applicable for the particularities of educational institutions (Leithwood, & Jantzi, 2005). The theory's four parts can be used by school leaders as an overall strategy to develop innovation in their organization.

Idealized Influence is the factor that may be hardest to define as it often has to do with the charisma of the leader (Feizi et al., 2014). This is the ability of the leader to project self-confidence and competence in order to appeal to the emotions of people that are potential followers (Kirby et al., 1992). As a leadership action, it is problematic as charisma is difficult to teach and transformational leadership is meant to be teachable (Kirby et al., 1992; Eisenbeiss, van Knippenberg, & Boerner, 2008). Collins' (2001) extensive study of successful organizations notes that the charismatic leader can be successful in the short term, but the more effective long term organizational leaders are often more understated in their approach to management (Collins, 2001). In fact, as idealized influence is applied in a school setting it is often less about a dramatic leader and more about building leadership at many levels (Leithwood, & Jantzi, 2005).

Several studies have attempted to isolate the impact of idealized influence on the innovative tendencies of schools. Kirby (1992) used the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) to measure the impact of charisma on educational faculty in two separate studies. The MLQ was developed by Bass to measure the degree of transformational leadership used in organizations. The MLQ is widely used and is administered to employees to rate their leader

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(den Hartog, van Muijen, & Koopman, 1997). In the first study, 103 teachers from different school districts responded to the MLQ. The authors concluded that leaders that were considered to have strong charisma were perceived to be effective and satisfactory leaders.

In a second study, the researcher utilized a qualitative design to confirm the findings of the first study. He used 58 graduate students who were also all educators as his subjects. Kirby (1992) had each create a narrative of a leader they found to be effective. From those descriptions, charisma did not rise to the top as being the most important element in a leader's success. The elements that were described mostly identified with the behaviors of exceptional leaders and were associated with Inspirational Motivation (Kirby et al., 1992).

Feizi, Ebrahimi, and Beheshti (2014) studied the relationship between transformational leadership and organizational commitment among 196 secondary school teachers in northern Iran. He used the MLQ and the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) to collect his data. The OCQ was developed in 1970 and is one of the most frequently used tools for measuring organizational commitment (Commeiras & Fournier, 2001). He found that there was a significant correlation between the two factors. Idealized Influence was identified as the most significant element of the transformational leadership paradigm for gaining the teachers' commitment to the organization (Feizi et al., 2014).

The second element of transformational leadership is called inspirational motivation, but is also referred to as vision building (Moolenaar et al., 2010) or shared vision and goals (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999). Leithwood and Jantzi studied the effect of transformational leadership on school and classroom conditions in urban school districts in Canada. Through surveys of 1818 teachers and 6490 students, he determined that transformational leadership had a significant effect on organizational conditions. Shared vision and goals were signaled out as a

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factor for study and were determined to have a .81 correlation to school conditions (Leithwood & Jantzi).

In the Netherlands, van den Berg (2000) studied the implementation of an innovation related to adaptive teaching techniques. This two-year study measured the attitudes and experiences of 129 teachers after the period of implementation of the innovation. Two of the factors that were measured were the perceptions of usefulness of cooperation with colleagues and perception of usefulness of support from school leaders. Sixty-seven percent of teachers found the most useful leadership behavior was when the principal showed an interest in the work based on their shared vision. Similarly, when teachers rated their colleagues' useful behavior it was found that teachers appreciated providing each other with tips and ideas and formulating action plans together (van den Berg et al., 2000). Both are activities that relate to creating common vision and expectations. As part of inspirational motivation, clear vision and expectations help a teacher energize action (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006).

The third distinct element of transformational leadership is intellectual stimulation. This is the process where a leader works to enhance the capabilities of the followers especially in the area of problem solving (Bass, 1985). In a large scale study in England, an innovation in mathematics was implemented in the school system. The data from 2,290 teachers from 655 primary schools was evaluated to test for the effects of transformational leadership practices. Transformational leadership had strong effects on teacher motivation -.62, improved work setting -.68, and teacher capacity -.52. Additionally the effect on the capacity of classroom practices was -.60 (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006).

The fourth part of transformational leadership is individualized consideration. This is where leaders works to develop members of their team as individuals. Capitalizing on an

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individual's strengths, the leader creates unique opportunities and training to improve the subordinate (Bass, 1985). "Followers prefer leaders who engage in the transformational behavior associated with individualized consideration, intellectual stimulation..." (Kirby et al., 1992, p. 309). An effective way to both build the leadership capacity of an organization is through the delegation of important work to subordinates (Bass, 1985).

Transformational leadership techniques, when taken as a whole system have been found to positively influence the innovative culture of the school in numerous countries (Chang, Hsiao, & Tu, 2011; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006). Judge and Piccolo (2004) did a meta-analysis of 87 studies examining transformational leadership. These studies were selected from electronic searches that measured some aspect of transformational leadership like vision or charisma. The researchers concluded transformational leadership had a .44 composite correlation as effective. He looked at a number of factors and found that people who were in organizations led by a transformational leader had higher job satisfaction, were more motivated, had better group performance, had higher satisfaction with their leader, and thought the leader was more effective (Judge & Piccolo, 2004).

Eisenbeiss, Knippenberg, and Boerner (2008) tested the impact of transformational leadership on the innovation of a team of people. They used the MLQ to measure 33 teams of people with an average team size of 10.7. From the data, they determined that transformational leadership must also have a climate of excellence present if support for innovation is to emerge in teams. (Eisenbeiss et al., 2008).

In an occupational social network, Moolenaar, Daly, and Slegers (2010) identify three positions a principal could hold: giver of professional advice, giver of personal advice, and a broker of resources between actors in the school. He found that a building principal who is

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perceived to use transformational leadership techniques is in an interesting position in the school's social network. In a study of 51 principals and 702 teachers in the Netherlands, the researchers used a survey to examine the relationship between teachers and principals from the point of view of giving advice. Principals that were perceived to be transformational leaders were also sought out by their staff to give both personal and professional advice. The more innovative the school was perceived to be, the more likely it was that staff would seek advice from the principal. However, if the principal took on the role of a broker of resources, then the school was perceived as less innovative. It seems that if the principal is perceived as trying to stand between members of the staff and their expertise, innovation decreases (Moolenaar et al., 2010).

Chang, Hsiao, and Tu (2011) attempted to isolate the behaviors leaders do with transformational leadership to energize their followers and help them achieve organizational innovation. Their literature review explored the impact of the larger organizational on school innovation. The authors concluded that while transformational leadership is an important element of improving instructional leadership, by itself it has an insufficient effect. There must also be an external and internal support for innovation and for organizational learning. So for an innovative environment to exist in a school, support must also exist in the schools' governing body (Chang et al., 2011).

Other studies have attempted to identify leadership practices that create an innovative educational environment. Although these studies did not specifically reference the transformational leadership model, elements of the four factors were present. In Park's (2012) study of leadership styles in Korean vocational schools, the Change Order Facilitator Style Questionnaire (CFSQ) was used to measure the impacts of the principal's leadership style on

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support for innovation through a climate of innovation. His study hypothesized that as a leader implementing school change, a principal's CFS will significantly impact the climate supportive of innovation within school organizations. When the principals are rated as either an Initiator or a Manager rather than as a Responder, the teachers will recognize that the school climate is more amenable to innovation and it is likely that the intended change will be more successful. He concluded that his hypothesis was correct, schools that were considered to be more innovative were also led by principals who demonstrated a CFS of an Initiator or a Manager (Park, 2012).

Schools in Germany offer a unique case for looking at innovative practices because they must compete for students. Thus, there is an emphasis on innovation. According to Koch, Binnewies, and Dormann (2014), research has been conducted on why individuals are innovative, but not on what causes organizations to be innovative. Their research hypothesizes that several factors may influence innovation in schools and tests the ideas in a quantitative study. The authors collected data in 83 schools with a sample of 87 principals and 961 teachers. They used the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale to measure the attitudes of educators and they used independent raters to examine school projects and communications. In the literature review the authors discussed the themes of innovation, principals' work engagement, and teacher creativity. From their findings, the researchers concluded that if principals are highly engaged in their own work, their energy and motivation also benefits their teachers, resulting in higher idea generation. In turn, teachers' idea generation fosters innovation in schools (Koch, Binnewies, & Dormann, 2014). This finding is supported by a study that shows that laissez-fair leadership styles have a negative correlation to innovation and that the organization will suffer under a leader that leads passively (Judge & Piccolo, 2004).

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To summarize, creating an innovative culture in a school is a very difficult process. The very structure of school fights the school leader in an attempt to bring people together to work as a team for a common goal (Eyal & Yosef-Hassidim, 2012). Often teachers plan their lessons, teach their students, and assess the learning completely on their own. Visits from the administrator can be infrequent and quality feedback on their performance are rarer still. This sense of isolation can make the average teacher feel like an independent contractor who is unconnected to the visions, goals, and practices of the whole school.

Transformational leadership practices dovetail nicely with the nine-point framework of Fullan (2002) for creating an innovative culture in the school. Both sets of ideas call for a leader to motivate people and indeed, the referenced studies indicate that teachers, like most people, respond well to the charismatic leader. But, it is also shown that if a leader focuses on creating a vision for the school and works to consistently communicate that vision, teachers find it helpful in their practice. Both Fullan's model and the transformational leadership practices focus on the building of the individual leadership and teaching capacity of staff members. Teachers should be recognized for their strengths and should be helped by leaders to develop and explore the possibilities of realizing their talents.

All of this calls for an active and engaged individual in the role of a school leader. Innovative cultures do not happen by accident, but by the intentional and disciplined actions of a person working to improve the outcomes of both teachers and students.

In the next section, we will examine some studies of educational leaders who are creating innovative cultures in their schools. From intentionally building the leadership capacity of their staff to nurturing the innovative tendencies that already exist in some teachers, these leaders are working to change their schools for the better. We will also examine what happens when an

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educational leader attempts to exhibit too much control and change the organization from the top down.

Studies of Transformational Leadership in Education

Both transformational leadership style (Bass, 1985) and Fullan's nine-point framework (Fullan, 2007) promote capacity building as an essential part of leading for innovation. In transformational leadership it is called intellectual stimulation (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006), and Fullan (2007) talks about the process in terms of intentionally focusing on cultivating the talent of a staff. Leithwood and Jantzi (2006) combined the ideas of providing intellectual stimulation, offering individualized support, and modeling desirable professional practices into a single category of "Developing People" (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006, p. 205).

In a study of six principals who intentionally focused on cultivating the leadership capacity of their staff, Klar, Huggins, Hammonds, and Buskey (2015) identified the techniques used by some principals to do that work. The research teams interviewed the six subject principals and the teachers they were mentoring—about 48 people in all. They reviewed and coded the interview transcripts, looking for the actions that principals took to increase their staff member's leadership capacity. The researchers identified four steps: potential leaders are chosen, leadership opportunities are created, identified staff members are transitioned into a leadership role, and teachers are provided continuous support with their new responsibilities (Klar, et al., 2015). These steps are not done in a linear order; rather, the leader and the teacher interact with each other in an organic process depending on the nature of the leadership opportunity and the needs of the staff in the development of their leadership capacity. The study authors noted that there is a downside to this process: building leadership capacity among some staff members has the effect of not building capacity among other staff members. In some cases, hard feelings

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ensued among teachers that desired to move into leadership roles but were not being mentored. Principals undertook this capacity building effort for three reasons: “meeting the needs of the individual leaders, meeting the needs of the school, and succession planning” (Klar et al., 2015 p.121). Each rationale serves to increase the capacity of the staff member.

Kose (2009) wondered what specific actions a principal would take to implement new teacher behavior patterns to improve social justice in a school. His central research question was “How do principals for social justice influence professional learning in their schools?” (Kose, 2009, p. 634). He used a multi-case study approach examining three principals who used transformational leadership techniques in their approach to professional development. The principals were interviewed three times, while another 36 staff were interviewed using semi-structured and informal interviews in order to triangulate the data. The researcher also observed each school’s staff meetings and planning time for over five months. The data were exhaustively analyzed using a variety of methods that allowed the researcher to note the similarities and differences of each principal (Kose, 2009).

Kose (2009) presented his findings in five categories related to transformational leadership: First a leader needs to be a transformative visionary, a term meaning that a principal develops and communicates a transformative vision and establishes concrete school goals. Second, Kose (2009) proposed that a transformative learning leader needs to foster teacher development for innovation and to promote organizational learning. Third, a leader must transform the culture through collaborative learning, promoting collective responsibility for all students, and connecting schools with similar innovations. Fourth, in order to transform the structure of how the school operates, a leader can create formal learning teams to organize common work, common time, and common space for staff members. The leader must efficiently

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distribute internal resources and develop an inclusive student service delivery model. Finally, the principal must be a transformative political leader, where he/she maximizes external resources and opportunities for professional learning and builds schoolwide support for change decisions.

Hockett (2015) examined the role of a transformational leadership style on the implantation of new curriculum in Kenya. After post-election violence killed over 1000 people in 2008, the Quaker Secondary Schools of Kenya introduced Curriculum for Peace and Conflict Management for their students. It was introduced in 95 locations: 14 were selected for sampling. Interviews were completed with school principals and selected staff members. The data was analyzed using “qualitative research protocols developed by Leech and Onwuegbuzie (2008)” (Hockett, 2015, p.10). In her findings, she noted that the success or failure of the implementation in each school was clearly the result of the individual school principal’s actions. In all of the schools with a high level of implementation of the peace curriculum, principals used a transformational style of leadership (Hockett, 2015).

In their three year study of how leadership styles affect innovation implementation, Dove and Freeley (2011) came to some interesting conclusions about effective leadership. They compared leadership styles to the effective implementation of an education innovation. The innovation was a framework of teaching and learning based on learning styles. The researchers looked at six different leadership styles that had been identified by Goleman (2000): “1) Coercive – the leader demands compliance (Do what I tell you); 2) Authoritative – the leader mobilizes people toward a vision (Come with me); 3) Affiliation – the leader creates harmony and buildings emotional bonds (People come first); 4) Democratic – the leaders forges consensus through participation. (What do you think?); 5) Pacesetting – the leader set high standards for performance (Do as I do, now). 6) Coaching – the leader develops people for the future (Try

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this.)” (Dove & Freely, 2011, p. 29; Goleman, 2000).

Dove and Freeley’s (2011) study was conducted in a middle school in New York. The staff consisted of one principal, three assistant principals, and 139 staff members. Nineteen semi-structured interviews were conducted by the researchers. In each interview a series of questions were asked that focused on the process of implementation of the learning styles model. The researchers also visited 35 classrooms over a six-week period. An electronic survey was sent to all teachers with both open and closed response types. Photographs and videos of classrooms were collected for analysis as well.

The results of the study indicated that two styles of leadership were successful in implementing the new instructional program. A leader who employed democratic leadership techniques was successful in getting teachers to buy into the program and carry the program through. The coaching technique was effective in breaking down resistance to using the instructional program (Dove & Freely, 2011). The four other types were not identified as effective.

Sometimes a principal does not need to identify teachers to build capacity to foster innovation, rather she/he needs to manage and encourage the educational entrepreneurs they already have in their school. In an informative study, Eyal and Yosef-Hassidim (2012) looked at how educational champions successfully interacted with their building principal’s management style. The term *innovation champion* was coined by the study authors to describe a teacher who developed and implemented educational innovation outside of their job description and without the direction of leadership.

This four-year study involved three separate schools in Israel. The researchers’ questions were: “How (do) educational champions construct their entrepreneurial endeavors in interaction

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with their principal's prevailing management style at their given school? How did that interaction between management style and entrepreneurship strategy influence the sustainability of these initiatives?" No specific hypothesis was tested. The study involved 71 semi-structured interviews in three public secondary schools that had been recognized for being innovative. Ten individuals were identified as champions through a four-step process that including interviewing a range of people with knowledge about the operations of the subject schools. The other people interviewed were principals and teachers that interacted with the champion. Four years later a follow-up study was conducted in which 23 interviews were conducted (Eyal & Yosef-Hassidim, 2012).

In the first school studied, the leadership was described as an actively-promoted, decentralized, and informal management system, which the authors labeled as *facilitative*. Management provided initial resources for starting a project and offered a high degree of support when problems emerged. This environment encouraged and supported innovation, but did not produce many innovations that became a sustainable part of the school's structure. (Eyal & Yosef-Hassidim, 2012). The successful type of entrepreneurial style that emerged in that environment survived by teachers forming their own structure that was distinct from the operations of the rest of the school, but still supported by management. Thus it was labeled "semiautonomous" (Eyal & Yosef-Hassidim, 2012, p. 230) by the authors.

The second school used a directive management structure. The style of entrepreneurship that emerged was labeled as "loosely coupled entrepreneurship" (Eyal & Yosef-Hassidim, 2012 p. 234). Innovations that were developed were done so in spite of building leadership, and operated with little to no district resources. The educational champions working in this environment often gave up their efforts. Those that keep going felt fatigued over time and were

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unable to expand their programs beyond their initial efforts.

The third school in the study used a style of leadership that was labeled “consolidative” (Eyal & Yosef-Hassidim, 2012, p. 238). The school prided itself on student empowerment. The management promoted, selected, and disseminated innovations in partnership with staff members. They routinely rotated different people into leadership positions so that a larger group of people could gain a wider perspective on school operations. In this environment, education champions became “sponsored entrepreneurs” (Eyal & Yosef-Hassidim, 2012, p.240). The champion had a little less freedom to innovate, but a successful innovation was supported and became part of the structure of the school. Of the three schools in the study, this style of leadership created lasting innovations that were able to be maintained by the educational champions.

