Processes of Developing Effective Researcher-Practitioner Partnerships in Education: A Content Analysis of Grant Related Documents

by

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Dedication

With great joy and thanksgiving, I humbly dedicate this dissertation to Akeem Dominic, to Starla Faith, and to all other present and future leaders and partnership developers. Continue learning, asking questions, setting goals, reflecting, and inspiring change. Be humble (Micah 6:8).

Through it all, keep moving forward. “Be strong and courageous” (Joshua 1:9).

The sky is the limit!
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Abstract

Research indicates that understanding the influence of leadership and partnership development can inform the need to improve public education (Penuel & Gallagher, 2017). Although leadership theory and change theory support the need for partnerships in education, less attention has been given to how such partnerships develop and the role that leadership plays in that process. Therefore, the present study explored the role of leadership within researcher-practitioner partnerships and the process of developing sustainable partnerships in education as documented in a set of federal grant proposals, their final reports, and other descriptions of their efforts. Grant documents examined were awarded from the 2013 funding announcement of the U.S. Department of Education Institute of Education Sciences (IES) Researcher-Practitioner Partnerships (RPP) in Education Research program.

In-depth qualitative document analysis provided a means to unobtrusively examine and interpret comprehensive, historical data (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Patton, 2002). Directed content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005; Kaid & Johnston-Wadsworth, 1989) of the documents directed the process of data collection. This process used key concepts from the literature on transformational leadership, shared leadership, and leadership for change as the initial framework for data collection. Data analysis employed Eisner’s (1998) process of educational criticism using description, interpretation, evaluation, and thematics. Hatch’s (2002) process of typological analysis led to four typologies to organize the data for description and interpretation: capacity building; strategies for partnership development; approaches to communication; and the role of reflection in partnership development. The evaluation dimension of educational criticism indicated that partnerships employed shared leadership with evidence of internal and external support and a cultivation of shared commitment.
Themes indicated that partnerships focused on both rigorous research and reflective practice, leaders engaged partners in establishing the infrastructure and strategic plans of the partnership, and partnerships galvanized support to address complex social issues beyond their formal organizational structure. Recommendations for future research include the need: (a) to explore the dynamics of communication in partnership work; (b) to clarify and facilitate the process of change in grant and project development; and (c) to develop a process for sustainability beyond a specific grant or project. Recommendations for practice include the need: (a) to explore the cultivation of relationships in support of partnership development; (b) to identify clearly the primary issue to be addressed in the work of the partnership, and (c) to clarify mutual outcomes. Conclusions from the present study indicate the importance of a focus on the deliberate development of the researcher-practitioner partnerships themselves, the importance of concrete strategies for sharing leadership, and the importance of the development of professional relationships that support sustainability in partnership development.
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

In recent decades, national interest in the quality of our nation’s public schools has increased. Many people—including parents, educators, students, and policymakers—share concerns about the need to improve public education for citizenship in a democracy. Such improvements can occur at the local level, at the state level, and with support from the federal government. Support for school improvement can also come from private sources, such as private individuals, organizations, and foundations.

Because of such widespread concern for improving education, partnerships to address complex educational issues have developed as a means of involving numerous stakeholders, especially if change in education is to be effective and sustainable. Of particular interest are those partnerships involving both researchers and practitioners. However, although leadership theory and change theory support the need for such educational partnerships, a review of the literature indicates that less attention has been paid to how such partnerships develop and the role of leadership in that process. Therefore, the present study focused on understanding leadership within researcher-practitioner partnerships and how strategies for partnership development have occurred to support improvements in education.

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the background for the present study and the rationale supporting it. The chapter also includes a discussion of the theoretical framework guiding the study and the resulting research question based on the study’s background and theoretical framework. Based on the research question—How are the role of leadership and the process of developing sustainable partnerships in education documented in the context of a set of grant proposals, their final reports, and other descriptions of their efforts?—the chapter focuses
on the research design and research methodology selected, including a brief discussion of the limitations of the study.

**Background for the Study**

Investing in America’s future is a critical investment in both fiscal and human capital. One philosophical perspective is that complex issues in education are best addressed democratically, with input and contributions from many stakeholders. However, the primary responsibility for K-12 education resides with state governments and local boards of education. The federal government, on the other hand, provides assistance to states and schools in an effort to supplement state and local efforts to educate students.

The United States has historically had far higher levels of educational attainment than other countries (Darling-Hammond, 2010; U.S. Census Bureau, 2016). To do so, taxpayers invest a considerable amount of resources into education (Berliner & Biddle, 1995). As of 2014, America spent over $632 billion a year on public elementary and secondary education in the United States (U.S. Department of Education, 2017). The Institute for Education Sciences (IES) at the U.S. Department of Education reported that school districts spend $12,608 annually for each individual student. Though public financial support does not necessarily equate to school improvement, collaborating to make the most of these public funds can potentially improve the lives of countless individuals and communities.

In order to support state and local efforts, the U.S. Department of Education (2016) promotes student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and equal access to educational opportunity. The federal government allocated approximately $254 billion to education in fiscal year 2015. Federal education funding is distributed to states and school districts through a variety of formulaic programs and
competitive grant programs. Formulaic grants are legislative entitlements where the state or school district acts as a conduit of a prescribed mandated agenda (Bickers & Stein, 2000). Examples include funds through the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001, the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), that is the primary source of federal K-12 support since 1965. However, the No Child Left Behind Act, one of the largest K-12 education laws, also contained more than 60 competitive grant programs within it (Burke & Sheffield, 2013). In 2015, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) replaced the No Child Left Behind education law further allowing for increased school district and state level competitive grants (Camera, 2015). Competitive grants are discretionary funds not based on a formula or legislative mandate (Browning, 2016). Instead, these grants provide school leaders and their stakeholders with fiscal support for local, innovative approaches to foster best practices and reform efforts promoting student achievement (U.S. Department of Education, 2017). Schools and communities, therefore, acquire a greater degree of autonomy when competitive, discretionary grants are awarded. An example of one competitive grant program was launched in 2013 by IES, entitled the “Researcher-Practitioner Partnership in Education Research Program.”

In 2016, discretionary funding within the federal education budget represented 46%, or 70.7 billion, of the total allocation, an increase of $3.6 billion, or 5.4 percent over the 2015 level. Some discretionary grants are awarded to eligible collaboratives with an organized interest and strategic plan to address a complex social issue (Talbert & Potoski, 2000). Understanding how these discretionary grants were conceptualized and how they operated as partnership contributes to the knowledge base of partnership development and functioning and may assist others in developing partnerships and in seeking support for their efforts. Therefore, the overall purpose
of the present study was to examine how a set of grant initiatives supported through the IES at the U.S. Department of Education have described the process of developing their collaborative activities in their grant applications, their final reports, and other publications or public communications.