Weedall (2004) studied the failure of an innovation implementation in a private school in Japan. Weedall was a teacher at the school and lived through the experience. Through his own memories of the events and interviews with teachers and the leader involved with the innovation, the author ascertained why the innovation did not manifest well in that school. The school studied was part of a private system that was organized like a corporation. A new head teacher was assigned to the school and proceeded to implement a system that had worked well in the branch where she had previously been employed. She decided to implement this change using “innovation by decree” (Weedall, 2004, p. 54). Instead of teaching the teachers how to use the new system, she centralized the power of student promotion in her office. The students’ were expected to promote from one level to another as their language skills progressed. As teachers were not trained on the new system, they were uncertain of how to promote students and what the standards for promotion were. The teaching staff therefore became resistant and

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uncooperative with the head teacher. After five months of declining student performance, she was removed from the head teacher position by the central office. The head teacher made three fundamental mistakes when implementing the innovation: she did not include the rest of the staff in the planning, she attempted to implement by decree, and she attempted to implement the plan in too short of a time frame (Weedall, 2004).

Steyn (2013) addressed the problem of school leadership and the ever changing and complex role of the building principal as administrator, manager, and professional developer of adults. This research explored how the innovation of Invitational Education (IE) in a single primary school in South Africa created a transformational and high-performing educational environment. The study was conducted after the innovation had been completed and was considered successful. The research method employed was a visual ethnography, in which the school principal was tasked to take 20 photographs that best represented the transformational aspects of the innovation. The principal created annotations that explained his choice of images. A follow up interview was conducted by the researcher (Steyn, 2013).

The Steyn (2013) study concluded that the principal had engaged in a transformational style of leadership to implement the innovation of Invitational Education. The 20 photographs were grouped into five themes by the researcher. Each theme corresponded to an aspect of transformational leadership. These themes were: the development of people (individualized consideration), the development of the place (inspirational motivations and idealized influence), changes in policy (inspirational motivation), improving programs (intellectual stimulation and inspirational motivation), and the principal's work at managing processes (idealized influence). By focusing on the students and teachers as individuals and working on specific policies and practices to make the school more inviting, the principal was able to implement and sustain the

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innovation of IE (Steyn, 2013).

In summary, there is a long history of education reformers who have been looking for the correct formula to make the implementation of successful innovations simple, but the revolving cycles of failed innovations demonstrate that it does not exist (Clemmit, 2011; Weedall, 2004). Even though the idea of a strong leader who can cut through educational bureaucracy remains a powerful myth in American politics (Drysdale et al., 2014), the leader that uses an autocratic or directive style tends to alienate the people doing the work. The literature reveals a pattern of leadership behavior that is counter-productive in educational systems (Eyal & Yosef-Hassidim, 2012; Weedall, 2004; Maranto et al., 2013).

Leaders who utilize a transformational leadership style tend to be much more successful in achieving a successful implementation of an educational innovation. While people tend to rate the effectiveness of their leadership as highly favorable, based on the perception of that person's charisma (Kirby et al., 1992), it is the leaders who focus on communicating a clear vision and building the capacity of their staff as individuals who tend to produce innovative schools (Dove & Freely, 2011; Hockett, 2015). In fact, if school leaders create favorable conditions in their schools, teachers will create innovative programs on their own. (Eyal & Yosef-Hassidim, 2012).

Successful innovation is about creating a vision and organizing and supporting people to achieve it. It is clearly the responsibility of the building principal to organize it on a practical level and to demand excellence of the staff so that innovative teams can emerge (Eisenbeiss et al., 2008). It is the responsibility of district management to make sure the building principal is successful as few principals are able to achieve it on their own (Chang et al., 2011).

The studies presented in this review help add some context for how the four core elements of TLT have been used and can be used for educational innovation. These elements that

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also framed the analysis for this study of educational innovation in three schools in Oregon.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

This study looks at the way that transformational leadership techniques are used by school principals to improve their schools. It employs a multiple case study approach that explores the work of principals in three schools who have gone through the process of significantly improving their organizations. The schools were identified from a database compiled by the educational consultation company, Education Northwest. The database used statewide assessment data to rank all schools on a percentage scale. Using the database, I identified schools that were labeled as being in Priority or Focus status, but had made dramatic improvement. I found three schools that are located in geographically diverse areas. One was located in an urban area, one school was in a medium sized community, and one was in a rural area. The three schools served approximately the same range of grades. All were elementary schools, but one was kindergarten through sixth grade while the others were kindergarten through 5th grade. The principals all served at their school through most of the improvement process. I established this criteria in order to capture a rich description of the work that was accomplished by the leader. Each school had a school improvement coach who was an employee of Educational Northwest, which was working under contract with the Oregon Department of Education. The coaches worked with the principal approximately once a week for four years to provide assistance and advice for the school improvement effort.

While qualitative studies are not generalizable to situations that do not have the same circumstances (Creswell, 2013, p. 99), a goal of this inquiry is to add to the collective wisdom for school administrators who seek to implement change in their environment. Analytical generalization may be done in a case study if the study is being generalized to theory (Yin, 1994, p. 36). For this study, a multiple case study format was used so that three examples of principals

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doing similar work in different locations could illustrate common approaches to solving the problem. All of the actions that participant administrators discussed were analyzed through the lens of transformational leadership theory. This filter helped to organize and clarify the purpose of administrative actions even when separate principals took different actions to achieve the same goal.

Data collection proceeded in the following ways: I began with an examination and analysis of each school's school improvement planning documents. All of these schools took multiple years to improve their state assessment scores and had to create a separate document each year. I reviewed one plan from each school during their second or third year of the improvement process. Each document was viewed through the lens of transformational leadership and was coded in such a way as to identify relevant actions.

Using a method from visual ethnography, each principal was asked to take 8-12 photographs that represented the changes that improved their school. Interviews were conducted with each principal using the photos as prompts for questioning. By having the principals take the photographs with minimal instruction from the researcher, the principals created surprising lines of inquiry. This technique is also called Visual Narrative Art (VNA) and it can enhance an interview in three ways: (a) the interviewee can assign meaning to the events recorded, (b) the interviewee can tap into her subconscious thinking about the photographs, and (c) The process of decoding the photographs and telling the story based on the image could be satisfying and healing for the interviewee (Woodside, 2010).

Further interviews were conducted with the coach assigned to work with each participant principal. The list of prepared interview questions for the coach was derived from transformational leadership theory (see Appendix A). As the coaches worked to improve the

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school, but were not part of the staff, their viewpoint was from the outside looking in. They had a different perspective on the school improvement process that enhanced the principals' points of view. Between the coaches and the principals, six total interviews were conducted. All interview transcripts and documents were analyzed through thematic coding (Creswell, 2013). The four distinct elements of transformational leadership theory guided the interview questions and analysis of collected data. Those elements were further broken down into specific codes that helped categorize the actions taken to improve the school (see Appendix B).

All interview transcripts and collected documents were examined and coded in an effort to find common themes of improvements. Most codes were derived from the four areas of transformational leadership theory, but some additional codes were developed to describe actions that were not described well by transformational leadership theory. The specific cases were described and pattern matching was employed to develop meaning from the collected data (Yin, 1994).

Description of Case Study Research

Case studies are a qualitative method of research. They are used to “investigate contemporary phenomenon within its real life context, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (Yin, 1994, p. 13). The method allows the researcher to develop a comprehensive exploration of the subject situation. Instead of isolating a variable away from its natural environment, like a laboratory experiment, various details must be evaluated to connect the person or event to the context that exists within. “The case study inquiry copes with the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than data points, and as one relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion, and as another result benefits from the prior development of

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theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis.” (Yin, 1994, p. 13). A case study requires an extensive collection of multiple sources of information to establish a complete picture of the topic (Creswell, 2013).

As a method of data collection and analysis, case studies were an appropriate methodology to investigate the proposed questions. Case studies are best used when the researcher is attempting to establish the “how” and “why” of a particular topic (Yin, 1994). When the researcher cannot establish control over any of the elements of a situation, but like a detective, is attempting to figure out what happened through the collection of evidence, a case study is a useful technique. The researcher tends to start with a theoretical understanding of the phenomenon being investigated. Cases can be selected to be concrete representation of the theory (Creswell, 2013). The data gathered can be used to confirm or deny the proposed theory. This investigative format fits the nature of the questions being explored in this dissertation.

There are a number of types of case studies that can be utilized based on the intent of the researcher. The first is the single instrumental case study. In this format the researcher selects a specific case that can be located in a specific time and place and illustrates a specific set of decisions that were made describing a theory (Creswell, 2013; Yin, 1994). In a collective or multiple case study the researcher is using more than one case to illustrate the theory and compare the circumstances between each. An intrinsic case study describes a unique event or set of circumstances that needs to be described precisely because it is unique (Creswell, 2013). To illustrate these ideas, imagine a medical researcher doing an in-depth study on how a common disease affects a single person (single instrumental), how the disease is transmitted among many people (multiple), or a study of a person who has a rare medical condition (intrinsic). Each type of case study is relevant for its own purpose.

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A multiple case study technique can be employed when the researcher is working to establish some external validity on the concept being examined. The multiple case study should start with the establishment of theory. Each case study acts as a replication for describing the theory. Cases must be carefully selected to either produce similar results or to produce different results, but for an understandable reason (Yin, 1994).

There are six sources of information that can be used to develop case studies: documents, archival records, direct observations, participant observation, interviews, and physical artifacts (Creswell, 2013; Yin, 1994). Each needs to be carefully selected to allow the researcher to triangulate information and achieve an in-depth examination of the subject.

Case studies allow the researcher to develop a deep understanding of the subject being researched (Woodside, 2010). Interviews of participants are a primary source of information, but 95% of a person's thinking is subconscious (Woodside, 2010). People tend to use mental models for several reasons: to explain events without the knowledge that they are doing so, to simplify information so they can tell the interviewer a coherent story, and to modify the perspective of actions to show themselves in a positive light (Woodside, 2010). This is why the triangulation process of case studies is so important. The researcher needs to analyze multiple sources of information to put interview and survey data in context. In this study, triangulation was achieved through interviews with leaders, interviews with school improvement coaches, and an analysis of program documentation. These data sources provided a number of perspectives on the actions of the leader, which reduced the subjectivity of each source and helped to provide clarity on each leadership decision.

For the purpose of answering the question of what educational leaders do to enact innovative practices in their schools, a multiple case study was a satisfactory research design.

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This allowed me to collect data from multiple schools that had experienced a similar phenomenon. By starting with Transformational Leadership Theory, and collecting data from three separate schools, I was able to compare the actions of school leaders to theory and illustrate both successful and unsuccessful practices.

Participants, Sampling Strategy, and Research Design

Schools in this study are located in the state of Oregon and were identified as Focus schools in 2011. They overcame their student achievement deficits to a greater degree than their peer schools.

As specified by the state of Oregon's ESEA flexibility waiver to the No Child Left Behind Act, Priority Schools are identified by reviewing all of the schools that receive federal Title 1 funding and identifying the lowest 5%. In the state of Oregon there were approximately 600 schools that received Title 1 funding in 2011; of that number 36 were identified as Priority. To be designated as Priority, a school must also be receiving a School Improvement Grant (SIG), have a graduation rate of lower than 60%, or be in the lowest 5% of achievement on state assessments ("Priority, Focus and Model School Guidance," 2014).

Focus schools are identified out of the same pool of Title 1 schools, but are ranked between the lowest 5% and the lowest 15%. Additionally the school must have one of the following characteristics:

- It may have a graduation rate lower than 60% and has not already been identified as a Priority School.
- It may have one or more low performing subgroups. The qualifying sub-groups are: Economically Disadvantaged, Limited English Proficient, Students with Disabilities,

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American Indian/Alaska Native, Black/African American, Hispanic, Combined Minority Sub Group.

- There may be at least a 39% gap in performance between the highest and lowest performing subgroup (“Priority, Focus and Model School Guidance,” 2014).

The Oregon Department of Education has set up a cycle of improvement for Priority and Focus Schools. It consists of an annual self-evaluation guided by a state provided school improvement coach. Next the school must have an external diagnosis performed by a School Appraisal Team. Third, the district, school, educators, and community members must create a Comprehensive Achievement Plan (CAP). The plan must be implemented and continuously revised by the team. Fourth, the school receives support from a network of higher achieving school districts, leadership coaches, and a menagerie of education organizations involved in improving student performance. Finally, the school is monitored periodically for improvement. (“Priority, Focus and Model School Guidance,” 2014).

The education consulting firm, Education Northwest developed a data base of school performance in the state of Oregon from the 2011-2012 school year to the 2015-2016 school year. During that time period the assessment instrument changed from the Oregon Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (OAKS) to the Smarter Balanced assessment. Also, the passing score, called the cut score, was adjusted from time to time for statistical reasons. This assessment instrument change made it difficult to assess the performance of a school over time.

Consequently, Education Northwest developed a data base to rank all of the schools in the state against each other. They used six factors: (a) percentage of students who met or exceeded the language arts assessment, (b) percentage of students who met or exceeded the math assessment, (c) growth rate of all students on the language arts assessment, (d) growth rate of all

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students in mathematics, (e) growth rate of students in disadvantaged subgroups in language arts, and (f) growth rate of students in disadvantaged subgroups in mathematics.

The performance of students on the six different factors were averaged and placed on a ranking scale. Schools were assigned a score between one and one hundred. The schools with the highest average performance were given a higher score. This process was repeated year after year, using the data from whatever the test happens to be that year and at whatever the assigned cut score happens to be. Thus, it was possible to assess how a school is performing relative to all of the other school in the state. It was also possible to see how a school's ranking changes over time.

The goal for selecting participants for this study was to find three schools that had been given a Focus or Priority designation and then had outperformed their peers as measured by Education Northwest's database. The criteria established for selection was that each school needed to have risen in the rankings by at least 50 percentile points from 2011 to 2016. They needed to be located in different types of social and physical environments. A school in an urban environment will always have different challenges and resources than one in a rural environment. The subject of this study was leadership actions for innovation, so a different location for each case study helped focus the inquiry and eliminate environmental factors.

Once a list of possible schools was identified, I contacted possible participants by e-mail and then telephone. I was looking for principal candidates that had worked through the improvement process for the majority of the time the work was underway. The actions of one leader are sometimes not continued by the leader that replaces them in the position and it was important to the study to understand everything that occurred during the period of improvement.

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Education Northwest provided school improvement coaches to the subject schools under a contract with the Oregon Department of Education and agreed to provide me access to the people assigned to each school. Fortunately, I was able to identify three schools that met my established criteria.

The principals and coaches agreed to be participants in the study (see Appendix C and Appendix D). The principals were briefed on visual ethnography as a data collection method and agreed to participate in the process. Visual ethnography is a collaborative process and in this study the participant principals were required to take the actual photographs. The school improvement coaches were interviewed using questions derived from transformational leadership theory (see Appendix A).

Description of Visual Ethnography

It is commonly said that a picture is worth a thousand words. Using the technique of visual ethnography may make images more valuable yet. Using visuals to help tell the story of people and their actions is both about documenting events and allowing individuals to tell their own story. It puts the researcher and participant into a collaborative relationship that helps both come to a deeper understanding of the answers to the question (Pink, 2004; Schembri & Boyle, 2013).

Visual Ethnography is a research technique where images are used as part of data collection and as a technique of analysis. Images are created of people and events and are used as both prompts for interviewing and as visual data for the researcher to examine. Both photographs and video can help the researcher bridge the gap between the local expertise of the research participant and the relative ignorance of the researcher (Kharel, 2015; Pink, Kurti, & Afonso, 2004; Stukalenko, Zhakhina, Kukubaeva, Smagulov, & Kazhibaeva, 2016). Like many experts,

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people are generally so immersed in their occupational or social culture that they are unaware of what they really know and what other people do not. The images can help the researcher see from the point of view of the participant (Pink et al., 2004). Photo elicitation is the act of sitting down with the interviewees and having each explain the meaning of the photo to the researcher to help bridge the cultural gap (Creswell, 2013; Steyn, 2013).

It is impossible to know how others feel (Pink, 2015) and people themselves often do not know why they feel the way they do about a particular event or action (Woodside, 2010). The camera offers a vehicle to help break down those barriers and create a path for people to reveal their thoughts and feelings about their experiences (Zenkov & Harmon, 2009). Interviews with participants about the photos are often about what is not initially said. People react to visual images viscerally and those reactions can help the interviewer draw out the hidden meanings in a person's verbal answers to questions.

Visual ethnography has been used in anthropology since the nineteenth century. It was thought that the images taken of rudimentary cultures would show how close the people were to nature. The technique fell out of favor after the 1930s until it was revived by Margaret Mead in 1942. In the 1960s, ethnographic film became an important part of visual anthropology. Since that time, the camera has become an important part of the anthropologist's toolkit. The film eye is considered to be more accurate than the human eye. The images can be reexamined for years instead of relying on the accuracy of memory or field notes. The development of inexpensive high quality digital photo and visual equipment has facilitated the popularity of these techniques (Kharel, 2015).

For this study, I put the camera in the hands of the study participants and allowed them to create the images that helped answer the research questions. This first person perspective

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helped remediate my biases as a researcher (Pink, 2015). By collaborating with the study participants we were able to build the story of innovation at each school together, and my preferences of educational leadership methods were mitigated. The use of this technique helped overcome the technical language of education that tends to dominate conversations between professionals. In my experience, educators are good at renaming old practices with current terminology. Using the visual medium as interviewing prompts helped to cut through the educationese and provided accurate descriptions of actions, so the photographs proved to be an interesting analytical tool for the comparison of practices between different schools.

Analytical Procedures

There are two basic strategies to analyze a case study (Yin, 1994). If the case study is designed to explore theory, then the analysis should follow the ideas and constructs of the theory. This information will guide the development of questions and help the researcher develop the codes needed to sort the data. If the case study is not based on theory, then the researcher should develop a schema for organizing the study (Yin, 1994). This approach will help the researcher make sense of the potentially random information that is collected in the field work.

There are four modes of analyzing data collected for a case study. The first is to match the patterns of what the researcher predicted would happen and what was actually found to happen. Whether or not the patterns match will help build internal validity for the results of the study. The second mode of analysis is explanation-building. When the researcher uses this method they are using the study to create a hypothesis about the situation. Causal links are presented and ideas for future studies are proposed. A third mode is a time-series analysis. This is where a sequence of events is measured across time. The researcher is looking for patterns of events about a phenomenon or a place over a specified time period. Questions are asked and

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examined about how events link to each other and explanations will be presented that explore cause and effect. The final mode of analysis is using program logic models as a framework for explanation. A logic model is a common management tool for outlining the planning and actions of an organization's efforts to achieve an objective. For case studies, using a logic model combines the strengths of pattern matching and time-studies to create a coherent explanation of the study's subject (Yin, 1994).