**The Role of Collaboration in Partnerships**

One advantage of partnerships is to inform research and practice because multiple voices contribute to the process of addressing complex social issues (Kania & Kramer, 2011; Owen & Larson, 2017; Penuel & Gallagher, 2017). Partnerships typically require collaborative approaches to addressing these complex social issues. Partnerships, by definition, require certain types of leadership. Leadership theories have evolved from predominantly hierarchical notions of working with people: “The Great Man” leadership approach, “Trait Leadership,” and “Behavior Leadership” (Bass & Avolio, 1991; Bennis, 1989; Collinson, 2006; Pfeffer, 2013). Partnership implies shared leadership and collective impact (Kania & Kramer, 2011; Penuel & Gallagher, 2017) among respected individuals who are recognized and empowered to build capacity and to make decisions for the greater good (Bowen & Martens, 2006; Bryson, Crosby, & Stone, 2006). Though partnerships are increasingly a part of leadership practices, sharing leadership requires a fundamental shift in perceiving the process of leadership as a solitary exercise.

A number of factors negatively influence the success of partnerships: rigid organizations (Burke, 2010), deep-set ideologies and mental models (Schein, 2004), and competitive bidding for funds (Penuel & Gallagher, 2017). Likewise, understanding how partnerships effectively engage stakeholders in a systematic and sustained fashion is an integral part of fostering change in education. However, even the most seemingly effective approaches to partnership work are
not without fault. Therefore, to share expertise and achieve desired outcomes, organizations and those they serve need to examine the challenges and successes of partnership work. The purpose of the present study was to describe how the documented experiences of partnerships revealed the role of the collaborative process in the context of federally supported grants in public education. Such descriptions would provide research-based guidance for others who seek to overcome the challenges of partnership work in education.

**Educational Leadership within Partnerships**

Leader behaviors and interactions influence all levels of partnerships and grant development (Harding, 2014; Jackson & Parry, 2011; Kotter & Schlesinger, 1979). Given the influence of leadership in partnerships, the practice of leader behaviors and partnership work has gained increased attention within the research community. The characteristics of leaders within partnerships influence the strength of partnerships. For example, leaders create and communicate change in ways that effectively secure constituent buy-in (Bass, 1990; Kotter, 2012), thus translating strategy to action (Gersick, 1991; Kaplan & Norton, 1996).

The core of leadership within partnerships is building and nurturing relationships (Costa & McCrae, 1992; Gladwell, 2000; Goleman, 1995; Penuel & Gallagher, 2017). In order for partnerships to develop and sustain themselves, leadership and influence must be shared (Penuel & Gallagher, 2017). Shared leadership is “leadership that emanates from members of teams, and not simply from an appointed leader” (Pearce & Sims, 2001, p. 122). Shared leadership implies the need for people to concede some power and control to other people (Bryson, Crosby, & Stone, 2006; Goldsmith, 2010).

Organizations in the 21st century realize that in order to advance chances of productivity and sustainability, leadership must reflect more of a horizontal distribution of power rather than a
vertical, hierarchical, top-down influence (Schein, 2004). Horizontal leadership strives to flatten or “delay” the leadership of an organization by distributing leadership and increasing shared involvement (O’Reilly, Doerr, Caldwell, & Chatman, 2014; Spillane, 2005; Sturm & Antonakis, 2015). The trend toward collective impact (Burke, 2010; Coburn & Penuel, 2016; Kania & Kramer, 2011) represents one flattened ideological framework relevant to the process of partnership development. Collective Impact theory exemplifies the shared nature of leadership and relationship building and is defined as “the commitment of a group of important actors from different sectors to a common agenda for solving a specific social problem or complex issue” (Kania & Kramer, 2011, p. 36).

Distinct leadership characteristics help to develop and sustain partnerships to bring about collective impact. Two of the most prominent leadership theories that encompass such relationship and managerial principles are transformational or relational leadership and transactional or managerial leadership. According to a meta-analysis of leadership styles by Amanchukwu, Stanley, and Olube (2015), transformational or relational leaders are perceived as passionate, visionary, creative, flexible, innovative, courageous, imaginative, experimental, and strategic managers of change. Another widely used model that describes transformational leadership (Costa & McCrae, 1992) identifies “The Big Five Personality Traits” for guiding leadership behavior. This widely examined model suggests five broad psychological dimensions under the acronyms OCEAN or CANOE. The five factors have been defined as openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism (Costa & McCrae, 1992). On the other hand, transactional or managerial leaders are often perceived as rational, persistent, problem-solving, tough-minded, analytical, structured, deliberate, authoritative, and stabilizing (Bass & Stogdill, 1990). The combination of these two theories in practice represent
what Bass and Avolio (2010) described as the use of full-range leadership theory. Though both transformational and transactional leadership theories are different in terms of management and motivation, full-range leadership theory includes qualities of both leadership styles necessary for guiding partnerships to success.

The present study was grounded in the need to understand what works in partnerships. With the long-term goal of improving quality educational practices, understanding the process of effective partnership development in education is one area of research worthy of further investigation (Burke, 2010; Coburn, Penuel, & Geil, 2013; Kania & Kramer, 2011; Penuel & Gallagher, 2017). Out of such research, strategic interventions—approaches, practices, programs, policies—that enhance partnership work for students’ academic achievement need to be identified and analyzed.

The present study was designed to describe how partnerships in education are developed and sustained in order to improve educational practice. One approach to such research is to analyze how partnership development is represented in grant proposals, in final grant reports, and in other descriptions of the grant efforts.

**Research Question**

Pressures increase on educational policy and practice to use research to guide school improvement through long-term, innovative partnerships that support education. As previously discussed, stakeholders in education are invested in making partnerships work effectively in order to improve students’ academic achievement and long-term holistic growth.

Previous research on the role of partnerships in education has focused primarily on the challenges faced in partnership work (Coburn & Penuel, 2016; National Academy of Education, 1999; Owen & Larson, 2017) rather than on specific, documented strategies used to better
understand and inform the process of partnership development. Research regarding such strategies for developing and sustaining partnerships is necessary to inform the growing number of stakeholders involved in partnerships and to assess their impact (Coburn, Penuel, & Geil, 2013; Donovan, 2013; National Research Council, 2012; Penuel & Gallagher, 2017). To address this need, the present study will investigate the following research question: How are the role of leadership and the process of developing sustainable partnerships in education documented in the context of a set of grant proposals, their final reports, and other descriptions of their efforts?

To do so, examining a sample of federally funded grant proposals in education focused on researcher and practitioner partnerships, their final grant reports, and related project documents will provide the opportunity to gain insight into the process of partnership development. These “Researcher-Practitioner Partnerships in Education Research” grants are funded by the U.S. Department of Education, through the Institute of Education Sciences (IES), established under the legislative authority of the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002. Therefore, analyzing the content of this set of grant proposals, final reports, and related documents can address the research question.

**Significance of the Study**

Improving education is a complex effort involving complex relationships among many stakeholders. Increasingly, funders are seeking to support long-term processes of social change, including the development of partnerships (Burke, 2010; Coburn, Penuel, & Geil, 2013; Kania & Kramer, 2011). Partnerships provide an organizational structure for addressing such work. Public and private sector interest is growing concerning understanding and improving the effectiveness of partnerships with stakeholder groups, such as how they are developed, nurtured, and sustained (Coburn & Penuel, 2016).
A deeper understanding of partnership development and sustainability can inform others who wish to establish partnerships to improve public education. In addition, such knowledge can inform the day-to-day work of education practitioners and policymakers (Penuel & Gallagher, 2017). An analysis of funded grant documents provided a highly detailed and unobtrusive view that describes the process of developing and sustaining partnerships.