Sorting field notes is like cleaning your room (Zenkov & Harmon, 2009). Random items go into themed piles, the piles are further divided into smaller groups, and the groups are put into drawers or onto shelves in an order that will allow a person to retrieve items at a later date. What is known in most qualitative studies as coding, is often called categorical aggregation in case studies (Creswell, 2013). This is the technique where the researcher works through field notes and assigns labels to the information that has been collected. Among the labels that are assigned, the researcher looks for similarities that indicate patterns. The patterns are eventually accumulated into themes (Creswell, 2013). The themes are used to help make meaning out of the information collected.

The analysis of this study was framed on the tenets of transformational leadership theory (TLT). Pattern matching was used as an organizational framework. Leadership actions were accumulated into the four basic categories—idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. In the three case studies, each school's actions are described by these themes. In addition, a time-series analysis was conducted in each school. Principals were asked to sort their photographs chronologically so that the sequence of actions could be understood. I was curious as to whether leaders tended to use actions described

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by TLT in a specific sequence, or if each leader used these actions in a different order depending on personality and situational circumstance.

Consequently, coding for breaking down the collected data flowed from the theory. Each of the four parts of the theory was assigned a code. Each category code was further refined by whether the action was applied in a general way or in a specific instance. For instance, if a leader was engaged in vision building for the school, did the leader do that herself or utilize a group of staff and community members to collectively create the vision? How was the vision implemented and was it well received? This coding system allowed me to specifically label the field notes with enough detail to later build patterns. TLT is focused on the actions of the leader and tends to downplay the influence of outside circumstances and governing organizations (Chang et al., 2011). These areas are better described by theories developed by Fullan (2002) and Deming (1981). Thus, several additional codes were developed by me to account for information not well described by TLT.

Idealized influence (II). As I interviewed principals and school improvement coaches, it became clear that the category of idealized influence was best described as the actions leaders specifically did to project their will or desired outcomes through the organization. Thus the following list breaks down those actions so they could be individually examined for importance (see Appendix B).

Leader initiated (IIL). General actions leaders take to change a procedure or enforce a behavioral norm among staff members.

Dispersed among staff (IID). Leadership built among staff members, like a formal leadership team.

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Behavior management (IIBM). Specific actions to influence how student behavior is managed, e.g. discipline and reward systems.

Special education (IISPED). Specific actions taken to influence how special education is undertaken in a school.

Structural change - calendar/schedule/contract (IIS). Actions leaders take to influence the operation of the school through influence over many of the formal organizational structures of the building, e.g. budgets, schedules, calendars, and contracts.

Staff reassignment (IISR). The ability of the leader to assign staff members to new positions or new school buildings.

Agreed-upon group action (IIGA). Actions staff members agree to and then are enforced by the school leader.

Hiring highly qualified teachers (IIHQ). The ability of the leader to hire and fire staff members who the leader judges to be effective or ineffective.

Inspirational motivation (IM). Inspiration motivation best describes work the leader does to create and communicate a vision of the school's culture to staff members, students, and the community it serves. This work is different than actions described by the category of idealized influence because it is meant to provide all people who work in an organization a philosophical basis for belief and action. In this way, all people who are part of an organization can know how to behave without the specific direction of a leader.

Vision created and diffused by leader (IML). A vision a leader creates and communicates through documents, discussion, and formal presentations.

Vision created and diffused by group (IMG). A vision that a group of staff members create and communicate through documents, discussion, and formal presentations. This vision is

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usually developed in a group process that is attended or facilitated by the formal leader of the organization.

Vision created and upheld by community (IMC). This is a collective vision that community members have of the school. It might be termed as a school's reputation, but it also includes an understanding that many community members have aspirations for what they want the school to be for their children

Intellectual stimulation (IS). Intellectual stimulation is the work that the leader does to improve the knowledge and skills of the whole staff. Often the work is directly targeted at creating group action in which the staff can engage. Leaders typically do this work either by bringing in trainers to provide instruction for the whole staff or by organizing the staff into some sort of work group. Sometimes the building leader or a staff member expert may provide the training, but the professional development is rarely random. The group learning is typically targeted to influence staff behavior to solve a schoolwide problem.

Professional development (ISPD). Training provided to staff members on a variety of topics.

Data teams/PLC (ISDATA). Training and organizational processes specifically targeted at teaching staff members to collect and analyze data related to student behavior and academic growth. Teams often use the information to adjust how and what is taught to students.

Behavior management (ISBM). Training provided to staff that is designed to increase their ability to manage problem student behavior.

Diversity/ equity (ISDIV). Training provided to staff improve the performance of students from a variety of racial, ethnic, and economic backgrounds.

Technology (ISTECH). Training provided to staff to improve their use of instructional technology.

Individualized consideration (IC). Individualized consideration is the training and opportunities given to specific staff members by the leadership. Instead of engaging in whole group development, the leader may choose to work with small groups or individuals. This may be done to create an expert on staff or to help distribute leadership tasks throughout the building. Often, principals use it as an intentional strategy to create change in a school. By planting a pocket of success in one part of the organization, they are able to let it grow to other locations. Instead of demanding that staff members take on a practice, they create a desire for a proven idea to be implemented everywhere.

Leadership development (ICL). Development of leadership capabilities with the intent of distributing leadership throughout the organization.

Specialization (ICS). The creation of expertise among specific staff members. These individuals may act as resources for the rest of the faculty or students.

Experimentation (ICE). Leaders or staff members may want to attempt a new practice in the school. Instead of attempting to implement the new idea with the entire team, an individual or small group may acquire specific knowledge to run an experiment.

Professional Development (ICPD). Individual teachers may be given extra training for any necessary reason.

Other codes not defined by TLT. Transformational leadership theory does not adequately acknowledge the influence of other parts of the larger organization that impact the operation of the subordinate organization. As the vast majority of schools are part of a larger

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school district and school districts themselves are impacted by state level departments and legislatures, it became necessary to recognize that influence.

District PD (DPD). Professional development initiated and organized by the school district. This could be related to topics as diverse as human resources procedures or instructional methodologies.

District vision building (DVB). School district's often work to create a distinct set of cultural practices among all of the school buildings. This may be accomplished by influencing the administrators who lead buildings or by district-wide trainings.

District leadership development (DLD). Efforts school district leaders make to improve the leadership capabilities of administrators and other staff members.

District Support (DLS). Budgetary decisions to provide a school with more resources. This includes extra personnel like instructional coaches and consultants.

Curriculum Implementation (CI). District selection and implementation of instructional materials.

Community Connections (CC). Efforts used in a school to communicate with community members. This may come in the form of community outreach activities to parents or by developing partnerships with community based organizations.

For the reporting of this research, each one of the studies are presented individually before themes are examined across the schools (Yin, 1994). The story of each leader's journey is presented. Each leader told me their story through the photographs they took of their work, and then was given the opportunity to comment on the case study. Each case study starts with a general setting and the particular circumstances of the school. Test data is discussed as well as the demographics of the student population. A summary description of the school's progression

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from poor performance to a high achieving organization is told. Principal actions are organized by photographs that each participant selected and used to tell the story. Each leader was asked to arrange the photos chronologically before the interview began so that each vignette would add to the others and create a complete narrative. The sequencing of the images also allowed me to understand which actions happened at what point in the story. Photographic evidence, interview information, and school improvement planning documents were used to provide a full description of each action and their effect on the school.

After each of the three case studies are described in detail, the principal's actions in each TLT category and sub-category are compared with each other. I explain which actions tend to be done more often by principals and which actions tend to have a greater impact on school improvement and teaching innovation. Each case study was sent to the principal that it corresponded to with a request for corrections. Two out of three principals responded that they felt that I had captured the story of their school accurately. One did not respond to my request for comment.

Research Ethics

In my background as a school administrator, I have held many roles. I have worked as an assistant high school principal, a middle school principal, a director and later assistant superintendent of an educational service district, and a school district superintendent. Over the years I have developed some particular ideas about what makes schools work well. These ideas could color my coding and interpretation of the data. I worked hard to guard against that from occurring.

All potential interviewees were contacted personally to request their participation in the study. The principals, took the photographs and sent them to me before the face-to-face

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interviews, which made them actual participants in the research as well. I provided all participants with a letter of consent (see Appendix C and D) that outlined the study's goals and methods. Both anonymity and confidentiality of all participants and schools are guaranteed.

All documents, photographs, and interview transcripts will be secured in a locking file cabinet or a password protected locking electronic file for three years after the completion of the dissertation process. At the end of those three years, I will personally destroy or delete all information with any personally identifiable information.

Schools and personnel will remain anonymous through the use of pseudonyms. I named the schools Alpha, Bravo, and Charlie and each person identified in the organization was given a name that corresponded with the alphabetic designation of their school. Profiles of the schools will be reported completely, but without information that identifies their specific location. Any photograph that can identify a specific person or place was gently altered with photographic image editing software so that identifying features are no longer recognizable.

Chapter 4: Case Studies

The subject schools were selected for case studies from a database obtained from Education Northwest. Each school selected met the following criteria: In 2011, each school was identified to be in the lowest 15% of all elementary schools in the state of Oregon. This determination was made by averaging student achievement, sub-group achievement, and growth percentages on the state-wide assessment. Between 2011 and 2016 each subject school gained at least 50 percentile points in relation to all other schools in the state. If they were ranked at the 15th percentile in 2011, they would need to be ranked at least the 65th in 2016. This improvement is being used as a construct for innovation, under the logic that a principal who was able to create dramatic improvement would have needed to create lasting and effective change in the practices of the school building.

I picked schools that maintained the same principal for the majority of the time period so that a single leader's actions could be examined during the time of improvement. Schools that made continuous growth over the five years instead of ones that had sudden spikes in growth were favored. Three schools of different size, location, and setting were chosen to limit the influence of environment on the success of the administrators.

Each principal was asked to take 8 to 12 photographs in advance of the interview. Each was asked to take photos that represented an action that the school administration and the staff took to improve their students' ability to learn, grow, and achieve. During the interview, each principal was asked to arrange the photographs in the order that they were initiated. The photographs were used as interview prompts; the case studies use the photos as the organizing principal.

All information provided by the principal was triangulated with interviews of school improvement coaches and review of the school improvement plans. In many cases, information was added to the principals' description of events from the other interviews and school improvement plans.

Case Study 1: Visual Ethnography of Alpha Elementary School

Alpha Elementary School is located east of the Cascade Mountains in Oregon. It serves kindergarten through fifth grade. The facility is relatively new and well designed. Before it was rebuilt, Alpha Elementary served mostly middle class children. It was known locally as an exceptional school and the teachers considered themselves to be quite competent at their profession. When the new school building opened in 2011, the school district changed the enrollment boundaries and suddenly the demographics of the school were radically different. The teachers began to struggle with a different population and they found the methods that had been successful with one group were not as effective with students with different backgrounds.

The new demographics were challenging: In 2012, 81% of the students were economically disadvantaged, 41% of the students were English learners, 16% of the students had a disability. Hispanic students now made up 60% of the population and 36% were white. In the 2011-2012 school year the school was ranked at the fourth percentile in its performance for elementary schools in the state of Oregon. Only 54% of students were passing the reading test compared to 73% statewide. A significant achievement gap existed between Hispanic students at 43.1% and 69.2% for white students. In math, 48% of Alpha's students were proficient compared to 64% statewide. The same achievement gap existed in math with white students achieving at 65% and Hispanic students at 36.8%. By the 2015-2016 school year the school was ranked at the

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60th percentile with a total positional change of 56. It was a rather remarkable improvement in a short period of time.

Alpha Elementary's principal, Mr. Andrews, is a 24-year veteran educator who has taught and administrated at a number of different educational levels. He was not the principal of the building when it received its Focus school designation; he was working in another school district. The principal who was in charge at Alpha had been fired in October of the year of the designation, and a district administrator had been serving double duty as both principal and curriculum director. The new school improvement coach, Mr. Able, and the district administrator created the first draft of the plan that would help Alpha Elementary improve its performance.

Mr. Andrews intentionally applied to work at Alpha because he wanted the challenge of improving the school. He was once a basketball coach and had an affinity for underdog teams. Leaders that were able to walk into a challenge and create order from chaos were inspirational to him and he wanted to put theory into action. Mr. Andrews cared deeply for both students and teachers and he wanted them to succeed.

Mr. Able is an experienced school administrator who has run successful schools and school districts. He is retired and lives in the region, but was hired as a school improvement coach by Education Northwest. He was able to bring both his knowledge of research-based school practices and his successful management experience to the task of assisting the school. Mr. Able believed that his strength was the ability to take complicated concepts and create actionable practices from them.

Mr. Andrews and Mr. Able developed a three-part strategy going into the improvement effort. First, they built a strong leadership team with the teaching staff. Then, they improved the

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functioning of the teachers' data teams. Finally, they focused on implementing instructional best practice.

According to Mr. Andrews, the following photographs illustrate the high leverage actions that were taken to improve Alpha Elementary.

Figure 1: Schedules maximizing instructional time. The first step to reforming the school actually took place before Mr. Andrews was hired as the principal. The district administrator recognized that the daily schedule did not maximize learning time. The old schedule was built around the comfort of the teaching staff—where the most senior teacher had the most favorable preparation times. She rebuilt the schedule to increase an academic skill block from thirty minutes to an hour. That way every student had a significant length of time where they received intervention. All staff members were on hand during this blocked time. Special education teachers, title 1 reading teachers, and English language learner teachers were all available to maximize instructional resources to serve students with the intervention that was needed for each child.

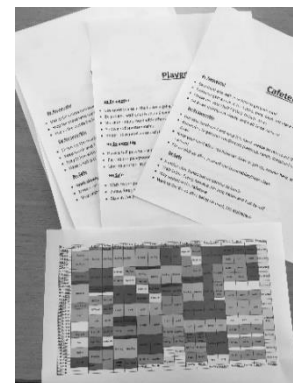


Figure 1: Schedules Maximizing Instructional Time

A 120-minute home room reading time was implemented as well. This cut into teachers' preparation time, but it made sure that every child was getting significant and consistent instructional time. This extended period also allowed data to be collected for use in the teachers' data teams.

Figure 1 also illustrates the consistent rules that were developed as part of the Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) put in place to mitigate poor student behavior. PBIS is a behavior system that uses discipline data to help teachers mitigate poor student behavior.

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Student expectations are explicitly and clearly explained to all students, data is collected about what sorts of misbehavior are occurring, and then the teachers teach the students the correct behavior in response to the data. Teachers work to reinforce positive student behavior with a token system, so staff members must catch students being good and not just misbehaving. The system is as focused on changing staff behavior as student behavior (Bradshaw, Koth, Ialongo, Leaf, 2014).

Mr. Andrews described the school as being very chaotic when he arrived. PBIS allowed the staff to teach behavior expectations and emphasize the value of learning time. Students were no longer allowed to run or yell down the hallway because it disturbed other's time to learn. PBIS allowed the staff members to use positive behavior as a tool to help build a learning culture. Data were also collected to help identify types and locations of misbehavior so teachers could take a preemptive approach to modifying student behavior issues.

Figure 2 and 3: Creating a vision and data to identify schoolwide trends. One of the first actions taken by Mr. Andrews was the development of the building leadership team. This team consisted of a teacher from each grade level, the Title 1 teacher, the building principal, and the school improvement coach. The specific teachers who were chosen to be on the team were the people who were already natural leaders in the building. The principal served to organize and direct them. While the idea was to create a shared leadership model, in practice the team served as a way to distribute ideas and plans as opposed to creating them. As a whole it was an effective team through which focus the improvement process. Ideas and work that took years to completely manifest were developed and managed through this group of professionals.

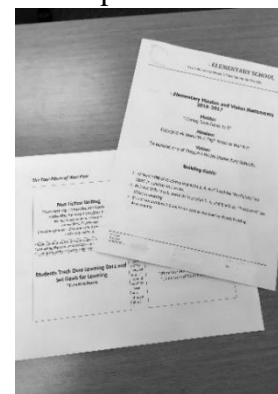


Figure 2: Creating a Vision

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The leadership team had a number of missions to complete, but the first and foremost was to create a vision for the building. Figure 2 illustrates the documents created to communicate that vision. It took several years to fully realize, but in the end a mission and vision were fully articulated. This vision was enhanced by a document called “The Four Pillars” of Alpha Elementary. The four pillars were the non-negotiables of the school. All students and teachers were expected to be involved with these strategies most of the time.

The four pillars were: (a) a focus on non-fiction writing, (b) students track their own data and set their own goals, (c) teachers post their learning targets with success criteria, and (d) at least 60 minutes of core math instruction, 30 minutes of additional math skills, and another 15 minutes of math fluency practice or a total of 105 minutes of math instruction per day. As the school developed multiple ways of providing professional development and reinforcing common instructional techniques, the four pillars were the basis of both instructional choices and observational feedback for teachers. Three out of the four pillars became imbedded practice, but the idea of students tracking their own goals and data had yet to really take hold as an effective learning strategy.

The leadership team also functioned as sort of an executive data team. The leadership team met approximately once every four weeks. Members of the team brought data from each grade level data team to the meeting. The information was examined to identify schoolwide trends (Figure 3). If a trend was noticed, the team discussed adjustments that could improve the functioning of the whole school. Once a decision was made, it was the job of the members of the team to disseminate the message to the whole school and develop buy-in from the staff. For instance, the

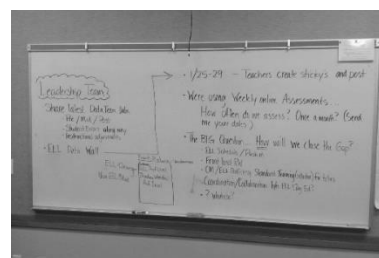


Figure 3: Data to Identify School-wide Trends

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leadership team noticed that ELL students were having trouble understanding the academic terms in math classes. This led to a school-wide initiative to focus on vocabulary while students were learning math. Team members were often sent to professional development to gain expertise for other teachers. Over time, the leadership team became an effective voice for articulating the mission of the school.

Figure 4: Visible Learning. The choices for the four pillars came from a variety of sources, but the primary text was *Visible Learning* by John Hattie (Figure 4). This book became the “bible” of instructional technique at Alpha Elementary. When Mr. Andrews took over at Alpha Elementary, the teachers were not unified in their approaches to educate students. They had been left by building administration to make their instructional choices in isolation with no way to judge the effectiveness of their approach. As this philosophy left the teachers without the ability to adapt when their student population changed, it was necessary to bring educational research to bear on the problem. John Hattie’s book is a meta-analysis of over 800 studies on educational strategies (Hattie, 2009). When applied effectively, it can help teachers and administrators tailor their instructional choices with confident knowledge that a specific approach has a solid research base behind it.

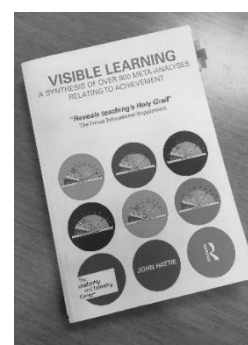


Figure 4: Visible Learning

Carol Dweck’s (2012) work around “Growth Mindsets” helped teachers work on developing positive relationships with students. By using the language of growth, teachers made students feel encouraged and not judged (Dweck, 2012). For instance if a student was having a hard time understanding a concept, he or she was told that struggling to understanding is learning. They were told their brains were growing and they were becoming smarter. Students were never done, no students were ever not good at something, and children could become

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smarter and learn. *Visible Learning* ranks relationship-building as an extremely effective technique for helping students learn.

Another educational researcher's who influenced the Alpha educators was Richard Elmore (Elmore, 2004). Mr. Elmore believes there are only three ways to improve student learning: (a) Raise the content the students are learning, (b) improve the skills and knowledge of the teachers delivering the content, and (c) increase the students' active learning of the content. Students will not learn beyond the level of the task they are asked to do (Elmore, 2004). These ideas were applied to help analyze the tasks students were doing.

Figure 5: Data teams. Figure 5 illustrates the last of the three major strategies that Mr. Andrews and Mr. Able implemented to improve Alpha Elementary: The improvement of data teams. Data teams at Alpha started by setting up common formative assessments. Student data were collected and charted. In the photo, the teachers are looking at a spreadsheet of student data and are identifying gaps in student learning. They take that data and plan new instruction to help students learn what was missed the first time. The team identified which teacher's students had the fewest errors in learning. That teacher reviewed her approach to teaching that particular skill or knowledge so that her teammates can benefit from her success.



Figure 5: Data Teams
Viewing Student Results

To keep the focus on data, the instructional coach, Mr. Able, built several protocol forms that required teachers to examine the data in terms of cause and effect. The team was to analyze what their instructional method was and determine how students reacted to it. Then the participants went through several levels of "why" questions until an understanding of the errors of student learning was achieved and what the teachers were going to do to rectify the problem.

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The school staff went through a great deal of training to achieve functional data teams. This was initiated at both the district and building level. Consistent work and practice were necessary to help teachers mediate the potential hard feelings and bruised egos that can develop during analysis of student results. The principal and instructional coach spent their time popping into data meetings to offer encouragement, guidance, and celebrations. The work of Micheal Schmoker (2003) was utilized as a philosophical base for these actions (Schmoker, 2003).

Figure 6: Learning targets. Many school districts require their teachers to post the learning target students are to achieve on the whiteboard. The teachers at Alpha decided to take the idea farther and put success criteria up as well. Written in the language of “I know I can be successful when...,” the statement clearly described to students what they could do to be successful in achieving a learning target. This helped give students ownership over their learning and demystified what a teacher wanted the students to do. The expectation was that a learning target with success criteria should cover no more than a week worth of learning. It took about a year of conscious reinforcement before this practice became routine.

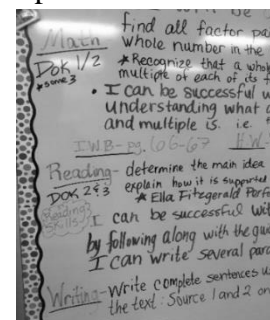


Figure 6: Learning Targets

The next step was to have each learning target given a Depth of Knowledge level (DOK) that would help students consider how to think about the task at hand. DOK helps teachers categorize tasks with the complexity of thinking needed to complete it. It is a good measurement of rigor (Aungst, 2014). As figure 6 shows, a few teachers are experimenting with teaching the students explicitly about DOK levels and how knowledge of a specific level can help a student learn how to approach a learning standard. For the teachers, DOK levels became an

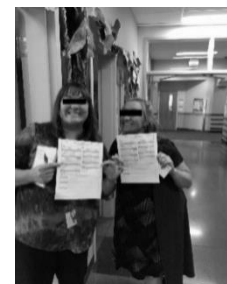


Figure 7: Celebrating Student Work

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important part of the planning process. It was a tool used to consider Elmore's notion that few students will learn beyond the challenge level of the task that they are assigned (Elmore, 2004).

Figure 7: Celebrating student work. A conscious decision was made to systematically celebrate students' work at Alpha Elementary. As students were meeting the success criteria that was posted, their achievements are celebrated. It was common at the school to see student work posted in the classrooms and the hallways. The work was not always by the top achievers, and included students who demonstrated their learning. In this photo, two kindergarten teachers are holding up evidence of their students' accomplishments.

Figure 8: Non-fiction writing. Figure 4.8 depicts students involved in non-fiction writing. Alpha Elementary used *Reading Wonders* by McGraw Hill as their core curriculum in Language Arts. Each unit had a number of weekly performance tasks included with it. Students participated in at least two written performance tasks per six week unit. During off weeks, the students did shorter writing exercises in response to their reading assignment.



Figure 8: Non-Fiction Writing

Figure 9: Peer Observations. Peer observations became an extremely important part of the professional development process at Alpha Elementary. They were used extensively over the last three years as a way to assess student learning and as a way to determine what specific professional development was needed for the whole staff.

The observations were conceived of as a way to improve instruction profoundly. Teams of teachers routinely watched their peers work and developed a consistent level of conversation about what good



Figure 9: Peer Observations

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teaching looked like. The goal was for classrooms to become transparent and depersonalized. This helped create an environment where teachers could receive feedback without taking much offense.

Teams of teachers walked through approximately five of their peers' classrooms every Wednesday. Each teacher in the building participated on the walk-through team at least twice during the year. It was a mixed group of grade level teachers who walked through a variety of classroom levels. The principal and a specialist were on the team as well. Even though the principal was present, the observations were non-evaluative in nature. No teacher was given specific feedback. They were there to look at the instruction, not the instructor. After the rounds, teachers reflected on what they saw in the classrooms and considered trends, the principal would publish a blog post to all staff reporting on what was observed on that day.

The peer observational teams spent the whole morning as part of the process. Before each session, the principal reminded the team that the reason they were doing the rounds was to find holes in practice, improve instruction in the building, and help improve transparency in practice. Also, each participant was to find something they could use to improve their own teaching from the process. Occasionally, the team looked for evidence of a building-wide improvement initiative, like using more academic vocabulary.

Over time, the focus of the observations changed from commenting on what the teacher was doing in front of the classroom to looking for what was happening on the student's desk. This action was in line with the emphasis on DOK levels and Richard Elmore's (2004) influence. The switch in focus came through discussions with the leadership team.

Mr. Andrews organized the peer observations on a weekly schedule. The teams worked with T-charts and other tools for recording what they saw. After visiting classrooms, teachers

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discussed what they witnessed and the asked questions they had. Thank you notes were sent out to teachers whose classrooms were visited.

Most of the teaching staff reacted positively to this process. Some did not, however, and they either retired or began to move themselves into different positions outside of Alpha Elementary.

Rather than plan out a calendar of professional development activities for teachers to participate in over the course of the year, nearly all the training the staff received came as a result of this process. As student learning gaps were noticed by the observational teams and reported to the leadership team, professional development was planned to rectify the situation. Most of these smaller professional development sessions were delivered by the principal or a teacher who had been specially trained. The identification of gaps in learning and the training to improve the instruction came relatively quickly in this system. This created a flexible and targeted feedback loop that helped staff respond quickly to changing circumstances.

Figure 10: Front loading instruction for ELL and SpEd students. As a strategy to improve the performance of students who were English Language Learners (ELL) and those who were identified with a learning disability (SpEd), Alpha Elementary pursued a strategy of front-loading instruction in specialized pull out classes. Although Figure 10 depicts students working through a Venn diagram on mathematical concepts, the technique was mostly used in language arts.



Figure10: Front-Loading Instruction for ELL and SpEd Students

Students in the ELL and SpEd classes received a preview of the lessons to be delivered to them. Academic vocabulary was emphasized so when students were hearing language they were unfamiliar with, they would have the knowledge and skills to

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tackle the lesson. Giving a head start to students with a specific need allowed them to learn with their peers instead of having to make up a learning gap latter on.

In a school, it can be a challenge to coordinate the lessons that happen in the general classroom with the targeted work that occurs in the ELL classroom, but it was important in this school. With 39% of the population being ELL and 16% of the students identified as SpEd, it was a priority to bridge the achievement gap. Information collected from their statewide assessments and data teams help the teachers break the silos that sometimes form in schools and propelled the teachers to work together on the issues.

Over the first few years, as the school was beginning to improve, the school staff was quite proud of their success. They were starting to celebrate their good work and let the pride of their accomplishments show. Principal Andrews and the leadership team took that moment to dig deeply into the data and show the staff that several of their sub-groups were being left behind. Both ELL students and students in special education were not making the gains that their peers were. The principal noted during observations that the goals on many Individual Education Plans (IEP) were not very rigorous and were not pushing children to achieve. When the staff really looked at those statistics, they resolved to solve the problem.

The staff at Alpha was not able to locate example schools that were front-loading effectively, except one in their own district. Nevertheless, the strategy made sense to them and so they pursued the challenge of using their curriculum maps and data teams to coordinate when instruction was to be delivered. The results with their SpEd population was fairly dramatic. They went from none of their students meeting state standards to approximately one-third to one half doing so at different grade levels.



Figure 11: Students Analyzing their Work with DOK Levels

Figure 11: Students analyzing their work with DOK levels. Figure 11 represents the school's current and future effort to deepen and strengthen student learning. Students were beginning to engage in analyzing both their work and peer work. Using DOK levels and pre-taught sentence frames, students were giving students each other feedback on their work. This process of summarizing, explaining, and analyzing their assignments helped the students engage deeply with the learning process. At this point the technique is only implemented in some of the classrooms at Alpha Elementary, but Mr. Andrews planned on scaling up the initiative in the next school year.

Summary. A remarkable aspect of the work done at Alpha Elementary was how little staff turnover occurred throughout the process. Out of a staff of 48 teachers, specialists, and support staff providing instructional services, only three teachers had to be encouraged to find other work. As will be shown in subsequent case studies, this is an unusual circumstance.

Mr. Andrews was able to take an existing staff who had experienced a significant failure in results and developed an effective educational team. He was able to identify talented people in the staff and create a leadership team that drove school improvement forward. Both he and the leadership team created a consistent vision, they published the vision widely, and they articulated the vision in concrete practices. Mr. Andrews created a consistent set of expectations for staff members to follow and then reinforced those expectations in both word and deed.

The school became data focused. Teachers used common formative assessments taken from both adopted curriculum and other curriculum they had created and then used those tools to create data sets that would help guide instruction and intervention. The data also became a tool to change the structure of how the school worked. When it was clear that groups of students were

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not achieving under the existing practice, the staff used the information as a catalyst to change the way instruction was delivered and student management was done.

The systematic data that was collected by the data teams, by the leadership team, and in peer observations, directly affected how the school operated. The data team's decisions directly impacted how instruction was delivered at the classroom level. The information collected by the leadership team helped create schoolwide instructional initiatives. Peer observations helped create a feedback loop for professional development. Professional development was both planned through this process and gauged for how effectively it was being implemented. Research proven instructional strategies were used as much as possible.

This case study focused on the actions of the principal as part of the school improvement process, but it should be noted that he had significant help. The school district was very supportive with school improvement expertise. They made significant investments into school improvement coaches who then helped teachers improve their practice. Individuals on the district team had school improvement knowledge and helped Mr. Andrews with both structure and guidance. The school district engaged in an extensive curriculum mapping exercise using a tool called Rubicon-Atlas that is purpose built for that function. Information from this tool helped the teachers create their learning objectives and success criteria.

Mr. Andrews also benefited by having Mr. Able working with the school weekly for four years. He brought much of the researched-based instructional practice to the school. He helped to both simplify and implement the concepts into classrooms and data teams.

Other strategies were also pursued, including some that were not listed as part of the key leverage points on which this study focused. For instance, the school engaged in significant community outreach to connect with the parents of the children who attended their school. They

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made sure their office staff was bilingual and they created outreach nights to invite community members into the school to celebrate academic subjects.

The staff, principal, and school district worked hard to improve the outcomes of their students. While a great deal of work is left to do, the system they built should allow them to adapt to changing circumstances and continue to improve student learning.

Case Study 2: Visual Ethnography of Bravo Elementary School

Bravo Elementary is a small rural school located in the farm country of Oregon. It serves approximately 350 students kindergarten through sixth grade. Many of the families that live in the community served by Bravo have been there for multiple generations. Some can trace their heritage back to pioneers that arrived by wagon on the Oregon Trail. Their facility is old and looks a little run down from the outside. On the inside, it is obvious that a great deal of care is put into keeping the building clean and as well maintained as the age and condition of the structure allows. The district administration hopes to raise the money to demolish this facility and build a new school.

Bravo Elementary was identified as a Focus school after the 2011-2012 state assessments were calculated. It was ranked at the 16th percentile in overall achievement for elementary schools in the state of Oregon. Only 59% of the students met or exceeded the reading assessment compared to 71% statewide. There was also a significant gap between White students passing the test (60.9%) compared to Hispanic students (38.6%) and Economically Disadvantaged Students (43.9%). On the mathematics assessment, 52% met or exceeded the assessment compared to 63% statewide. Again there was a significant gap between the White students' passage rate (53%) and the rate of Hispanic students (42.8 %). Economically Disadvantaged students passed the math test at a rate of 41.9%. Similar results were achieved by students taking the fifth grade science assessment, with 42% of the students passing compared to 70% across the state.

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The principal, working with her staff and the school improvement coach, achieved a remarkable positional change of 73 places in the rankings for elementary schools. From the 16th percentile in 2011-2012, the school improved its performance to the 63rd percentile in 2014-2015 and the 88th percentile in 2015-2016.

Bravo Elementary's principal was hired just prior to the 2012-2013 school year. She started her teaching career in a much larger school district and worked as a teacher in two different elementary schools. One of the schools had a fairly challenging population, so she had experience working with students that had a higher level of need than an average student, but she had never worked in a small district. She had to quickly adapt from an organization where there were many people to do specialized work to one where she was expected to be an expert for a variety of student and teacher needs.

Even though Ms. Baker had begun teaching in 2003, this was her first administrative job anywhere, and she had no idea that the school was going to be given a Focus designation. She received the news about two weeks after she started the position. The school had been through four building principals in the previous six years and it was only the superintendent's second year in the district. Staff members were upset about the Focus label, but as many of them were new as well, no one really owned the issue. The veteran staff felt unsupported by leadership in the past, did not feel that the label represented their work, and were not overly excited about yet another principal. Needless to say, many people would have been overwhelmed with the situation; Ms. Baker took most of the first year to get know the place and get a sense of what was needed. Then she rolled up her sleeves and got to work.

The school improvement coach was assigned to the school just a few days after Ms. Baker took the job. Ms. Blake was an experienced school improvement specialist, having worked

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at an Educational Service District for a number of years in the role. When she was hired to help create a turnaround at Bravo Elementary, she was working as an independent contractor that specialized in school improvement work.

In the opinion of Ms. Baker, the following photographs illustrate the high leverage actions that were taken to improve Bravo Elementary.

Figure12: Schedule Maximizing Instructional Time. One of the first changes made by Ms. Baker was to adjust how the schedule worked. When she came to the school, she expected the schedule would be set up to maximize instructional time and make sure adequate periods were in place for core reading and math, as well as intervention time. What she found was a schedule that was mostly organized around teacher preparation time. Teachers had most of an hour in the morning for preparation, another hour in the day during music and physical education, and yet another hour after school.

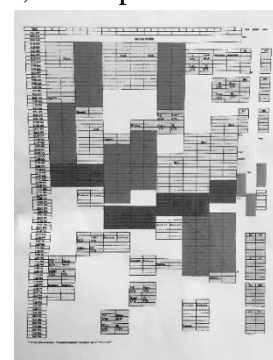


Figure12: Schedule Maximizing Instructional Time

Students started their day with half an hour eating breakfast and on the playground. When it was time for students to come into the classroom, they had a difficult time settling down and focusing on learning.

Ms. Baker decided to start each day with a five-minute daily teacher meeting. The staff gathered together to discuss the day's work and talk about any logistical changes, introduce substitute teachers that were in the building, make announcements, and celebrate birthdays. Students gathered in the gym for a breakfast and were then picked up by their teacher to start class.

Ms. Baker scheduled a 90 minute core reading time and protected it from any interruptions. No assemblies or special announcements would occur during that time period. The

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Title 1 reading support and special education teacher pushed into the core time to offer support instead of pulling students out. Moving from a typical pull-out model kept all students receiving core instruction and allowed the specialists to augment student instruction as it was happening.

Other changes were made to the schedule as well. Ms. Baker segregated lunch and recess time by grade level bands. Having sixth grade with their own break times reduced the amount of behavior incidents that occurred. Music and PE time were reduced from a 55-minute block that students attended every day to a 35-minute period that alternated between the subjects.

The schedule improved slowly over the years, with each change increasing and focusing instructional time. Parts of the adjustments had to be negotiated into the contract, but the changes were important enough to go through the effort to get contractual obstacles cleared.