**Theoretical Framework**

Developing and applying a theoretical framework is the foundation for knowledge construction for any research study (Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Patton, 2002). Lysaght (2011) highlighted the necessity of identifying one’s theoretical framework in research:

> A researcher’s choice of framework is not arbitrary but reflects important personal beliefs and understandings about the nature of knowledge, how it exists (in the metaphorical sense) in relation to the observer, and the possible roles to be adopted, and tools to be employed, consequently, by the researcher in his/her work. (p. 572)

Theory-driven thinking and acting should be emphasized in any research study as justification for its appropriateness and rigor in addressing the research question and generating useful findings and conclusions (Howe & Eisenhart, 1990).

Theories enable scholars to better explain and predict individual and group behaviors and outcomes. Figure 1 provides a graphical representation of the theoretical framework that guided the present study.

**Figure 1**: A theoretical framework for partnership development
The theoretical framework that guided the present research study includes: the theory of shared leadership, full-range leadership theory, and Kurt Lewin’s 3-Step model of planned change theory.

Shared leadership theory is relevant to partnership work because the latter implies the need for people to concede some power and control to other people (Bryson, Crosby, & Stone, 2006; Goldsmith, 2010). Shared leadership is “leadership that emanates from members of teams and not simply from an appointed leader” (Pearce & Sims, 2001, p. 132). Secondly, the “full-range of leadership” model acknowledges that a combination of an array of leadership styles, from laisse-faire—the most passive form of transactional leadership—to transformational behaviors (Avolio, 2010; Peck, 2003) may be appropriate in partnership work.

Third, social scientist Kurt Lewin’s planned change theory is best known as the unfreezing-move-freezing model of the change process in human systems. Lewin’s 3-stage model is robust, yet simple and easy to understand (Lewin, 1947). Furthermore, this organizational change theory challenges the idea of rapid, transformational change (Burns, 2004; Kippenberger, 1998). Indeed, partnership work requires long-term commitment (Coburn, Penuel, & Geil, 2013). According to Lewin’s principles, planned change requires preparation, transitioning, and establishing new habits and stability (Lewin, 1947).

In summary, key theoretical principles included in this framework as reflected in this study are partnership development in shared leadership, stakeholders as leaders operationalizing full-range leadership, and Lewin’s organizational change theory as reflected in the unfreezing, movement, and freezing model. These three theories were used as a guide to understanding and explaining the challenges of developing researcher-practitioner partnerships in education and sustaining them over time.
The Research Design and Methodology for the Study

According to Patton (2002), qualitative research can be done “wherever situations of importance to a study can be observed, people interviewed, and documents analyzed” (p. 4). Qualitative research has much to offer the field of education by providing rich descriptions and discussions and developing ideas that demand complex understanding (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). For example, one such benefit is understanding leadership and partnership designs that support researchers and practitioners working together to focus on problems of practice and solutions for improving schools and school districts (Coburn & Penuel, 2016). The focus of the present study was to understand the process of developing sustainable partnerships in education as documented in the context of a set of grant proposals, final reports, and other descriptions of their efforts. In order to access this information, an in-depth qualitative document analysis methodology allowed the researcher to elicit meaning, gain understanding, and develop empirical knowledge by unobtrusively examining and interpreting comprehensive, historical data (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Patton, 2002; Rapley, 2007). Furthermore, this research approach clarifies the documented experiences of a number of researcher-practitioner partnerships in the context of grant development.

Limitations

The focus of the present study was on understanding the process of developing partnerships in education as documented in the context of grant development and implementation. Creswell (2012) defined research as “a process of steps used to collect and analyze information to increase our understanding of a specific topic or issue” (p. 3). The present study focused specifically on shared leadership in partnerships that influences people to enact organizational change. The focus of this research was on one specific type of federal grant
and the documented process of developing partnerships in education by examining one specific type of partnership. Grant proposals that were examined are those awarded from the 2013 funding announcement of the U.S. Department of Education Institute of Education Sciences (IES) Researcher-Practitioner Partnerships (RPP) in Education Research program. As only one set of documents, this study provided only one view of how funded partnerships develop and function. Other sets of documents could also provide knowledge relevant to the research question.

Content analysis as the research approach in the present study provided knowledge about how partnerships develop and are sustained. However, other approaches to research could also be useful. For example, interviewing partnership participants or directly observing their behaviors within the partnerships could also provide insight into partnership development and sustainability. Thus, though this research focuses on content analysis of only one set of federal grant proposals, final reports, and other descriptions of their efforts, interpretations from these data can be relevant to other researchers and practitioners with similar interest in partnership development.

**Definition of Terms**

Below are definitions for terms used in this research study. These definitions of terms can provide a common understanding and clarification regarding key concepts as they are relevant to this study.

**Collaboration:** the sharing of information and resources by two or more organizations in an effort to solve social problems that could not be achieved by organizations working independently (Bryson, Crosby, & Stone, 2006).
Collaborative Leadership: leadership that promotes strategic relationship building, resource-sharing, honest and open dialogue, and a deeper understanding of important social issues (O’Brien, Littlefield, & Goddard-Truitt, 2013).

Collective Impact: the commitment of a group of important actors from different sectors to a common agenda for solving a specific social problem (Kania & Kramer, 2011).

Cross-Sector Collaboration: linking or sharing of information, resources, activities, and capabilities by two or more organizations to achieve jointly an outcome that could not be achieved by organizations in one sector separately (Bryson, Crosby, & Stone, 2006).

Distributed Leadership: a framework which suggests that leadership is dispersed among multiple leaders in both “formal,” designated positions and “informal,” everyday interactions within an organization (Gronn, 2000; Spillane, 2006).

Education Agency: authorized by law to develop, manage, and provide services or programs to schools (U.S. Department of Education, 2012).

Grant (noun): a tool for funding ideas and projects to provide public services, stimulate the economy, and benefit the general public (Grants.gov, 2017).

Leadership: the exercise of influence in a group context; the use of power to influence the thoughts and actions of other people through the process of goal setting and goal achievement (Bass & Stogdill, 1990; Northouse, 2007; Zaleznik, 1992). Leadership motivates and catalyzes people by directing the focus of an organization and shaping practices, strategies, and actions to influence sustainable outcomes (O’Brien, Littlefield, & Goddard-Truitt, 2013).

Partnership: relationships in the workplace characterized by the sharing of a common goal, mutual respect, and openness to negotiation (Buchanan, 1994).
Research-Practice Partnerships (RPPs): long-term collaborations between practitioners and researchers that are organized to investigate problems of practice and seek solutions to improve schools and school districts (Coburn, Penuel, & Geil, 2013).

Shared Authority: intentional strategies used to organize the work of one or more people, such as: negotiating the focus of joint work; uncovering key drivers for improvement; structuring co-design processes; and sharing and interpreting findings from research studies (Coburn, Penuel, & Geil, 2013).

Shared Leadership: leadership with power and responsibility broadly distributed so that people in the team influence and lead each other to maximize effectiveness; a process that extends beyond just one appointed leader (Bolden, 2011; Yukl, 1989).

Stakeholder: in education, anyone who is invested in the welfare and success of a school and its students, including administrators, teachers, staff members, students, parents, families, community members, local business leaders, and elected officials such as school board members, city councilors, and state representatives (Glossary of Education Reform, 2017).