Figure 13 & 14: Data teams. When Ms. Baker and Ms. Blake started their work at Bravo Elementary, the teachers typically went into their classrooms, shut the door, and taught. To improve the achievement of students, the leadership knew they had to have the teachers start to build data. Figure 13 is of a form used in data team meetings to record student results.

The first year, Ms. Baker introduced a common assessment tool she was comfortable with and began to have the teachers get together and discuss the results. The meetings were low stakes at first. The plan

was to have the teachers get comfortable with the reading data, learn to understand the results as part of their instruction, and finally to own all of the students as their responsibility. Mentally, the school's teachers had not been taking responsibility for students who were receiving services in special education or Title 1 reading. The data process helped teachers identify actions they could use to help all students.

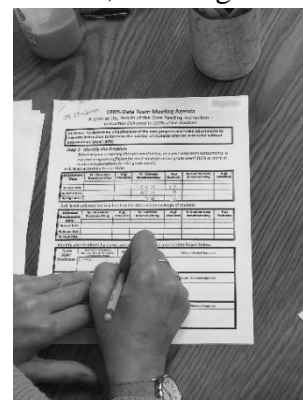


Figure 13: Data Team Form

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Some of the teaching staff were resistant to the data teams. Many had to be forced to attend, but over several years and with some staff turnover, the data team process was refined and gained strength. Part of the power of this model was building the data, but just as importantly, the teachers collaborated with each other and built a team atmosphere. The process of working with each other helped change the staff's mindset about having a closed classroom. They began to see each other as resources and learned to grow together. Figure 14 shows that process in action.



Figure 14: Data Teams

Figure 15: School calendar. Bravo Elementary was on a four-day week for regular classes. On Friday, the teachers served smaller groups of students and in the afternoon they participated in professional development. The small groups started as a program where students could drop in on extra-curricular classes. Students could choose between sewing, cooking, art, and other interest-based seminars. The classes were voluntary and approximately one quarter of the students attended. Over time the teachers became more targeted in their approach. Students who needed more instruction to achieve the week's learning goals were invited to attend a small group intervention session on Friday.

SCHOOL DISTRICT 2017-2018 CALENDAR											
Four Day School Week - 191 Instructional Days - Antelope 4-10-17											
Aug 21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	Sept 1
Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31	Oct 1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31	Nov 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	Dec 1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31	Jan 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	Feb 1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	Mar 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	Apr 1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	May 1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
Jun 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	Jul 1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31	Aug 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
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Figure 16: *The 5 Powers of an Educator*. A district wide initiative was put in place to embrace the teachings of Mawi Asgedom (2014) and his philosophy of the five powers of an educator: (a) Press your turbo button—engage in action, (b) Relate with heart—build relationships to create an inclusive school, (c) Speak with success mindsets—success is action it takes to grow and increase intelligence, (d) Push for skill—train students to increase their skills and embrace frustrations as necessary for growth and (e) Champion voice—develop and nurture each student’s unique voice (Asgedom, 2014).

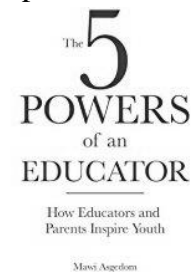


Figure 16: Mawi Asgedom’s Book

Staff members from Bravo Elementary traveled to Chicago to take part in Mawi Asgedom’s workshop. They brought back the idea that each staff member would embrace one of the powers and use the language with students. Teachers defined what each power explicitly looked like in their classroom and used those ideas to engage students. This practice helped ignite the passion of the staff to create a positive environment for students to learn and grow.

Figure 17: Breakthrough coaching. Ms. Baker experienced the shock of moving from a big school to a little school when she started asking staff members who takes care of various functions of the school. The answer “you do” caused her to jump in and try to be everything to everybody, with predictable results. As the second year began, she began to look for a better way to get the work done efficiently.

A fellow administrator recommended that she attend Breakthrough Coaching (Pancoast, 2016). This is a process where administrators and secretaries go through a seminar together to create an organized system of teamwork and time management. With the idea that



Figure 17: Breakthrough Coaching

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managers manage and other people do the work, it helped Ms. Baker set up a system to delegate work to the correct staff members. Her new secretary was empowered to set the schedule and make sure Ms. Baker had designated time in the classrooms and dedicated time in the office. This gave the principal the ability to stop doing crisis management and start creating systems to make the school run more efficiently.

Figure 18: Building an effective workforce. The staff at Bravo Elementary consisted of 22 teachers and 16 other staff members. In the first five years working of at the school, Ms.

Baker had to hire 24 teachers and 16 various staff members.

Figure 18 represents hiring quality staff members.

Bravo Elementary has had to endure the same circumstances as many small rural schools across the State of Oregon. Young teachers and administrators come to small



Figure 18: Building an Effective Workforce

schools to gain experience and then move on to schools in larger towns. Bigger schools typically have higher salaries, more support, and are often closer to where the teachers live. But Bravo had another problem as well: Because the district and school had an unstable administrative staff over a number of years, teachers with shoddy instructional methods had been allowed to stay in the classroom. Both Ms. Baker and Ms. Blake expressed how bad the problem was. One year, attempting to support a couple of dysfunctional teachers took more time than running the rest of the building.

They started to take a different approach to hiring staff. They actively called universities for promising recruits. They went to job fairs and sold their vision for the school. Whenever possible, they tried not to hire a teacher straight out of school. Rather, they looked for teachers with experience that wanted to work with them for the right reasons. The district's

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superintendent told them to hire for talent, not for skill. The idea was that if they could find a teacher who was willing to commit to doing what it takes to teach the students, who had the heart and purpose to help kids, the principal and coach would teach them how to actually do it. The strategy paid off. In the last school year only one teacher had to be hired.

Figure 19: Standards mapping. With such high staff turnover it was difficult to create a stable instructional path for students. When teachers left, they would take all of the curriculum they created with them. The new teachers were not left with many resources with which to work. The district had adopted a couple of curricula in both language arts and math, but neither was deemed adequate enough by the staff to be used systematically. With such a hodgepodge of curriculum, instructional intervention tools were used with half of the students. The core curriculum did not exist in a meaningful way, so students ended up with gaps in their learning.

Figure19: Mapping the State Curriculum Standards

The school improvement coach worked with staff members to map the state standards over a timeline (Figure 19). This allowed teachers who taught the same grade level to coordinate their teaching. Teachers were also able to match their multiple curricular resources to the correct standard. Gaps in the materials were identified and other instructional tools were found to fill those lapses.

Figure 20: Common assessments. For two years, the school district was able to fund an instructional coach at Bravo Elementary. This person had various duties, but one of her most important accomplishments was the development of common assessments which teachers could apply to the math curriculum.

Figure 20: Common Assessments

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Working with the staff and school improvement coach, assessments were built from the curriculum maps. Month by month, standard by standard, grade level by grade level, teachers now had a tool to monitor student progress. Each teacher was required to give the assessments at an agreed-upon time and then put the resulting data into a spreadsheet. The data were displayed in meetings and together teachers would plan interventions to be used to improve student learning. With this information system, teachers finally had a tool to make rational instructional decisions.

Figure 21: Technology. Bravo Elementary invested in technology to augment their instructional capabilities. Each classroom had at least six desktop computers for student use and each teacher had a laptop or desktop or both for their use. The school had been adding carts of Chromebooks for classroom use as well (Figure 21). Affectionately known as computers on wheels or COW, these mobile computer systems could be moved from classroom to classroom to meet student needs. So far, Bravo has acquired a single computing device for every two students they serve.



Figure 21: Cabinet of Chromebooks

The computers were used to create tailored instructional programs for individual student needs. Using a host of educational software, many students spent about 25 minutes a day on a program that was specifically targeted at a personal learning need. While some students were getting a mini-lesson from a teacher on a specific skill they needed to master, others were practicing on a different topic altogether.

Figure 22: Behavior Management. Figure 22 is a screen shot of the behavior management tracking system used at Bravo. It was created by the school improvement coach to help solve a couple of problems. First, during Ms. Baker's first year at the school, the standard

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operating procedure when a student was in trouble was to send that person straight to the office.

There eight chairs were constantly full of children who had

misbehaved. This made it difficult for Ms. Baker to do anything but

process referrals and discipline children. As each day ended, Ms.

Baker found she still had a pile of paperwork to go through. Even

worse, the system did little to actually change student behavior and

many children were losing a significant quantity of instructional time.



Figure 22: Behavior Management Software

The behavior tracking software was built to organize staff responses to misbehavior. Student behavior was defined by levels and assigned a specific response. A minor incident required a teacher response, the next level sent the child to an instructional assistant (IA) who had been trained in behavior modification. A major incident landed a child in the principal's office. The software also sent a communication to all relevant parties about what had happened, thus communication was clear to both the person processing the referral and the person who had written it.

Data were collected in the system so the Positive Behavior Intervention System (PBIS) team could review the information periodically and work to create supports that could modify the problem before it happened. Information on location, time of day, who was writing the referrals, and who was receiving the referrals helped the team create accurate responses.

A high percentage of students who misbehaved qualified for special education services. The behavior data allowed teams to modify Individual Education Plans (IEP) and provide more support to students who needed it. Even a major issue might send the student to work through the problem with an IA instead of sitting in the principal's office.

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Suddenly, the principal had time to focus on improving the instruction in the building. Communication with parents improved and the overall climate of the school began to change.

Figure 23: Proficiency Tracking. Bravo Elementary had been working to help students become proficient in standards and give children ownership of their learning. This goal manifested itself in a number of ways at different grade levels. First of all, students were taught about a growth mindset when it comes to meeting a proficiency target. A student might say, “I am just not proficient yet, but I will be.” The language of learning becomes part of the daily discourse between the students and teachers.

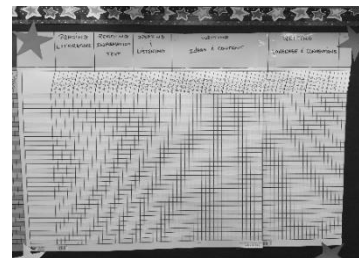


Figure 23: Proficiency Data Chart

Figure 23 is of a chart used in sixth grade where students were tracking their proficiency attainment. Students were able to see what they had learned and what they still need to learn, thus, they achieved a degree of control over their learning. Different grade levels used other means to achieve the same result. For instance in the fifth grade students were to fill out a daily goal of what they were to achieve that day. Other students led their parents through conferences. In kindergarten, students did not track their learning, but they were taught how to problem-solve issues they were experiencing. For instance, if they had a complaint, they first told their problem to the complaint poster. When the child was ready they addressed the complaint to the person who needed to hear it. Students were given many different alternatives to take control of their own learning.

Summary. Ms. Baker believed that one of the most important factors in improving the performance of Bravo Elementary was the commitment of the administrative team in her school district to stay in their positions. It took three years of hard work before the school started to

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experience meaningful change. Even though she did not specifically speak about developing a vision as part of her choices of high leverage actions, it was evident she had one.

Bravo Elementary also had clear and continuous support from the district level. The school district had developed a vision of an individualized education program for all students. The entire school district staff embraced the philosophies of Mawi Asgedom (2014) and sent educators to conferences to reinforce practices that helped teachers and students think about education differently. The district worked to change the teacher contract to create more focused instructional time.

Ms. Baker and Ms. Blake had a considerable number of challenges to improve the performance of students and teachers at Bravo Elementary. They believed that creating data systems to organize individuals into productive teams would help students grow. A clear example of this approach was the student management system that helped bring order from chaos and freed up resources to work for the future instead of just dealing with the crisis of the moment.

The team at Bravo Elementary emphasized, data, teamwork, growth, and consistent action to achieve their dramatic improvement. They worked hard to find the correct people to put the ideas into action. When they had the right people, those teachers and aids worked with purpose, determination, compassion, and skill to improve the performance of their students. It was a difficult journey with many obstacles along the way, but in the end the school improved more than any other Focus or Priority school in the State of Oregon.

Case Study 3: Visual Ethnography of Charlie Elementary School

Charlie Elementary School is located in the largest city in Oregon. It served approximately 435 students grade K-5. It had a diverse student body—41% of its students were

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white, 25% were Hispanic or Latino, 11% were African American, and most of the remaining 23% were multi-racial. The school served an urban population with 69% of the students labeled Economically Disadvantaged and 27% as English learners.

The facility is in good condition. It was remodeled as part of a recent local bond levy. It is a community school located in a neighborhood of working class homes. In the 2004-2005 school year Charlie Elementary had been rated as an Exceptional School. In the three subsequent years, it was rated Strong, and then Satisfactory for a few years after that. The building had gone through a few principals. One of them created some excellent programs and practices, but the next principal did little to improve upon them. The staff remained loyal to the work of the previous principal, but they had become unfocused; each teacher was individually doing their best work according to their own professional judgment. They felt like they were good teachers and enjoyed a productive relationship with the community. One year the school received an international award for reading instruction. Consequently, the staff was shocked when the school was identified as Focus. The school continued to get acceptable test scores throughout the years, but when the State of Oregon changed the measures and added student growth scores into the calculation, student achievement was found to be lacking.

In 2011-2012, the year Charlie Elementary was labeled as a Focus school, it was ranked at the 12th percentile for all elementary schools in Oregon. Three other elementary schools in the school district were also categorized as Focus the same year. In 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 the school had advanced to the 68th percentile. This was an impressive change of 57 percentage points in the rankings. The other three Focus schools in the district also made some improvement, but not at the same magnitude. The next runner-up in the race to improve increased 36 percentage points. All of the schools served a similar student population.

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Ms. Clark was assigned as the principal of Charlie Elementary right before it was designated as a Focus school. This was her first administrative assignment anywhere, and she was hired by the superintendent without any input from the staff at the site. This unusual move angered the teachers and created an atmosphere where there was very little good will toward the new principal. She had been a classroom teacher for 15 years, 14 of which were in Charlie Elementary itself. Ms. Clark had only been out of the building for one year before she came back as its leader. She was quite familiar with the history and staff dynamics of the building. Many staff members were not excited about her as the principal because they still thought of her as a colleague. A few wrote letters to the board in protest. To add to the difficult circumstances, the building was being remodeled when Ms. Clark began her tenure.

Ms. Cleveland became a school improvement coach after a distinguished career as a school administrator both in Oregon and another state. She had worked in school improvement and she was passionate about helping students succeed. Her dissertation focused on transformational leadership, so she brought both practical and academic knowledge to the process of improving Charlie Elementary.

In the opinion of Ms. Clark, the following photographs illustrate the high leverage actions that were taken to improve Charlie Elementary:

Figure 24: Dynamic indicators of basic early literacy skills (DIBELS). Over a few years, the school district had a series of administrators occupy the position of curriculum director. Each brought their own take on the process of improving student learning. Consequently, the district had gone through a series of instruments to assess and track student learning. The result of this variability was that the teachers

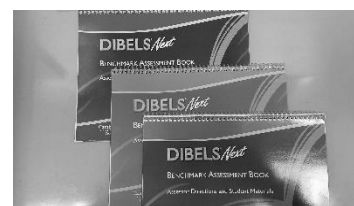


Figure 24: Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS).

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had not gained expertise on any particular tool. They did not have a system in place that helped them to track the growth of students over time and to help the teachers make instructional decisions to improve student outcomes.

Ms. Clark was familiar with Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS). DIBELS is a system of assessments that measures students' reading fluency and comprehension (Baker & Smith, 2001). Students are objectively tested three to four times per year and the results are used to determine a student's proficiency level compared to the expected progress of a student at grade level. The school district had used the assessment system before and as a former kindergarten teacher she had experienced success with it. Ms. Clark was able to successfully lobby the district for adoption of DIBELS and they did so both in her building and across the school district.

Because of the tendency of the district to switch testing instruments every two years, the teachers were skeptical of committing time and energy into really learning and implementing the assessment system. It took Ms. Clark and Ms. Cleveland a while to convince them that the system would be in place for a long period of time and that it could give them information they needed to affect student growth. In the first year of Ms. Clark's tenure as school principal, professional development was mostly focused on getting staff members trained to use DIBELS effectively.

Figure 25: Creating a vision. Ms. Clark described her first year or being a principal as feeling like the William Wallace character from the movie *Braveheart*. Unfortunately, standing up in front of the troops in the cafeteria and trying to rally them to take on the challenge of pulling their school from the bottom 15% was a futile exercise. The problem was that the teachers weren't really inspired to do anything but go back to their classrooms and continue to do what they were doing. It was a pretty tough situation; Ms. Clark had no experience as an administrator, the teachers were upset that they had no input on her selection, and they had to deal with the stigma of being designated as a focus school.



Figure 25: Teachers Participating in Offsite Vision Building Exercise

The next school year, Ms. Clark used school improvement funds to take the staff off site for a visioning process (see Figure 25). She hired a retired school administrator to facilitate the session. Ironically, using the expertise of someone with experience in developing visions actually helped the staff start to accept her as their leader. They were able to come together several years in a row at offsite staff retreats to continually refine their vision. One year it was the simple statement of “Growing and learning together.”

Ms. Clark felt this process was the catalyst that helped staff take the next step forward. Before getting the group together to brainstorm their priorities, the teachers did not have a unified vision, so they did not have collective action. The process of creating the vision helped build the staff into a team but, it was really not until year three that it all jelled together. Ms. Clark reinforces the vision by bringing it out every fall and every spring. She explained to staff members what her expectations for them were around the vision and the actions they could expect from her. The strength and consistency of her non-negotiable standards become the cornerstone of the enacted vision.

Figure 26: Professional development. After the first year of training on how to do DIBELS assessments, the second year was about learning to put the data to good use. The school had hired a new Title 1 reading teacher who understood how to use this information to improve instruction. Even though many staff members were resistant, the DIBELS books came out each professional development session and the teachers began to understand how to read error patterns. Eventually they listed out the students by name. They coded the students' subgroup and asked questions about why some groups of students were achieving more than others. Together, they began to adjust instruction to fill some of the gaps in student learning.