Chapter Summary

In order for partnerships to work, they must operationalize promising approaches that will help increase the effectiveness of their collaboration (Penuel & Gallagher, 2017).

Developing partnerships has the potential to promote change in organizations, particularly for the improvement of schools and school districts (Coburn, Penuel, & Geil, 2013; U.S. Department of Education, 2017). This chapter introduced the growing interest in partnership development that influenced the focus for the present study regarding understanding how partnerships in education are developed as documented in one sample of federal grants awarded in the year 2013 for
projects operating from 2013 to 2015. In addition, this chapter introduced the research design, methodology, and limitations of the study, along with definitions of relevant terms. This chapter also contains the theoretical framework that guided the conceptualization of knowledge construction for the study.

Chapter 2 provides a review of related literature regarding the dynamics of partnerships, the impact of leader and leadership development within partnerships and the challenges of leading partnerships. Chapter 2 also includes a discussion of the conceptual framework that will systematically guide data collection, and data analysis. Chapter 3 includes a discussion of the research design and the methodology used in data collection and analysis.
CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

*The modern organization cannot be an organization of boss and subordinate. If the organization is to perform, it must be organized as a team of associates.*

*Peter Drucker (2003, p. 121)*

As noted in Chapter 1, the purpose of the present study was to analyze the process of researcher-practitioner partnership development in education as documented in a set of federally awarded researcher-practitioner grant proposals and supplemental reports. The focus in the present study was on leadership behaviors, collaborative communities of practice, and researcher-practitioner partnerships because knowledge about those topics can lead to deeper understanding of partnership development in order to improve education. To address topics in the literature relevant to researcher-practitioner partnerships, the review of related literature which follows is organized into three sections: (a) the concept of partnerships in education; (b) leadership in collaborative communities; and (c) challenges in leading partnerships.

Within any partnership, there are forms of leadership operating, either formal or informal. Often leadership is shared (Bryson, Crosby, & Stone, 2006; Carson et al., 2007; Goldsmith, 2010; Katz & Kahn, 1978). Shared leadership implies the need for people to concede some power and control to other people. Based on concepts found in the literature, Chapter 2 examines the topics of partnerships, leadership, and the challenges of leading partnerships. The first section of Chapter 2 begins with a review of the concept of partnerships, including researcher-practitioner partnerships. The literature indicates that partnerships involve shared leadership and empowerment among respected individuals working in learning organizations as
a system (Bryson et al., 2006; Senge, 2006). Therefore, the second section of this literature review examines the many concepts and styles of leadership. Finally, the third section describes the importance of trust, strategic planning with shared leadership, and the careful management of resources for implementing partnerships. This section also includes a discussion of the challenges faced in developing partnerships and strategies associated with leading them.

**The Concept of Partnerships in Education**

*None of us is as smart as all of us.*

~Ken Blanchard (2001, p. 184)

Partnership implies shared leadership and collective impact (Kania & Kramer, 2011; Penuel & Gallagher, 2017; Senge, 2006) involving respected individuals who are recognized and empowered to build capacity and to make decisions for the greater good (Bowen & Martens, 2006; Bryson, Crosby, & Stone, 2006). The term *partnership* is used liberally through funding applications (Hutchinson & Campbell, 1998; Osborne, 1998). However, the nature of a partnership relates to the purposes established for the organization. For example, “The symphony orchestra does not attempt to cure the sick; it plays music. The hospital takes care of the sick but does not attempt to play Beethoven” (Drucker, 2003, p. 118). Therefore, those involved in a partnership must share similar purposes. With specific vision and goals that are shared, frameworks for working together create added value to successful partnerships.

Partnerships consist of stakeholders who have a vested interest in shared ideals and outcomes. Meaningful engagement of stakeholders requires an exchange of influence and power. For example, developing a shared vision requires respecting and understanding the vision of goals of each partner (Senge et al., 2000). To develop a shared vision requires a “set of tools and techniques for bringing all of these disparate aspirations into alignment around the
things people have in common” (p. 72). Further, establishing a shared vision leads to shared social power within a team.

In education, the term partnership refers to a broad range of arrangements between researchers, practitioners, and community members (Buchanan, 1994; Kania & Kramer, 2011; Penuel & Gallagher, 2017). When working in partnerships, stakeholders can be meaningfully engaged in and contribute to the partnership (Bowen & Martens, 2006; Graham et al., 2006; Green & Mercer, 2001; Jansson, Benoit, Casey, Phillips, & Burns, 2010). Empirical research on strategies behind the dynamics of the development of partnerships—how they work and the mechanisms by which they foster educational improvement—provide little insight into the purposeful design of partnerships and leadership strategies within them (Farrell et al., 2017; Kania & Kramer, 2011). However, prominent researchers, such as Young and colleagues (2002), stressed that connecting the work of universities, practitioners, professional associations, and state policymakers is essential to ensure quality programs and interventions. In developing quality programs and interventions, a critical factor of partnership work is understanding the vision and goals of stakeholders and the collective team (Burke, 2010; Gladwell, 2000; Lewin, 1947; Senge, 2006). When stakeholders collaborate effectively, as suggested in the above noted research, quality programs and interventions in education will prepare young people for success in school and later in life.

In addition to the need to share and develop goals, partnerships require the skills and methods necessary to develop and maintain such relationships, methods that are complex, fluid, and often misunderstood (Bryson, Crosby, & Stone, 2006; Kania & Kramer, 2011). Adding to the complexity and delicate nature of partnership work is the need for shared leadership. As noted earlier, such leadership requires people to concede some power and control to other people
At its best, working together to develop long-term collaborations creates a sense of teamwork, and shared vision sets the stage for partnership success.

In partnerships, issues of power exist. Maintaining partnerships of any kind requires a realization that the influence of power is in every organizational culture (Tett, 2014). However, contrary to a hierarchical structure, power-sharing in partnership work involves building an organization of a more flattened authority (Bass & Avolio, 2003; Darling-Hammond, 2010), grounded in trust and respect. Cevero and Wilson (2001) argued that the struggle for power in organizations is difficult. Mental models developed in everyday life influence how partners engage with each other (Senge, 2006). Partners must recognize that control exists in the structurally defined hierarchies of everyday life. Similarly, people enter the process of teamwork marked by their perceived or actual domains of power and privilege. Therefore, learning to share power in partnerships is a strategic approach to creating effective partnerships.

Partnership effectiveness in part depends upon the ability of teams to manage relationships and inspire others to use their “voice” to inspire other people (Covey, 2005; Goleman, 1995; Yukl, 1989). A body of scholarly research suggests that learning organizations rely upon the interactions of individuals, marked by an exchange of power, persuasion, and influence (Coburn & Penuel, 2016; Senge, 2006; Yukl, 1989). Building a supportive infrastructure allows partnerships to effectively develop as a team, reform organizations, and foster desired changes in communities.

When researchers and stakeholders share power and develop long-term partnerships involving multiple organizations, specific problems of practice and policy can be addressed (Penuel & Gallagher, 2017). Given the maturation of social science and increased demand for
accountability, the current educational climate exhibits growing interest in a very specific form of partnership, *researcher-practitioner partnerships* (RPPs). RPPs are defined as “long-term collaborations between practitioners and researchers, organized to investigate problems of practice and solutions for improving schools and school districts” (Coburn, Penuel, & Geil, 2013, p. 2). RPPs function as groups with shared authority (Cooper, 2007), initiated by researchers, practitioners, or funders. RPPs do not address gaps in existing theory or research; instead, they focus on a specific problem of practice, selected from a wide variety of problems, key dilemmas, and challenges that practitioners face. One example of an RPP program is funded by the Institute for Education Sciences (IES) of the United States Department of Education. This researcher-practitioner partnership initiative has encouraged local and national groups to support this strategy.

Research enhances the understanding of complex social issues by providing both information for practitioners in schools and school systems and information for policy-makers to consider in the structuring and funding of program development grants (Cobb & Jackson, 2012; Penuel & Gallagher, 2017). Research is limited by a gap in knowledge about the process of collaboration among researchers and various stakeholders (Farrell et al., 2017; Henderson, Brownlie, Rosenkranz, Chaim, & Beitchman, 2013). Because granting bodies now place greater emphasis on allocating public funds to RPPs for improving public schools, increased interest has developed to investigate strategies used by these partnerships to improve policy and practice (Coburn et al., 2013). Exploring the working conditions of funded RPPs can inform effective partnership development with the goal of school improvement.

Various approaches to establishing and developing researcher-practitioner relationships have been described in the research literature, including participatory action research (Kidd &
Kral, 2005; Southam-Gerow, Hourigan, & Allin, 2009), community-partnership research (Macauley & Nutting, 2006), community-based participatory research (Green & Mercer, 2001; Israel, Eng, & Schultz, 2012), research alliances, design-based research partnerships, and network improvement communities (Coburn, Penuel, & Geil, 2013). In education, research-practitioner partnerships have received attention because they can strengthen the degree to which research supports educational improvement.

Beyond the field of education, studies of the outcomes of RPPs in public health, mental health, and criminology have contributed to understanding partnership development in a variety of contexts. All RPPs are a concerted effort to strategically forge robust and unique relationships between researchers and practitioners (Penuel & Gallagher, 2017). Partners commit to forming and maintaining a long-term working collaboration beyond a single consulting agreement or grant. Initiated by either RPP participant, researchers provide ongoing engagement with practitioners to develop ideas for studies and to share results throughout the duration of projects (Roderick et al., 2007). Such partnership work is viewed as a conduit for a strategic plan which leverages research and improves communities.

In education, some partnerships focus on independent analysis of district policies and their implementation, and others involve co-designing and testing solutions for improving teaching and learning or orchestrating system-wide change. Similarly, RPPs can involve systematic methods for fostering continuous improvement research among networks of schools, districts, or other institutions (Bryk, Gomez, Grunow, & LeMahieu, 2015). Some focus on in-school and out-of-school spaces and the connections between them, while some involve university researchers or intermediary organizations working together to improve social conditions (Donavin, 2013). All RPPs are long-term, mutualistic, and focused on collaboratively
defined problems of practice (King et al., 2010; Metzler et al., 2003). The proliferation of RPPs underscores the increased interest from funders, as well as researchers and practitioners, to make a sustainable difference in public policy, practice, and research.

RPPs vary in their design, as do partners and partnerships, and in the variety of problems of practice upon which they focus. The literature describes three main types of RPPs: Research Alliances, Design Research, and Networked Improvement Communities (NICs). Coburn, Penuel, and Geil, (2013) described a research alliance as a long-term partnership between a district and an independent research organization focused on investigating questions of policy and practice that are central to the school district that funnels findings back to the school district, community, and other stakeholders. Design research is similar to engineering research in that the aim for partnerships is to study solutions at the same time as they are building responses to identified problems (Penuel & Gallagher, 2017). In education, such efforts support student learning (Cobb, McClain, Laumberg, & Dean, 2003). Berwick (2008) described Networked Improvement Communities (NICs) as groups collectively pursuing improvement, for example, focusing on schools to provide effective teaching and learning opportunities to students. NICs analyze and identify what works, where, when, and under what conditions.

This section highlights the concept of stakeholders working together to address complex social issues as partners, specifically as Researcher-Practitioner Partnerships (RPPs) in education. Engaging the commitment of various partners requires a delicate combination of establishing trust, sharing power, and delegating responsibilities. Developing a shared vision and goals encourages the strategic process of relationship building which support the work of this type of collaboration. Researcher-practitioner partnerships in education foster and sustain long-term ongoing relationships that collectively impact problems of practice in education.
Rationale for Partnerships

Following the publication by the National Commission on Excellence in Education of *A Nation at Risk* in 1983, the concept of partnerships in education gained visibility as part of a call for educational institutions to become more relevant and connected to their constituents (Cousins & Simon, 1996; Donovan, 2013; Firestone & Fisler, 2002). The document’s use of the phrase, “at risk,” portrayed public education as being in crisis, marked with fragmented achievement gaps and a cause for declines in global economic competition (Berliner & Biddle, 1995). Consequently, the premise was a call for change in education that increased extensive program redesign initiatives and increased collaborative work (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). In response to this call, in 1985, the U.S. Congress enacted the Education and Training Partnerships Act (Gutierrez, Field, Simmons, & Basile, 2007). The goal of this Act was to better use and connect human resources and intellectual capital that existed in communities to foster social change.

Reciprocal exchanges and enhanced collaboration between researchers and stakeholders over the course of an initiative or project is often a good return on public funds (National Institute of Mental Health, 1999; Southern Regional Education Board, 2010). In fact, in 2010, the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) reported strategic redirection of resources towards partnerships in the discussion of all three essential elements for improving schools: state capacity-building, district vision, and principal leadership. Partnership development became a means to integrate intellectual capital and other resources by engaging stakeholders.

In recent decades, education in the United States has undergone major changes in response to the “spate of reports and articles in professional literature and in public discourse that point to the need for education to be more responsive, accountable, relevant, and accessible to its
constituencies” (Overton & Burkhardt, 1999, p. 218). Some of these reform initiatives were mandated by state governments or the federal government in order to challenge educators to rethink teaching and learning (Donovan, Wigdor, & Snow, 2003; National Academy of Education, 1999; National Research Council, 2012). Others have been the result of general criticism that public schools were not adequately preparing students to be successful citizens. Therefore, in order to rethink teaching and learning, educational leaders developed revitalized partnerships of many types— cross-sector partnerships with government and non-governmental organizations, the private sector, school and district level educators and leaders, local community organizations, and families. Among other strategies to remain competitive and promote quality education, partnerships have the potential to be the focal point for building school and community relationships.

At the federal level, the primary impetus for reforming programs came from the perception that the United States’ public education system was suffering from wide-spread inefficiencies and systematic failure (Hess, 2002; Kearns, Harvey, & Bush, 2000; Walberg & Bast, 2003). A few examples of the challenges that face education reform in our nation’s schools and colleges include: ethnicity-based gaps in academic achievement, too many adolescents dropping out of high school, too few children learning to read proficiently, and low student success rates in community colleges and universities (Bryk, Gomez, & Grunow, 2010; Columbus, 2015).