Figure 26: Staff Member Receives an Award for Improving Literacy

This process was a tough sell with many staff members. For a year, the principal and Title 1 teacher would repeat the data hunt at almost every staff development session. While it took a while for teachers to learn how to read the data, it also took time for the instructional staff to be convinced that the process had much value. Each time the data were examined, new information would come to light which caused teachers to adjust something in their instruction. This level of change caused some staff members discomfort and was difficult for some individuals to accept.

The process of analyzing data was supported by professional development on instructional strategies. The school district as a whole used the program Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID). AVID is a college readiness program emphasizing specific instructional methods that help students be successful in higher education (Johnston, 2015). Teachers were taught note-taking strategies, Costa's levels, Socratic Seminars, inquiry, and other methods to deepen students' thinking.

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To reinforce reading specifically, Enhanced Core Reading Instruction (ECRI) was brought in as an intervention strategy. This system was created to work with DIBELS to reinforce phonemic awareness, phonics, word recognition, and other foundational reading skills at the primary level (Smith et al., 2016). The staff received training to correctly implement both the set of intervention materials and a set of teaching routines.

Figure 27: Developing a quality staff. During Ms. Clark’s first year as principal at Charlie Elementary a number of staff members were quite unhappy that she was in the position. Several staff members started to work to undermine the progress that she was making. The Title 1 reading teacher in particular was not in favor of the DIBELS assessment system and the data process.



Figure 27: Charlie Elementary Staff Members

Ironically, the very person who needed to take charge of improving the reading outcomes was actively working against successful implementation of the tool that had been chosen to accomplish it. At the end of the school year, Ms. Clark went to the superintendent and asked to have several people, including the Title 1 teacher, transferred from Charlie to another school. This was accomplished.

A power play like that sent a specific message to the remaining staff members. Ms. Clark candidly admits that not everyone wanted to work in her school, but she was interested in working with those that did. Teachers that had different educational philosophies were encouraged to find positions that were a better fit for them. Ms. Clark labored to put people in the positions that would best serve students under their care. Each spring she met with staff members and had explicit conversations with them about whether they “were in the right seat on the bus.” She felt that to not do so was a disservice to everyone.

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In Ms. Clark's opinion, many school administrators ignore problems instead of taking on the challenge of fixing them. During her very first year as an inexperienced principal she had a teacher on a plan to improve performance. She has had to do a number of these over her tenure at Charlie.

Knowing that using the stick alone to improve performance a school is rarely successful, Ms. Clark focused on building the capacity in her staff as well. She had no desire to try to do everyone's job for them, so she worked to get people trained in ways that would help them improve their performance. Ms. Clark often pursued the strategy of picking out a couple of staff members and getting them highly trained in an area so they could become expert resources for the rest of the staff members.

Ms. Clark did not hire staff who were new to the profession. When searching for new team members, she looked for people who had previous experience or training in another district that she could use at Charlie Elementary. It is typical for beginning teachers in Oregon to work in rural and remote locations to gain experience before moving to urban locations when positions become available. Ms. Clark is aware of this cycle of geographic hiring and consciously used it to her advantage. She was able to hire professionals that matched her educational philosophy and brought added value to the school. Ms. Clark wanted people who had expertise in areas that she did not.

Figure 28: Professional development-mathematics. Even though the school had started their data-focused work around improving reading with data gained from DIBELS, representatives from the State of Oregon wanted the staff to focus on improving math performance. Luckily the local Education Service District (ESD) had hired a team of people who were experts in math instruction. At the end of Ms. Clark's first year, few of the local school districts were utilizing the resource. So she capitalized on the opportunity and devoted part of her school improvement grant to hire substitutes and send her staff members to professional development for math (see Figure 28).



Figure 28: Teachers receiving Professional Development in Math from the ESD

The activities at Charlie were structured so small groups of staff members could go to the ESD for training. In the morning they did intensive professional development on math instruction, and in the afternoon they discussed strategies on how to implement new knowledge. Every teacher on the staff went through three PD sessions in a year for three years. During this time of intense training, many of the staff members begin to engage in lesson study as well. Lesson study is a professional development method that was originally developed in Japan, where teams of teachers create lessons together. As each teacher instructs children with the lesson, the other team members observe the effect on students. Using that data, the teachers improve the lesson for the next iteration (Dudley, 2011). By going into classrooms and watching their peers teach and providing feedback, the teachers were able to help each other grow.

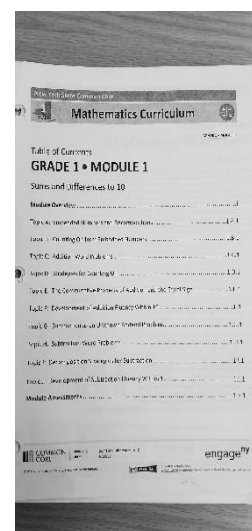
The training focused on having the teachers go deep into the problem. Using the learning target as organizing principle, the teachers spent time digging into the questions of “what are we teaching?” and “why is it important?” One of their turning points was when they started to have students collaboratively partner to solve math problems. This helped students learn how to talk

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about doing the math so they could think deeply about the process. As opposed to just calling on one student at a time, collaboration helped them consistently engage more students at the same time.

Ms. Clark believed the key to the successful improvement of Charlie Elementary was the establishment of effective math instruction. In her opinion, good math instruction influenced how all other subjects were taught at the elementary school level. It both intensified how academic disciplines were taught and systematized the implementation of the instruction.

Figure 29: Engage New York. Before Charlie Elementary had been labeled as a Focus school, the school district had not adopted a mathematics curriculum for the elementary level that matched Oregon's Common Core Standards. Most of the emphasis of previous district curriculum directors had been focused on getting materials for the secondary level. The staff started to look for alternatives and found two curricula that had been created for the Common Core that were free for the cost of printing. They chose *Engage New York*.



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Figure 29: TOC for Engage New York Math Curriculum

The Engage New York mathematics curriculum (see Figure 29) was published as an open source resource. It was complete with lessons, worksheets, and assessments. The assessments could be adapted for gathering data to help track student progress. Finally the staff had a resource they were able to use as a focus for training and planning. A framework could now be developed to improve instruction.

Ms. Cleveland challenged Ms. Clark to develop a math instruction block of 75 minutes. After some tinkering with the schedule, it was instituted. During that timeframe, every teacher and instructional assistant on the staff was actively involved with the instruction of math. Every

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specialist, no matter what their specialty, pushed into the classrooms during that 75 minutes and supported the teaching of math. This practice helped reinforce the attitude that they were all in this challenge together.

Figure 30: Positive school climate. It's a common to hear people say “this school just feels right” when they come to visit Charlie Elementary. The halls are clean (see Figure 30), the place is in good condition, and students are well-managed. Staff members worked intentionally to create the positive culture. Focusing on developing pride in the school and encouraging pride in students for being part of the school helped to create a positive buzz about the place. Teachers took the time to honor the student accomplishments in assemblies. Parents were contacted beforehand, and approximately 80% of them took time off work to support their children when getting recognitions.



Figure 30: Clean and Well Kept School Building

Undergirding all of this was a strong Positive Behavior Intervention System (PBIS). Though this system, student behavior data were collected and analyzed so common expectations could be taught and retaught when circumstances arose. Charlie students were consistently instructed in what they should do and how they should do it.

Figure 31: Supportive community. Figure 31 represents the community that Charlie Elementary School serves. When the school was first labeled as Focus, the parents could have reacted angrily. They could have transferred their children to different schools or they could have accused the teachers of lying to them about how their children were achieving, but they did not. The community remained supportive and people inquired about how they could help to make it better.



Figure 31: Community Attending Back-to-School Night

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The principal was honest with the community members about what was happening. As the school started to go through rapid changes in instructional methods and curriculum, parents were asked to trust the professionals but to question the work as well. Ms. Clark wanted people to know about what was going right and what needed to change. The community support made it easier to innovate and try new ideas.

Back-to-school nights were packed and community members felt welcome at the school. Staff members intentionally cultivated those relationships. As a result, the community was part of the school improvement process as opposed to a barrier to it.

Summary. Charlie became known as an innovative school in its region. Ms. Clark and her core team let go of their allegiance to the past and became willing to try new things to improve student outcomes. The school district superintendent made the comment that Ms. Clark just thinks differently than everyone else and she always seems to be thinking outside of the box. Like using ECRI, the teachers at the school tried an idea first and then their successful practices were adopted by other schools in their district. Successful innovative practices were accomplished by training small groups of teachers in new methods. Once they were implemented, those new methods eventually spread into the rest of the school.

When she had the funding to support it, Ms. Clark always focused on small group professional development. She found it more effective to teach teachers specifically to the circumstances each faced. Instead of having a trainer talk to a whole staff about an instructional strategy, professional development focused on the needs of the third grade team and how a strategy would specifically work at their level.

The use of data systems was paramount in improving student performance at Charlie Elementary. For both instruction and student management, the collection of useful data and the

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teachers' actions in response to that information made the school vital. Data helped break the isolation of the classroom and forge independent teachers into a team.

Both Ms. Cleveland and Ms. Clark believed that the longevity of the principal mattered a great deal in this situation. Principals that stay in a position for a significant period of time are able to create a vision, shape a staff, and structure the schedule to improve student performance. It was the third year in her position before the hard work started to pay off for Ms. Clark. Despite many accomplishments along the way, it took her that long to recognize and respond to the problems and marshal the resources necessary to make the school work well.

Evidence of Transformational Leadership Theory in Case Studies

Transcripts of the interviews of principals, school improvement coaches, and the school improvement documents were coded according to the system that was described in Chapter 3. Tables 2-6 show the results of the codes. It is important to note that the accounting of the codes is only an indication of the frequency each was mentioned in the documents and not a judgment of the importance of the strategy. Some strategies are easier to implement and naturally create a larger impact, thus they may not be discussed as often. But without that strategy, many of the others may not have worked at all. Also, school improvement plans are not blank slates. The plan format asks specific questions the building team must respond to, whether or not they feel that the topic has any importance. Each of the three school improvement coaches spoke about how lopsided the initial school improvement plans developed by the state of Oregon were. In their opinion a large percentage of the plan was about connecting with the community, which for most schools was a small component of the improvement the school needed to make.

Idealized influence. Elements of Idealized Influence were the most noted aspects of the four parts of Transformation Leadership Theory (see Table 2). This is understandable if for no

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other reason that the structure of the interviews asked principals to discuss the high performance strategies they undertook to improve their school. But even with that being said, it was evident in each case study that the school started out in trouble because of an ineffective leader and a poor organizational strategy. Each principal considered it their job to organize the school to promote student achievement first and foremost.

Both Mr. Andrews' and Ms. Baker's first steps were to reorganize the daily or weekly schedule to emphasize large blocks of instructional time. Ms. Clark eventually created a 75-minute math block and made sure that every staff member was teaching math during this sacred time period. In this way, both the temporal and behavioral aspects of the school were controlled by the leader.

Table 2

Indicators of Idealized Influence (II) in Interviews and Documents

Indicators of II	Alpha Elementary			Bravo Elementary			Charlie Elementary			Total
	Principal	Coach	SIP	Principal	Coach	SIP	Principal	Coach	SIP	
Leader initiated	11	18	7	12	7	9	25	16	2	107
Dispersed among staff	11	3	12	1	2	11	1	9	5	55
Behavior management	2	1		4	1	7				15
Special education				1		4		2		7
Structural change - calendar/schedule/contract	7	2	1	22		5	6	2		45
Staff reassignment	4	2					2	6		14
Agreed upon group action	20	9	6					2		37
Hiring highly qualified teachers		1	2	6	5	4	5	2	2	27
Total idealized influence										307

To varying degrees each principal worked to develop leadership teams. Mr. Andrews made the structure a core part of the school improvement strategy, while Ms. Baker and Ms. Clark developed smaller ones that mostly included the building specialists. In each case, the planned dispersed leadership was essential to moving the staff to new behavior patterns.

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In every school, improving the school was about building the staff into a functional team. Teachers that wanted to close their door and just teach with their own methods were not welcome. No matter how effective or experienced the teacher was, this independent attitude made him or her unable to adapt to children with changing needs. Each principal in this study used their power to hire, fire, evaluate, and reassign staff to get people “on the right seat on the bus.” Ms. Clark related a story about how she reassigned a staff member from a higher grade level down to a position at the primary level. The teacher went kicking and screaming, but at the end of the year thanked the principal for putting her in a position in which she was now excelling. Mr. Andrews used his leadership team and peer observations to force change. Ms. Baker found it necessary to replace half her staff to get the right people. In every case, each principal was relentless and focused about getting the right teachers and staff members to work as a team.

An unmistakable quality of each principal was the willingness to act to solve problems and promote student achievement. None of these folks were willing to wait and see if issues would work themselves out—each was an activist for their school. When each school improvement coach was asked what made the difference in improving the school, each attributed the progress to the leadership skills of the principal.

Inspirational motivation. The coding process did not numerically identify Inspirational Motivation as a significant factor in the process of improving the school (see Table 3). Yet, each principal used vision-building as a purposeful strategy in creating team cohesion and standardizing staff behavioral norms. Ms. Clark used the proven business technique of getting her staff away from their daily concerns and led them through group process exercises to create a collective vision.

Mr. Andrews used his leadership team to create documents that promoted the vision. Many of their philosophical statements were rooted in the studies of John Hattie (Hattie, 2009) and research based instructional best practice. The work of the leadership team and the peer observational process used those documents to communicate and reinforce the vision of the school.

The vision for Ms. Baker's school was created by the school district. The school believed in creating an individualized educational path for students at the secondary level and they wanted a similar system at the elementary level. This philosophy was reinforced by the ideas of Mawi Asgedom (2014) and the innovative four-day calendar operated by the school district. Ms. Baker did not need to create a vision—she only needed to reinforce the one given to her.

Table 3

Indicators of Inspirational Motivation (IM) in Interviews and Documents

Indicators of IM	Alpha Elementary			Bravo Elementary			Charlie Elementary			Total
	Principal	Coach	SIP	Principal	Coach	SIP	Principal	Coach	SIP	
Vision created and diffused by leader	1	1		2		1	6	5	1	17
Vision created and diffused by group	14	5	3	5		1	6	2		36
Vision created and upheld by community							3			3
Total inspirational motivation										56

Intellectual stimulation. Intellectual Stimulation was used as a focused strategy by each building principal. In every interview, each principal commented on how upon their arrival each staff member was teaching according to their best professional judgement. This made instruction uneven from classroom to classroom and left many staff members without the knowledge and skills to adapt to changing circumstances. Each one of the principals used data collection and the

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data team process to break down the walls of individual practice and create a team response to the challenges they faced. For both student behavior and student achievement, the systems that measured the impact of adult behavior on student behavior made the difference. Armed with that knowledge, staff members were able to act with confidence to improve student outcomes. The coding process highlighted the major professional development efforts that went into improving the schools (see Table 4).

Table 4

Indicators of Intellectual Stimulation (IS) in Interviews and Documents

Indicators of IS	Alpha Elementary			Bravo Elementary			Charlie Elementary			Total
	Principal	Coach	SIP	Principal	Coach	SIP	Principal	Coach	SIP	
Professional development	18	10	20	22	6	15	16	6	12	125
Data teams/PLC	11	7	14	8	5	17	8	9	11	90
Behavior management			1	1	5	5		1	1	14
Diversity			2			2	1			5
Technology				3						3
Total intellectual stimulation										237

Other types of professional development were used as well. At Charlie Elementary, the whole staff engaged in intense training in instructional best practice mathematics for three years. The new knowledge was reinforced through a lesson study process that gave teachers timely feedback on their practice. At Alpha Elementary, the principal used the peer observational process to let the whole school know their progression in implementing Hattie's work (Hattie, 2009) through his weekly blog. He then took that information to create a professional development session within a few weeks. At Bravo Elementary, Ms. Baker had to start at the ground floor using Friday in-service time to build curriculum maps, then common assessment creation, and the implementation of new curriculum.

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In all school districts a variety of training occurs on a continual basis. Typically, distinct trainings are on the topics of diversity, technology, and behavior management. It was clear to me that most of the effective work in those areas were covered in the data team process. Instead of a sensitivity training on equity, the teachers looked at groups of students and asked the questions, “Why are these students behind?” and “How do we change our work to improve their performance?” Behavior management was mostly handled through data teams called Positive Behavior Intervention Systems (PBIS). The process was the same; the PBIS team would ask “Why are students misbehaving?” and “What can we do to improve their behavior?”

Individualized consideration. Individualized consideration was the area of TLT that was least commented on by all sources of information. Most of the influence used by principals to motivate their staff was in the areas of structure and whole group training. Yet, for several principals the strategic use of developing expertise in an individual or small group was a clear tactic to create change in the school.

Ms. Clark was especially adept at this technique. She told me that her preference was to always use small group training. She would send people to gain expertise in a subject and then work to implement it successfully. Soon, other teachers would inquire about the activity and want to learn about it. The teachers generally thought the call for new practice was their idea, when in reality she had been setting up the situation for months.

Ms. Baker runs a small school in a low-resourced poor rural school district. Developing capacity in individual staff members was a matter of survival. Her instructional coach came from within her staff and other staff members were trained to work with misbehaving students. This freed the principal up to focus more of her time on school improvement activities.

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At Alpha Elementary, members of the leadership team were regularly sent to professional development workshops so they could increase their expertise. These staff members then had the responsibility to share their knowledge with the rest of the faculty.

Table 5

Indicators of Intellectual Stimulation (IS) in Interviews and Documents

Indicators of IS	Alpha Elementary			Bravo Elementary			Charlie Elementary			Total
	Principal	Coach	SIP	Principal	Coach	SIP	Principal	Coach	SIP	
Leadership Development						1				1
Specialization						2		2		4
Experimentation				1				2		3
Professional Development	1			2	1	1		3		8
Total Individualized Consideration										16

Student instructional strategies at each school began to mirror the development of the staff. At each school, experiments were being run that require students to account for their own learning.

Other codes. There are a number of leadership activities that do not fit well into transformational leadership theory (see Table 6). Few leaders do not have an authority to whom they answer. Whether it is a person with a higher position in the organization or a board of directors, most leaders are subordinate to someone else. Every principal has a director or a superintendent who exercises some amount of control over their operations. That leader has his or her own vision for what should be happening in school. They also control resources, policies, and the power to evaluate over elements of the school. Consequently, part of the process of improving a school is working in harmony with that authority so that goals and procedures align.

At Charlie Elementary it was necessary for Ms. Clark to convince the whole school district to move to the DIBELS system so she could get the resources she needed to create a

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functional data system at her school. Of course, this meant that every other principal in the district could have been forced into using a system in which they were not invested. Conversely, the district was considering adopting a new math curriculum that the staff at Charlie Elementary did not want. At Bravo Elementary, the school calendar and school vision were clearly the results of district vision.

Each school had to create a school improvement plan with requirements that were dictated from the State of Oregon. Some of the requirements of the plan may have forced principals to engage in activities they found unnecessary to improve their school.

Table 6

Indicators in Interviews and Documents that did not Directly Correspond to TLT

Indicators not in TLT	Alpha Elementary			Bravo Elementary			Charlie Elementary			Total
	Principal	Coach	SIP	Principal	Coach	SIP	Principal	Coach	SIP	
District PD	3		2			2				7
District Vision Building				1						1
District Leadership Development	1			2		1	1	1		6
District Support Curriculum Implementation		2					2	6		10
Community Connection	1		7			3	5	3		19
			11		4	6		1	20	42
Total Other Codes										85

Conclusion. Each school researched in this study was different from the others. Two were in larger school districts. One was urban, one was rural, and one was located in a medium-sized community. Two were ethnically diverse. Two schools had rebuilt facilities and one was located in a building that is moving beyond its useful life. One school had an experienced administrator and two were working through their first principal job. But despite their differences, all schools were performing poorly before the process and ended up as solid educational institutions.

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Each principal made a commitment to stay in the position until the job was done and each had to persevere through a number of challenges to successfully come out the other side. All of those leaders knew their job was not yet complete, and never will be. Even through their schools are working well, new problems will emerge. Regulations change, new curricular programs are adopted, and difficult students suddenly show up three weeks after school has started. These principals were successful because they built learning organizations that could adapt and grow to changing circumstances.

Chapter 5: Using Transformational Leadership Theory to Create an Innovative School

Schools are complicated, open organizations. Unlike many businesses, the ability to control the consistency of the raw materials coming into the system is impossible. Students enter from all sorts of backgrounds with an infinite variety of needs. The ability to develop real time data to control the behavior of people working in the system is limited and difficult at best (Hazzan & Zelig, 2016). Teachers traditionally work independently and use their professional judgement to assess student needs and determine the goals of students learning. As Mr. Andrews, Ms. Baker, and Ms. Clark experienced, independent professional judgement may not be enough when the needs of the children change. As the economic and demographic circumstances of students continue to evolve in the United States, schools will need to continue to become more adaptable and innovative to help our students succeed (Clemmit, 2011).

Transformational leadership theory (TLT) provides a broad framework that can be used to analyze the actions of a leader who successfully creates innovation. These four themes are also useful as a general planning guide for the leader who needs to create change in a school. However, in both cases, the details of what it takes to move the work forward needs to be deeply understood.

Each principal profiled in the case studies solved the problems of low student achievement, but through different means. However, they had enough commonalties in their work to begin to point toward a set of actions that could be useful guidance for educational leaders who need their schools to respond to changing conditions. This guidance is better expressed not as set of directions that a principal must follow, but as a set of interconnected questions that a leader must ask to create the capacity for their organization to innovate (see

Appendix E). These questions need not be asked and answered in sequence, nor should they be only considered once. The school environment is always in flux; thus a person who chooses to lead one needs to be consistently growing, learning, and adapting.

Idealized Influence

While Idealized Influence is defined in the literature as charisma, or the ability to appeal to the emotions from the leader's followers (Kirby et al., 1992), it was clear from the case studies that this definition is a bit too romantic. Effective leaders take actions, either by themselves or through a team of people, which create systems to achieve defined goals. The numbers of ways that actions are taken and the reasons those actions are taken vary considerably, but idealized influence is the will and ability of the leader to act and to transmit that will through members of the organization. Charisma helps that process, but by itself it is less effective than when a leader focuses on creating efficient systems. In order to create idealized influence, a principal must ask herself a series of questions about her own behavior that will help create effective systems.

The first question leaders must ask as they consider the process of creating an innovative organization is: *How much time am I willing to devote to improving the school that I am leading?* Each of the three principals interviewed put in two to three years of hard work before they started to realize significant improvement. In some instances, it was five years before the changes started to become an established part of the system. All three principals commented on their belief that their long-term commitment to the organization was a significant factor in the success of their work. Hazzan (2016) claimed that one reason innovations tend to fail in schools is that they tend to get abandoned after a year with no results. Clearly, consistency counts when creating change in schools.

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The second question a principal must ask is: *How will I use the structures I control to organize the school so students can achieve maximum growth?* Each of the three leaders studied made good use of the organizing platforms that rule the school day. They all adjusted schedules to create more focused instructional time. They worked with professional development schedules to reinforce adult learning. They created leadership teams to help develop and promote visions. The idealized influence executed here was to use time and resources as a means of achieving specific goals. The leader used the control of the structural systems in the school as active tools to improve the learning of both staff and students. Leithwood and Jantzi (2005) reorganized TLT into three groups of strategies; one was redesigning the organization. Any leader who attempts to create change should start by analyzing the existing organizing frameworks to determine if they can be made to help promote the innovation goal.

Behavior management systems clearly fall into this category. For many staff members, the management of the students is the administration's primary job. This outdated idea is not useful when it comes to improving a school. If the students behavior is not within a manageable parameter, the principal will not be able to do anything but deal with unruly children. When students are out of control, staff members are unable to effectively deliver instruction, and administrators are rarely able to give effective feedback. In this area, the leader who displays idealized influence uses the power over structural systems to create an active student management system. An effective leader does not wait for students to get off-task and react to their behavior. Rather, he creates a system that uses data to stop the misbehavior before it starts.

The next question for the leader to consider is: *Do I have the right staff members in the correct positions to create an innovative organization?* Each of the three leaders interviewed worked diligently to find or reassign staff to positions that would most benefit the students under

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their care. In his influential book *Good to Great*, researcher and author Jim Collins (2001) famously said that leaders should focus on the “who rather than what” (Collins, 2001, p. 42). He also coined the commonly heard phrase, “If we get the right people on the bus, the right people in the right seats, the wrong people off of the bus, then we will figure out how to take it someplace great.” (Collins, 2001, p. 41). Each of our leaders professed to speak at length about how not every staff member wanted to work for them. A leader should not take that fact personally. Ms. Clark explicitly told staff members, “Not everyone is a fit for me, and I am okay with that...you guys are amazing professionals.” Helping staff members into new positions may not be an assessment of the teacher’s instructional skill. Rather, it may be an expression on whether or not the individual cares to work as a member of the team. Clearly, a leader who is actively working to build a team to accomplish student achievement goals is executing a focused leadership strategy.

Given the difficulty of dismissing a teacher from a position in most school districts (Darden, 2017), the leader must focus on creating team-based systems that encourage professional collaboration. As Mr. Anderson and Ms. Baker found, teachers who are unwilling to work as members of a team naturally start to move themselves to other employment opportunities. Staff members who work to undermine the process become insubordinate. Insubordinate staff members are considerably easier to move to another employment opportunities than ones who are just ineffective instructors. Ms. Clark experienced that situation. Creating an expectation and method of a collaborative culture is a powerful expression of idealized influence.

How will I provide each member of my staff with effective feedback and supervision?

Edward Deming (1981) believed that one of the 14 points to improve production in a company

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was to improve supervision. School administrators have traditionally had a difficult time giving teachers effective feedback that helps to improve their practice. For instance, if an administrator drops in for a quick observation they may only observe a snapshot of instruction that has little context. On the other extreme, a scheduled formal observed lesson might be elaborately prepared by the teacher and be dramatically better than normal daily instruction. Neither technique may allow an administrator to provide feedback that is both specific and consistent enough for a teacher to use to improve their methods. What is more, the evaluative structure creates a relationship between the teacher and the observer that could be antagonistic as opposed to developing instructive partners.

Mr. Andrews overcame this difficulty with his establishment of a peer observation model. By teaming with a cross section of his staff he was able to provide all of the teachers with a weekly check-in of practices being used in the building. Ms. Clark used lesson study to further the implementation of math instructional practices. The lesson study process gave teachers the ability to use their peers to improve their work in a non-evaluative environment.

Each of the three principals profiled used common assessments and data teams to create feedback systems that were wholly focused on student data. In each building, teachers looked at the results students were producing and discussed what to do to improve performance. In some cases, teachers whose students seemed to be outperforming their peers were able to show their fellow teachers their successful techniques.

Both of the practices of peer observations and data teams helped overcome the problems that Hazzan (2016) claims to cause innovations to fail in schools. Each method attempts to establish a system of control that gives teachers consistent reinforcement on the implementation of the innovation. Both practices are focused on the short term results of the teacher's work. This

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helps staff members take control of the innovation and create the results that can drive the work forward instead of being discouraged by inadequate measured yearly progress, typically assessed in the form of a standardized test or course passage rates.

There are few indicators of idealized influence that are more dominant than feedback and data models. Structured correctly and reinforced consistently, these systems become the backbone of the operations of the school. The leader's intentions and desires are clearly communicated through these practices.

How will I distribute leadership tasks to fulfill the goals of the school? The question is not whether an administrator should distribute leadership roles, but is a question of how it is best accomplished. Fullan (2002) described how leadership roles must be created at every level of the organization and how changes could not be sustained without distributed leadership. One of the advantages of a school is that its employees are highly educated individuals, and many have a number of years of practical experience working with children and parents. Most professionals are also ambitious and ready for new challenges in the profession.

All of the principals in this study created or recreated some form of a leadership team. Most were made of specialists and school improvement coaches. Only Mr. Andrews specifically identified his leadership team as one of his high leverage strategies to improve his school, using it as the backbone of his school improvement process. Functioning as an overarching data team, a visioning team, and as a place to train staff members to become experts in instructional technique, he was able to use the group as a way to transmit his influence to all aspects of the school operations.

Inspirational Motivation

Inspirational Motivation is described in the literature as the vision of the organization. Each of the leaders profiled used vision as a tool to improve the operation of the school. Some used literature that helped create a common set of expectations for staff members. Others went through a formal visioning process to establish a common set of goals. All used language taken from the process to push the students forward.

Many leadership writers make the establishment of vision an essential aspect of the management process. For example, Deming (1981) said that leaders need to create consistency of purpose with their team members. Everyone needed to learn the philosophy of the organization and the leadership should drive out the fear of making mistakes. Fullan (2002) said that the staff must understand the moral purpose of their work and must develop a coherence in their mission. A shared vision is one of Senge's (2012) five disciplines, and one of the chief findings of leadership behavior by Leithwood and Jantzi (1999).

Given the importance of the establishment of a coherent vision for a school, a leader must ask several more questions: *How will a vision be created to focus the efforts of the staff members? How will that vision be communicated to all stakeholders?* The traditional method is to get a representative sample of the stakeholders in a room and over a series of meetings create a vision statement, a mission statement, and perhaps a motto, and then develop accompanying documentation. Participants in the process take the time to discuss philosophy and deeply held beliefs about the purpose of the organization. Group process techniques are employed so every voice is heard. The resulting documentation is distributed to members of the school and community. Parts of the vision may be painted on the wall or put on letterhead. It is a time-

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honored process that many organizations use to great effect. This is precisely what Ms. Clark did in her school, and it worked well for her staff and her students.

Ms. Clark took the idea a few steps farther and made the vision real in her school. Each fall, the whole staff went through the visioning process to refine the ideas a little better. Each time the words became a little clearer and had a little more meaning. She brought out the vision again each spring for the staff to review and make sure they were on track to accomplish the mission. In each evaluation session, she asked staff members about what they were specifically doing to accomplish the mission. Most importantly, she developed her administrative non-negotiables to be anchored firmly in the vision statement.

Administrative non-negotiables are the metaphorical lines in the sand that administrators will not cross. The idea is that when push comes to shove, these are issues administrators cannot relinquish. An example of a non-negotiable may be that every child gets the same consequence for a specific mistake, no matter who the student's parents are. Another may be that during a scheduled math instruction time, no one can be doing anything but math. Some administrators keep these value statements in the back of their minds, while others publish them so staff members know exactly what the principal's answer will be before they ask the question.

Ms. Baker and Mr. Andrews used educational literature as a philosophical base to create and communicate the vision of the school. Ms. Baker's school district embraced the teachings of Mawi Asgedom and his five powers of an educator (Asgedom, 2014). They requested staff members each adopt one of the powers and start to use the language with students. Their vision helped create actions that were used for staff to create a positive environment for students to learn and grow.

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Mr. Andrews used *Visible Learning* by John Hattie (Hattie, 2009) as the bible of his school improvement work. From the information gained as a result of this research, his leadership team created the Four Pillars of Alpha Elementary. The leadership team also went through a vision creation process and produced a mission statement, but the Four Pillars became the actionable part of the documents. These statements of behavior became the non-negotiables of the school. This is what every teacher was expected to do at all times. The criteria was used by peer observers and discussed in the leadership team to determine the progress and training needs of the school.

The moral purpose of any organization is its guiding light. It is simultaneously the easiest thing for a leader to create and the most difficult thing for a leader to turn into action. Focusing the belief system of a group of people takes time and reinforcement. Creating real coordinated action from those common beliefs is challenging. What often starts as inspiring words on a document that no one reads, can become a driving force for the actions that everyone must take.

Intellectual Stimulation

When I first started teaching high school, I had the good luck to be hired into a great organization with a talented staff and a wonderful principal. Despite that, professional development was not overly effective. Each year we were given a yearly in-service the week before school started on whatever the latest educational fad happened to be. Some of us diligently attempted to implement the new innovation. I remember the year the concept of multiple intelligences was introduced. My teaching partner and I used the theory to create grouping strategies for cooperative learning. We assessed the children for different intelligences and then placed them into teams so each could benefit from the perspective of someone with a different set of strengths. Despite my willingness to adjust my instruction to attempt to utilize

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new ideas, no administrator ever came by to see if I was doing so. As a staff, we did not review our progress with the new ideas at a staff meeting in an attempt to try and perfect the work. After a couple of months of experimentation, I effectively abandoned the ideas I was trying to implement because I did not see any real improvement to learning. Worse, I really did not know what specific problem the innovation was trying to solve, other than that students needed to learn more efficiently.

Year after year this happened. My principal brought us new ideas, a few staff members would try them, and by winter break it was mostly abandoned. Sadly, my experience is not unusual and is a typical cycle experienced by many teachers. I suspect this is the source of Hazzan's (2016) observations about school's lack of control with the implementation of innovation.

All three principals reviewed in this study overcame problematic aspects of professional development by establishing systems that created a more scientific and collaborative model of training. Deming insisted that training for company members must be job-embedded (Evans et al., 2012). Mr. Andrews, Ms. Baker, and Ms. Clark created such systems.

To do so, the principals needed to answer several questions: The first was: *How will the professional development needs of the staff be determined?* Ironically, these schools had the advantage of poor results to help with that question. The statewide assessment data clearly indicated where the weaknesses in student learning existed in each school. Most schools have data points that are collected and should be used to understand the results of their collective work. Clear and abundant research now exists to help teachers understand what to do to solve the problems they encounter, but getting that knowledge to the teaching staff and making it actionable is another problem altogether.

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This leads us to the next question: *How will effective training occur to meet those professional development needs?* The principals at Alpha, Bravo, and Charlie Elementary Schools all solved this problem by making good use of their school improvement grants to create time periods for teachers to get regular and focused training in specific methods to solve specific problems. They created feedback systems through peer observations and data teams. All of this reinforced the innovation that was being attempted and gave teachers the chance to discuss the attempted technique with each other and adjust their practice to improve the results with students.

Each of the three schools examined were focused on student data, and each used data to improve the results of student achievement. This begs the question: *How will an effective data system be created?* The studied schools used three basic methods. First, each used a commercial product called the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS). This is a research proven premade set of assessment tools and database software. The students take tests at predetermined intervals and the information is fed into a computer. The teachers are then given detailed information about how the students are learning.

The second method was teachers mapping out their curriculum according to the state standards and then creating common assessments. The common assessments were given at predetermined times, and the data were collected to see how students were progressing on the standards. The data were collected and stored in data bases or displayed on data walls.

The final method was the collection of discipline data. For the most part, this was collected from regular reports of student misbehavior. These reports were catalogued by type, location, and time of incident. Of course, this means teachers have to be trained so they each report similar incidents with similar terms and learn to record this data in a standard format.

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Once the data is collected, *how will staff members use the data to create action?* Each school studied credited their work in data teams as one of the high-leverage strategies used to improve student achievement. In most cases, the data team format became the backbone of how the school operated. Each developed a protocol where they looked at data and considered the strengths and weaknesses of their instructional approach. Sometimes the data helped teachers share their technique. At other times, it motivated them to find other resources. Two of the three schools brought in Enhanced Core Reading Instruction (ECRI) tools to fill instructional holes not being covered adequately with the core reading materials. Two schools found that the data led them to start pre-teaching students who needed extra help in understanding the vocabulary of upcoming lessons. In each case the data helped teachers reconsider their approach and find other ways to meet the needs of their students.

The structure of schools and the nature of the teaching profession tend to isolate people in their classrooms. Yet, in each of our schools, it was crucial for the staff to work together to improve the organization. This poses the question for a school administrator: *How will the staff members work together as a team?* Clearly the data team process begins to break down the walls of the classroom.

Data teams that are specifically targeted at student management are a good example of this. Student data that indicates problems in instruction, curriculum, discipline, or culture spanning multiple classrooms demand a coordinated response. That coordinated response requires a group of individual teachers to relinquish some individual control of their own classroom and work as a member of the whole school team. Most administrators find that it takes significant effort to change the perspective of a teaching staff in this regard.