The challenge is to rethink education with the goals of improvement, equity, and quality. Money cannot buy quality education, nor can it make successful partnerships. These issues exist even though the United States spends more than most countries on all levels of education combined and the highest of all countries for postsecondary education (OECD, 2014). Research
by organizational theorists such as Burke (2010), Gladwell (2000), Lewin (1947), and Senge (2006) suggests that change is most successful and sustainable when accomplished with the assistance of people working together—the human resource. The researchers also suggested the simple philosophy that mutual engagements and partnership work are necessary for any type of reform.

One dominant focus of partnerships in education is improving the college and career readiness of K-12 students. The federal government made “college and career readiness” a key principle in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 passed by the U.S Congress (Jeffrey, 1978, p. 270). In a more recent news report, former U.S. Education Secretary Arne Duncan also emphasized the role of a quality education for college and career readiness:

Our children are not competing for jobs down the block or in the district or in the state—they’re competing against children in India or China. Providing a quality education to all children is not just a moral obligation but an economic imperative. This is both a civil rights issue for our generation and the economic foundation of our future. (Streitfeld, 2009, para. 7)

From this perspective, improving school experiences to adequately prepare youth for the 21st-century global economy became the goal of educational reform.

On the other hand, as partnerships work together to address problems of practice, some argue strongly for a broader purpose of education, such as creating systems to help prepare young people for social challenges (Shulman, 1987). Civic engagement, critical thinking, collective decision-making, and a commitment to the common good are examples of social issues which address the broader purposes of education. Preparing students for life as informed and engaged citizens is also important. For example, a Center for Education Policy document
published in 2007 updated a previous 1996 publication entitled, *Why We Still Need Public Schools: Public Education for the Common Good*. It asserts that the goal of public education should demand much more than academic purposes. Yet, policy debates over the purpose of education and rationale for reform will continue as controversial topics.

Given the rise to prominence for the implementation of sweeping education reforms, the recommendation that researchers and practitioners create and engage in partnership arrangements with other entities has become particularly important in public school systems (Coburn & Penuel, 2016; Coburn, Penuel, & Geil, 2013). The reasons why partnerships are able to achieve more together than individual groups are able to do on their own include: sharing of resources and expertise, accessing broader professional networks, and developing shared purposes (Penuel & Gallagher, 2017; Tett, 2005). Ruth Neild, the Director of the U.S. Department of Education Institute of Education Sciences provided a succinct justification for partnerships: “When practitioners and researchers work together, not only is practice better, and what we are able to do for kids better, but the research is much, much better” (William T. Grant Foundation, 2016, para. 1).

The rationale behind the partnership concept within educational environments is that the differences in perspectives of those involved will enhance and strengthen the quality of education that students receive (Davis & Krajcik, 2005; Glifford, 1986; Wallerstein & Duran, 2010). Collaborative relationships stress the inclusion of voices from the field, i.e., practitioners and community stakeholders, in educational practice and research. Illustrating the benefit of these relationships, prominent literature in the field (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007; McCarthy, 2002; Norton, 2002; Southern Regional Education Board, 2006) identifies core benefits of establishing diverse researcher and practitioner partnerships as:
• helping to ensure a better understanding of the needs of the field,
• assisting in maintaining a proper balance between theory and practice,
• enhancing opportunities for effective field-based experiences, and
• keeping university and private research programs grounded in the local community context.

Furthermore, research suggests support for the notion that such partnerships strengthen schools by fostering improvement and development (Sanzo, Myran, & Clayton, 2010; Southern Regional Educational Board, 2010). Optimizing the use of resources to improve student learning is a purposeful and strategic decision that engages partners in the process of collaboration.

**Building and Sustaining Partnerships**

Lessons from a body of literature suggest that the lack of sustained results in partnerships can be attributed to the complex, unpredictable, and entangled dynamics of collaborative groups (Bryson, Crosby, & Stone, 2006; Owen & Larson, 2017; Queen, 2011). Because of these complex challenges in developing and sustaining partnerships, many partnerships do not make sustainable or measurable improvement for people and communities, regardless of seemingly good intentions (Bryson, Crosby, & Stone, 2006). Consequently, understanding effective strategies and challenges of partnership development can contribute to their efforts in addressing complex societal problems that exist across organizational boundaries.

Based on decades of research on effective strategies in partnership development, Penuel and Gallagher (2017) suggested partners take time to learn about each other. Further, building an infrastructure of tools and routines helps to support the development of partnerships. Also, designing work adaptively across levels and settings contributes to carrying out the mission of
the partnership. Lastly, expanding joint relationships builds capacity for the sustainability of such partnerships.

Specifically, partnerships must strategically plan their work as a platform for maintaining organizational design and promoting change (Owen & Larson, 2017). However, planning should not be mistaken for strategizing (Martin, 2014; Penuel & Gallagher, 2017). In education, most of the guiding principles for conducting work include the involvement of strategic and purposeful partnering with the vision of improving educational practice (Cech, 2008). Strategic planning involving the integration of knowledge and resources is often what policymakers, funders, researchers, and practitioners seek when collaborating for social change (Owen & Larson, 2017).

Strategic planning helps partnerships coordinate their work effectively. Across literature, and across disciplines, strategic planning describes an iterative process in which shared communication leads to strategic organizing in the form of action (Nadler, 1994; Penuel & Gallagher, 2017; Spee & Jarzabkowski, 2011; Wilson, 1994). Successful organizations make strategic planning a part of their standard repertoire by empowering informed participants, creating precise short and long-reaching goals with evaluation measures, detailing strategies for meeting those goals, and creating agility to adapt to sudden changes in the internal or external environment of the organization (Penuel & Gallagher, 2017; Senge, 2006). Without strategic planning, it is unlikely that any organization, much less partnerships, will successfully address the many challenges that face them.

In addition to strategically collaborating around a shared vision and purpose, literature on engaging partners identifies a common set of conditions that are important to building collective impact and the success of partnerships (Kania & Kramer, 2011; Penuel & Gallagher, 2017).
Kania and Kramer (2011) defined collective impact as, “the commitment of a group of important actors from different sectors to a common agenda for solving a specific social problem” (p. 36). Their research has argued that successful outcomes in partnerships stem from five key characteristics of partnerships:

- a common agenda and vision for change,
- a measurement system mutually agreed upon by the partners,
- the coordination of differentiated activities that are mutually reinforced,
- continuous communication that nurtures motivation and trust, and
- a backbone organization that supports the infrastructure of the partnership.

When organizations work together toward common goals, partnerships are better equipped to address social problems that cannot be achieved by any one organization (Kania & Kramer, 2011; Owen & Larson, 2017).

Working with other people and organizations creates added value to relationships and results (Cech, 2008; Levine & White, 1961; Rippner, 2015). Building and nurturing relationships begins with trust, the essence of collaboration (Huxham & Vangen, 2005; Owen & Larson, 2017; Senge, 2006). Spending time to establish trust and share authority by developing structures that support trust helps to sustain partnerships (Israel, Eng, & Schultz, 2012; Penuel & Gallagher, 2017). Because leaders play a vital role in any effort to build stronger partnerships, the following section will discuss theoretical frameworks in the field of leadership that support the strategic development and sustainability of partnerships.
Researcher-Practitioner Partnerships

By combining knowledge, resources, approaches and operational cultures, partner organizations are able to achieve more together than they could on their own (Kania & Kramer, 2011). Research has indicated that partnerships that take into account the wishes and circumstances of various stakeholders, such as researchers and practitioners, are more likely to lead to synergy of purpose and successful outcomes (Penuel & Gallagher, 2017; Senge, 2006; Tett, 2005). However, understanding and operationalizing these behaviors tends to be much more difficult than expected. One such approach to this collaborative process is the development of researcher-practitioner partnerships.

RPPs are mutualistic in that the work is jointly negotiated (Coburn, Penuel, & Geil, 2013). Most definitions of effective groups in general refer to mutual recognition among members and a sense of belonging to the group (Forsyth, 1999; Johnson & Johnson, 2012). RPPs use intentional strategies to support their commitment to mutualism and to ensure that different perspectives contribute to defining the focus of the work that researcher-practitioner partnerships do. A community of diverse researchers and practitioners is a more robust source of knowledge and expertise. To do so, professionals within the partnerships must remain open to changing thinking and behavior and to thereby release often limited conceptions of what is thought to be solely correct (Cohen, 2011). Thus, a shift occurs within the individuals of a group regarding their beliefs about common knowledge (Deem, Hilliard & Reed, 2007).

Shared responsibility in RPPs is enhanced when stakeholders are cooperatively engaged and included in all phases of program development and implementation. Instead of the academic partner determining the research questions, research questions are jointly determined by the partnership. Practitioners may collect their own data to be analyzed by the partnership (Coburn
Researchers may also make data available to practitioners. RPPs involve original analysis of data where participants collect their own data and often use sophisticated analytic techniques to answer research questions (Coburn, Penuel, & Geil, 2013). Research–practice partnerships thus go beyond the focus of many current communities where researchers simply make data available to practitioners (Penuel & Means, 2012).

One example of this type of partnership is the Baltimore Education Research Consortium which analyzed the relationship between early-elementary achievement and attendance in that city’s pre-kindergarten and kindergarten programs. The goal of this study was to understand the effects of early chronic absences on later outcomes (Coburn et al., 2013). The results from this study indicated that students with chronic absences in pre-kindergarten and kindergarten were more likely to be retained by grade 3 (Connolly, Plank, & Rone, 2012).

Another example is the John W. Gardner Center for Youth and Their Communities which collected its own data to help the Redwood City 2020 partnership study the association between after-school programming and youth development outcomes given the goals of their partnership (Coburn et al., 2013). A study of four case examples presented by the Gardener’s Center found that “data use and inquiry in research-practice partnerships” enhance relationships between providers and the families whom they serve (Biag, Fehrer, Gerstein, Sanchez, & Sipes, 2016, p. 3).

Yet another example of researcher-practitioner partnerships is the Strategic Education Research Partnership (SERP). Its focus is to build academic language necessary to comprehend subject area texts and improve the vocabulary of students (Snow & Lawrence, 2011). This group has led extensive data collection and analysis on the development, impact, and scale-up of Word Generation, a middle school program co-designed by researchers and practitioners from Harvard
University and the Boston Public Schools. This study found that going beyond the teaching of individual vocabulary words and instead promoting deep reading and comprehension provided a more integrative approach to teaching academic language and promoting literacy to improve the understanding of language arts.

As part of promoting RPPs, the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) at the U.S. Department of Education funds the National Center for Research in Policy and Practice (NCRPP) as well as the Researcher-Practitioner Partnerships in Education Research program, hereafter referred to as the RPP program. IES launched the RPP program in 2013 with the purpose of supporting the partnership of research institutions and state or local education agencies to develop a plan for addressing high-priority problems in practice. NCRPP is a collaborative research effort between the University of Colorado Boulder School of Education, Northwestern School of Education and Social Policy, and the Center for Education Policy Research at Harvard University. The Institute of Education Sciences at the U.S. Department of Education supports NCRPP through grant R305C140008.

To develop a better understanding of participants in the IES RPP program, Farrell et al., (2017) designed a descriptive study that examined the perceptions of 106 RPP program participants, reflecting 27 of 28 funded RPPs between 2013 and 2015. The study design described the RPP program based on perceptions of partnership participants as recorded in surveys and interviews; grant applications were used to develop and further explain survey and interview questions.

Farrell et al. (2017) found that the most commonly reported goal among participating RPP program recipients were goals stated in the request for applications (RFA) for the program, that is, “conducting and using research and impacting local improvement efforts” (p. 3). The
descriptive study also found that educational leaders used research drawn from data they collected to inform the logic, position, and practice of partnerships. With data collected from participants in the partnerships, the authors provided descriptions of the activities and communication methods of the partnerships, challenges and perceptions of working within the RPP program, plans for future activities for RPP work, and programmatic guidance for IES.

The NCRPP study is complementary to the focus of the present study in terms of seeking to better understand the work of RPPs. However, rather than a description of the partnerships themselves as provided by the participants, the present study focused on the process of developing partnerships as documented in the context of a set of grant proposals, final reports, and other descriptions of their efforts. Further, research questions that guided the NCRPP study were developed based upon the experiences of the researchers involved. In contrast to the Farrell et al. (2017) report, categories that will guide the coding and analysis in the present content-analysis study were developed from a thorough review of the literature as presented in Chapter 2.
Leadership in Collaborative Communities

Effective leadership is not about making speeches or being liked;
leadership is defined by results not attributes.

Peter Drucker (1998)
(as cited in Hersey, Blanchard, & Johnson, 2008, p. 109)

Leadership has long been claimed as a major determinant to the success, achievements, or failure of organizations (Bass, 1990, 1994; Costa & McCrae, 1992). In accordance with this argument, the nature of leadership is complex and perplexing—explored in articles, books, courses, lectures, and handbooks, and evident in theories, styles, practice, and politics. Likewise, James MacGregor Burns asserted: “One of the most universal cravings of our time is a hunger for compelling and creative leadership” (Burns, 1978, p. 1). With ever-escalating interest in the research and practice of this topic, leadership is a universally applicable and critical factor in the initiation and implementation of transformation in organizations, and with great benefits (Hersey, Blanchard, & Johnson, 2008). Moving away from antiquated unidirectional or hierarchical, task-oriented models of leadership (Pettigrew, 2003), this literature review investigates historical and modern concepts of people-oriented leadership styles which support collaborative work. Furthermore, classic leadership theories that inform the processes of collaborative work, such as in the process of partnership development, are also discussed.

Contrary to managing things, people are led (Costa & McCrae, 1992). There are almost as many definitions of leadership as there are persons who have attempted to define the concept (Stogdill, 1974), hence the enigmatic and eclectic nature of leadership. However, articulating and demonstrating strategic and visionary leadership is a very common requirement for effective leadership, especially for transformational leadership (Bass, 1985; Penuel & Gallagher, 2017). The definition of leadership asserted by Bass and Stogdill (1990), Hersey, Blanchard, and
Johnson (2008), and Northouse (2007) serves as the foundation for the present study: leadership is the exercise of *influence* individually or in a group context. To accurately gauge influence, astute leaders must keep their fingers on the pulse of employee perceptions (Moorman, 1991). Leadership requires using power to influence the thoughts and actions of other people through the process of goal setting and goal achievement (Northouse, 2007; Zaleznik, 1992). Whereas management emphasizes rationality and control, leadership applies a practical, open-minded effort to direct affairs (Bass & Stogdill, 1990). However, both play an essential role in the operations of any organization.