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In order for discipline to improve for some students, it must be improved for all children. The climate and culture of the school must be improved. Counterintuitively, the process is really about training all adults to react to student behavior the same way. Adults must train students about correct behavior in a uniform manner and must react to student misbehavior in a similar fashion to create a productive environment. Clear data helps teachers to use teamwork to modify their own approach to working with students.

Individualized Consideration

Most teachers are professionals who take pride in their work. They have devoted themselves to years of expensive training to effectively help students succeed. Because of that, teaching tends to be a profoundly personal experience. Often the teacher giving the instruction to students is standing alone in front of a group of indifferent children. Both the curriculum and the lesson that derive from it may have been written by the instructor. The teacher probably created the student assessment, and will most likely grade it as well. The personal ownership that goes into the work creates people that can become defensive when student assessment results are low. Often it is clear in the teacher's mind that the students did not work diligently to learn the material carefully created for them. This is a significant barrier to motivating teachers to change their instruction to meet student needs.

Fortunately, most teachers desire to improve and grow in their craft. Providing individual training is a good practice to improve the overall capacity of a staff member. It is also an effective way to help teachers give up the past and start working to create a better future.

Both Mr. Andrews and Ms. Clark used individual or small group training as a way to seed the implementation of larger school-wide initiatives they wanted to bring to their school. A transformational school leader should ask herself: *How will the training of individuals be used to*

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move student achievement goals forward? As the capacity of an individual staff member improves, the overall capacity of the whole staff increases.

A simple analogy for this phenomenon is the creation of a strong athletic team. Everyone on the team is conditioned together and learns to play as a team. Yet each player is also trained specifically for their role as well. As each athlete gains expertise in their position, the strength of the whole team is improved.

How do I encourage individuals to take instructional risks? Doing something new can feel risky to some teachers. One of Deming's 14 strategies (Deming, 1981) was to drive out fear. By eliminating the fear of not having enough knowledge or making a mistake, a leader can help create an innovative environment (Evans et al., 2012). Deming believed that a relentless focus on improving the data would achieve this goal.

Another approach for the principal is to find teachers in the school who are naturally innovate and support their work. Some teachers just need to invent and attempt new educational approaches in their classrooms. A wise principal will encourage that activity and create "sponsored entrepreneurs" (Eyal & Yosef-Hassidim, 2012, p. 239). Working with innovative staff members, principals work to encourage changes that will push the students and school forward and discourage efforts that are not achieving results. Positive changes become part of the school's system; unsuccessful efforts are pruned. Active management of this innovative energy will develop happy staff members and a school with positive energy, too.

Other Considerations

Despite the strength of transformational leadership theory for helping a school leader organize their work in school, it does not appear to describe the work that needs to exist outside the building. Each of the three principals profiled in this study all were influenced by factors that

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were outside of their control. Each had to comply with mandates from the department of education, and each had a school improvement coach. Ms. Baker was in a small school district and had an elevated level of district influence on her operations. Ms. Clark used the local educational service district to provide professional development for her staff. Mr. Andrews actually had a district director running his school before he was able to come in and take over. A principal needs to consider how to take advantage of these elements when working to create successful innovation in their school. I suggest spending some time considering the following questions: *How will the school's relationship with the school district be defined? How will the school develop a positive relationship with the community it serves? How will the school develop a positive relationship with the larger educational community, e.g., State level departments of education, educational non-profits, universities, etc.?*

Each specific question is really a subset of the general question: *How will the school get the resources it needs to move student achievement forward?* The relationship that a school leader develops with different stakeholder groups creates potential areas of partnerships and direct funding. Most schools do not have the resources or expertise to create sustainable innovation or change without developing those positive relationships.

Using Visual Ethnography

As a research technique, visual ethnography has considerable advantages. I found that by sending the assignment to the research participants in advance and giving them the task of taking and selecting the images, it gave the participants time to really consider the questions. Each person was able to take the time to identify high leverage strategies that worked to improve their school. This gave each principal a bigger role in the project than just being the interviewee, they were also part of the research. Using the photographs allowed me, the researcher, to transcend

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time and place. I was not bound to my direct observations of events that happened in the moment, nor was I left guessing about events that happened behind closed doors. The images created a window into activities that had happened over a number of years.

I used the photographs themselves as question prompts, so each principal knew in advance what I was going to ask them. Each person had the opportunity to tell the story from their point of view without subconsciously adjusting their answer to tell me what they thought I wanted to hear. The photographs as artifacts made the interviews easy, productive, and collaborative.

The technique is not without negative aspects. The principal interviews were triangulated with interviews of school improvement coaches that did not use visual ethnography, but even so the story I heard was the story that each principal wanted to tell me. I did not observe operations or come back and ask the interviewee about a detail I thought was significant, but the principal had not mentioned in the interview. This made it difficult to find an idea or theme that was not shaped by the principal's story.

The other challenging aspect of this method is that because the person creating and selecting the photographs is a greater part of the process, I was dependent on other people's schedules. Each of the professionals involved in this project, including myself, were extremely busy people. Asking folks to take time out of their day to do the work was a great deal to require, and it took a little badgering on my part to get their part done. Thankfully, I was interviewing people on what went right in their schools and the good work they had done. It would be harder to get that much willing participation if I were to ask them about what went wrong.

Recommendations for Further Research

I choose these three schools because the data base that I acquired from Education Northwest clearly indicated that each had advanced at least 50 percentiles on the scale relative to other schools in Oregon. Because I was looking at change and not overall accomplishment, none of these institutions were performing in the top ten percent of Oregon schools. It would be interesting to look at such schools to see if transformational leadership theory (TLT) describes the actions of the leaders in those buildings, or if another leadership model is more accurate. It would also be fascinating to take a look at the schools that advanced the least in the school improvement process. Does TLT describe the leaders work, but without the required results? Can TLT help identify what the leader did not do to create innovation in the school?

The three participant schools in this research were all elementary level schools. I had originally wanted to use middle schools in the study, but no schools in the database met my research selection criteria. Not a single middle school that had been identified as Priority or Focus advanced the required amount. On the other hand, several middle schools that were not identified as Focus or Priority had advanced at least 50 percentile points. This includes, incidentally, the middle school in my school district that advanced from the 29th percentile to the 91st in the same time period as the subject schools. These facts point to several interesting ideas for further research: First, why and how did several middle schools without school improvement coaches and school improvement grants advance their work? Why did schools with those advantages not dramatically improve? Does TLT describe the work that leaders did in both groups?

High schools are much more complicated organizations than elementary schools. Because the teachers teach specific subjects like art, science, and metal shop, they tend to be

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more fragmented as a group. High school athletics and teen drama distract from the business of improving academic achievement. The principals in this study focused on data and teamwork to create innovation. Can TLT describe the innovative work that happens in high schools? Can TLT help administrators build functioning teams at the high school level? Is another model, perhaps Deming's, more appropriate to apply to high schools?

I have posed 18 questions that an administrator should consider as he or she plans to build an innovative organization (see Appendix E). These questions are meant to act as scaffolding for school administrators as they consider the practical problems of using TLT as a guide for creating change. Do these questions provide useful guidance when TLT is applied in other locations other than the ones I have examined? Are there questions that provide better guidance?

Conclusion

Through this research process, I have come to see that creating innovation in a school is about establishing clear goals, creating data systems to measure the progress on achieving those goals, and developing a well-functioning team to focus their efforts on achieving the goals.

Some people believe that innovation must come from the lone inventor or the entrepreneur who risks everything to create their product. In my opinion, that point of view is short sighted and a little lazy. It cedes the responsibility of improvement to someone else, some other person with more talent or a different background to make the changes needed. The achievement of all children is the responsibility of all educators. It is our job to work together and find a way to help our students become more accomplished than the teachers that teach them.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Question Prompts for School Improvement Coach Interviews

These questions will be referenced when interviewing participants. I will use approximately 8 to 12 of them per interview depending on what information is volunteered during the conversation.

- 1) Why did you choose to take on the challenge of improving a school that had been rated in the lowest 15% of all schools in the state?
- 2) What was the state of the school when it was identified as Priority or Focus?
- 3) How did the staff respond to being rated low?
- 4) Was an initial assessment process conducted on the school? What was the method of the evaluation?
- 5) What were the school's strengths and weaknesses?
- 6) How long did it take to create an improvement plan for the school? What did the planning process look like?
- 7) What were the major elements of the plan? Was the plan developed using any educational theories?
- 8) Was any research used to help create the plan? What was it?
- 9) What was the first step you took to improve the school? Why that step?
- 10) How did the staff respond to that action?
- 11) Did the staff jump on board the improvement plan right away? Were some staff members resistant? What actions were taken to mitigate the resistance?
- 12) What was the second step taken? Why?

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- 13) How long did it take to see some improvement? How did you know it was happening?
- 14) How long did it take to you to feel like the improvement process was fully implemented?
What made you think so?
- 15) How did parents and/or community members react to the changes that were implemented?
- 16) Did any staff members really step up to help with the improvement process? Please describe their actions?
- 17) What were the greatest obstacles to improving the school?
- 18) What challenges became opportunities?
- 19) How do you measure school success besides test scores?
- 20) Did the district office provide much support for the school improvement process? Please describe the level of support.
- 21) Please describe the state of the school currently.
- 22) Were any actions taken that you would consider to be unusual during the improvement process?
- 23) What are you most proud of?
- 24) What should I know about the improvement process that I have not asked?

Appendix B**Codes for Document Analysis**

Idealized Influence (II)

Leader initiated (IIL)

Dispersed among staff (IID)

Behavior Management (IIBM)

Special Education (IISPED)

Structural Change - calendar/schedule/contract (IIS)

Staff reassignment (IISR)

Agreed upon group action (IIGA)

Hiring highly qualified teachers (IIHQ)

Inspirational Motivation (IM)

Vision created and diffused by leader (IML)

Vision created and diffused by group (IMG)

Vision created and upheld by community (IMC)

Intellectual Stimulation (IS)

Professional development (ISPD)

Data teams/PLC (ISDATA)

Behavior management (ISBM)

Diversity/ equity (ISDIV)

Technology (ISTECH)

Individualized Consideration (IC)

Leadership development (ICL)

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Specialization (ICS)

Experimentation (ICE)

Professional Development (ICPD)

Other codes not defined by TLT

District PD (DPD)

District vision building (DVB)

District leadership development (DLD)

District support (DLS)

Curriculum implementation (CI)

Community connections (CC)

Appendix C

Letter of Consent – Building Principal

Dear Principal,

My name is Charan Cline and I am a doctoral student in the Educational Leadership program at George Fox University in Newberg, Oregon. I am conducting research on the leadership actions of several principals who were able to facilitate the growth of their school from Priority or Focus status to a high level of performance. Your school was identified as one that posted dramatic gains. I will be developing case studies to tell the story of three school's success and compare the actions that each principal took to create this remarkable achievement. I hope that you would be willing to engage with me on the project. If so, you would be required to take 8-12 photographs that represent an action that you and your staff took to improve your students' ability to learn, grow, and achieve. After taking the photographs, you and I will talk for about an hour about why these images represent your good work. You may not feel like an expert in the school improvement process, but trust me, your thoughts and experience are important.

As part of this process, I will also need access to a copy of a school improvement plan that was created as part of the SIG process. The SIP should be one that was developed a couple years into the school improvement process and that you feel really captures the work that your staff put into place. I will also seek to interview your school's coach from Education Northwest to gain another perspective on the process.

This study promises many benefits. As you know, it is difficult for educational leaders to know just what to do to improve a failing school. Even administrators who are lucky enough to work in a high performing school often do not know how to successfully implement an innovation. I hope to distill the successful actions of my colleagues into wisdom that others can replicate in their schools.

The risks associated with this research are minimal. The personal interview questions are innocuous and should not create distress. Nevertheless, please be aware that your participation is completely voluntary and you may decline to continue at any time or decline to answer any question at your discretion.

The results of this study will only be used for research purposes which may include presentations at a professional conference and/or academic publications. Personal interviews will be audio recorded and later transcribed. Information will be analyzed and presented in an anonymous fashion and no individual will be personally identified or school named. I affirm to keep any personal information and identities confidential. All photographs will be altered with image modification software so that neither staff members, students, nor place names can be identified. While a general description of the school and its setting will be made, all place names, specific identifying features, and names of both students and adults will be modified in the reporting of the data.

LEADING FOR INNOVATION

All research materials (i.e., audio recordings, transcriptions, and signed consent forms) will be locked in separate, secure locations for a period of no less than three years. I will be the only individual who will have access to these materials. After three years, I will personally destroy all relevant materials and delete the audio recordings.

I thank you for your time in considering this project. If you choose to participate, please be aware that you are making a contribution to furthering educational research. If you have any questions regarding this research, please contact me.

If you understand the use of this research and agree to participate, please sign below.

Participant signature _____

Researcher signature _____

Appendix D

Letter of Consent – School Improvement Coach

Dear School Improvement Coach,

My name is Charan Cline and I am a doctoral student in the Educational Leadership program at George Fox University in Newberg, Oregon. I am conducting research on the leadership actions of several principals who were able to raise their school from Priority or Focus status to a high level of performance. Your school was identified as one that posted dramatic gains. I will be developing case studies to tell the story of three school's success and compare the actions that each principal took to create this remarkable achievement. I hope that you would be willing to engage with me on the project. If so, you would be required to review 8-12 photographs that represent an action that you, the school administration, and the staff took to improve your students' ability to learn, grow, and achieve. The photographs will be taken by the building principal. After reviewing the photographs, you and I will talk for about an hour about how these images represent your good work and also what may not be illustrated by them.

As part of this process, I will also need access to a copy of a school improvement plan that was created as part of the SIG process. The SIP should be one that was developed a couple years into the school improvement process and that you feel really captures the work that your staff put into place. I will also interview the school's coach building principal to gain another perspective on the process.

This study promises many benefits. As you know, it is difficult for educational leaders to know just what to do to improve a failing school. Even administrators who are lucky enough to work in a high performing school often do not know how to successfully implement an innovation. I hope to distill the successful actions of my colleagues into wisdom that others can replicate in their schools.

The risks associated with this research are minimal. The personal interview questions are innocuous and should not create distress. Nevertheless, please be aware that your participation is completely voluntary and you may decline to continue at any time or decline to answer any question at your discretion.

The results of this study will only be used for research purposes may be used for presentations at a professional conference and/or academic publications. Personal interviews will be audio recorded and later transcribed. Information will be analyzed and presented in an anonymous fashion and no individual will be personally identified. I affirm to keep any personal information and identities confidential. All photographs will be altered with image modification software so that neither staff members, students, nor place names can be identified. While a general description of the school and its setting will be made, all place names, specific identifying features, and names of both students and adults will be modified in the reporting of the data.

All research materials (i.e., audio recordings, transcriptions, and signed consent forms) will be locked in separate, secure locations for a period of no less than three years. I will be the only

LEADING FOR INNOVATION

individual who will have access to these materials. After three years, I will personally destroy all relevant materials and delete the audio recordings.

I thank you for your time in considering this project. If you choose to participate, please be aware that you are making a contribution to furthering educational research. If you have any questions regarding this research, please contact me.

If you understand the use of this research and agree to participate, please sign below.

Participant signature _____

Researcher signature _____

Appendix E

Essential Questions for Transformational Leadership Theory

For a leader to fully realize the benefits of applying transformational leadership theory, he or she should consider how the following questions apply to the specific circumstances of a school:

Idealized Influence

- 1) How much time am I willing to devote to improving the school I am leading?
- 2) How will I use the structures I control to organize the school so that students can achieve maximum growth?
- 3) Do I have the right staff members in the correct positions to create an innovative organization?
- 4) How will I provide each member of my staff with effective feedback and supervision?
- 5) How will I distribute leadership tasks to fulfill the goals of the school?

Inspirational Motivation

- 6) How will a vision be created to focus the efforts of the staff members?
- 7) How will that vision be communicated to all stakeholders?

Intellectual Stimulation

- 8) How will professional development needs of the staff be determined?
- 9) How will effective training occur to meet those professional development needs?
- 10) How will an effective data system be created?
- 11) How will staff members use the data to create action?
- 12) How will staff members work together as a team?

Individualized Consideration

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13) How will the training of individuals be used to move student achievement goals forward?

14) How do I encourage individuals to take instructional risks?

Other Questions

15) How will the school get the resources it needs to move student achievement forward?

- a. How will the school develop a positive and productive relationship with the school district?
- b. How will the school develop a positive relationship with the social and business community that it serves?
- c. How will the school develop a positive relationship with the larger educational community? (e.g. state level departments of education, educational non-profits, universities, etc.)

GEORGE FOX UNIVERSITY HSRC INITIAL REVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

Page 6

Title: Leadership for Innovation

Principal Researcher(s): Charan Cline

Date application completed: 9/28/17

(The researcher needs to complete the above information on this page)

COMMITTEE FINDING:

For Committee Use Only

(1) The proposed research makes adequate provision for safeguarding the health and dignity of the subjects and is therefore approved.

(2) Due to the assessment of risk being questionable or being subject to change, the research must be periodically reviewed by the **HSRC** on a _____ basis throughout the course of the research or until otherwise notified. This requires resubmission of this form, with updated information, for each periodic review.

(3) The proposed research evidences some unnecessary risk to participants and therefore must be revised to remedy the following specific area(s) on non-compliance:

(4) The proposed research contains serious and potentially damaging risks to subjects and is therefore not approved.

Winston Leagbe

10/03/2017

Chair or designated member

Date



“LEADING FOR INNOVATION: A VISUAL ETHNOGRAPHY OF THREE PRINCIPALS WHO LED THEIR SCHOOLS FROM LOW TO HIGH ACHIEVEMENT AS VIEWED THROUGH TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP THEORY,” a Doctoral research project prepared by CHARAN CLINE in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Education degree in Educational Leadership.

This dissertation has been approved and accepted by:

2/20/2018 Patrick Allen Committee Chair
Date Patrick Allen, PhD Professor of Education

2/20/18 Terry Huffman Professor of Education
Date Terry Huffman, PhD Professor of Education

2/20/18 Gary Sel Associate Professor of Education
Date Gary Selhorn, EdD Associate Professor of Education