At the forefront of leadership is communication, albeit directly or indirectly (Burke, 2010; Fullan, 2001; Lewin, 1947). Hersey, Blanchard, and Johnson (2008) suggested that communication is one of three competencies required for leading or influencing others. Organizational effectiveness is dependent on communication skills (Brun, 2010; Summers, 2010). A recent study indicated that recruiters rated communication skills as the most important characteristic of an ideal candidate for any job (Yate, 2009).

Much attention has been given to the concept of leadership in relationship to learning organizations (Senge, 2006). Dialogue, a form of communication, is often at the core of learning (Argyris, 2003; Avolio & Gardner, 2005). Communication, thus, facilitates individual learning and, by extension, organizational learning (Antonacopoulou, 2006; Hersey, Blanchard, & Johnson, 2008). A learning organization communicates as a system, yet with individual personality, moving collaboratively toward a shared vision (Senge, 2006).

Leaders in learning organizations are responsible for providing opportunities for people to reflect on the metacognitive process of continuous learning (Day, 2000; Schon, 1983; Senge, 2011). Senge (2006) described a learning organization as a growing institution that “is
continually expanding its capacity to create its future” (p. 14). Given this perspective, leaders can be teachers—teachers with influence on the learning process of individuals and organizations. This role builds capacity to strengthen groups of people in order to improve their efficiency, to accomplish their mission, and ultimately to impact the quality of life in communities.

Learning takes time. Time is not wasted when leaders spend time listening in order to foster learning (Bolman & Deal, 2008). Learning in organizations depends on developing positive relationships (Peters & Waterman, 1982). Building and nurturing relationships often begins with trust, the essence of collaboration (Huxham & Vangen, 2005; Senge, 2006). Followers are motivated to achieve organizational goals when leaders behave with integrity, thus allowing for the development of trust.

For example, one study indicated that employees are more likely to trust a complete stranger than their own boss (Segalla, 2009). Building and nurturing relationships and trust are skills that effective leaders are required to have, and yet, can be a challenge to obtain (Costa & McCrae, 1970; Cullen, Deal, Gentry, & Stawiski, 2014; Northouse, 2007). Developing the virtue of trust in any relationship, including leadership dynamics within organizations, garners mutual respect and buy-in towards the vision of any given partnership.

Based on decades of work researching leadership development, Bass and Avolio (1994) developed the concept of transformational leadership including four components often referred to as the 4 I’s of transformational leadership: idealized leadership, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. These four components of transformational leadership influence team performance. The 4 I’s of transformational leadership connects with two parts of full range leadership. The idea of full-range of leadership
developed from research on transformational leadership (Bass & Avolio, 1994). It acknowledges the delicate combination of exhibiting an array of leadership styles, from laisse-faire, the most passive form of transactional leadership, to transformational behaviors (Avolio, 2010; Judge & Piccolo, 2004).

Just as a perfect panacea to the process of collaboration does not exist, a perfect leadership style to negotiate all collaborative efforts is unrealistic (Gates, Blanchard, & Hersey, 1976). No factor of leadership can be applied without exception or without complement of other streams of thought. Because no single all-purpose leadership style exists, leaders adapt their behavior to the needs of their own unique environments. The leadership strategies of choice depend on the individual and the context of the given situation.
Traditional Leadership Styles

*Be the change you want to see in the world.*

~Mahatma Gandhi

Leadership should not be specifically defined or confined to a particular style (Yukl, 1989). Instead, leadership styles should be practiced in accordance with the situation at hand (Hersey, 1985; Kotter, 1985). Leadership style focuses specifically on the traits and behaviors of leaders and fall within various leadership theories. Rather than viewing traits as purely heritable qualities, this review focuses on leader traits defined as “relatively stable and coherent integrations of personal characteristics that foster a consistent pattern of leadership performance across a variety of group and organizational situations” (Zaccaro et al., 2004, p. 38). Understanding traditional leadership styles and theories can inform the research and practice of developing partnerships.

Leader behavior uses the dimensions of initiating structure and consideration (Stogdill, 1974). The terms structure and consideration were derived from decades of research dealing with the observation, description, and measurement of leaders compared to the results of their behavior as evidenced in the achievement and sustainability of a group. Initiating structure refers to behaviors that “get the job done,” such as emphasizing quality of the work, clarifying responsibilities, continual planning, offering new approaches to problems, initiating change, and encouraging the meeting of deadlines. Guba and Bidwell (1957) explained that consideration is reflected by behaviors of leaders when they: find time to listen to others, make it pleasant to work together with that person, show interest in other persons, compliment the work of others, have an open ear, and have others share in making decisions. The consequences of myopic leadership can slight the prudent choice which is learning multiple perspectives to the art and science of leadership (Senge, 2006).
Demonstrating consideration is a dimension of a leader’s style that can also impact employee satisfaction. A study of nearly 100,000 respondents in different organizations designed to determine the effect leaders have on the job satisfaction of their employees found that consideration by the leader had the greatest impact on employees’ job satisfaction (Cottrell, 2012; Devi, 2009; Kyndt, Dochy, & Baert, 2010; Leidner & Smith, 2013). Leader behaviors and traits, when appropriately demonstrated, can be useful to evoke effective organizational outcomes, such as increasing employee satisfaction.

The need to make decisions is yet another key factor that determines one’s chosen leadership style. Leaders are faced with multiple decisions that must be made every day. As organizations grow, so do the frequency and complexity of decisions and their ramifications.

Beyond the espoused “saying” aspects of leadership, the “doing” aspects of leadership sets the tone of an organization (Sy, Cote, & Saavedra, 2005). Followers emulate the behavior of leaders, thus influencing the way they feel, think, and act (George, 2000; Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2001). Effective leaders understand the antecedents to leadership decisions, accept consequences of their actions, and intervene to create better personal and professional relationships (Bird & Wang, 2013). Wrong decisions will happen and should lead to constructive learning experiences (Day, 2000; Penuel & Gallagher, 2017; Senge, 2006) for all involved.

In 1939, founder of modern social psychology Kurt Lewin led a group of his colleagues in developing the first major study of leadership styles and identified three different styles of leadership—autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire (Lewin, Lippit, White, 1939). This landmark study established the three major leadership styles that impact the four major factors of leadership—the led, the leader, the situation, and communications (U.S. Army, 1999). Because
of the complex interactions of blending knowledge, mentorship, leadership and self along with the receptiveness of followers, some researchers have concluded that leadership is situational, nonhierarchical, and relational (Goffee & Jones, 2006; Pettigrew, 2003). Thus, leadership styles depend on the approach of the leader, regardless of the leaders’ position, and receptiveness of the leaders’ followers (Northouse, 2016). Further, given that all situations are different and multiple voices and schools of thought compete for the leader’s attention, the style of leadership is directly related to the context of leadership (Bolman & Deal, 2008). Modern thinking recognizes that leadership style is important, but, as opposed to a rigid set of types, a good leader is responsive to the needs of those they lead and astute to the perceptions and realities of the internal and external environments in which they lead. Thus, such leaders may employ more than one style, even though there are “bright and dark sides” (Judge, Piccolo, & Kosalka, 2009), benefits and drawbacks, to every leadership style.

Leaders who follow the autocratic or authoritarian style seek control over all decisions and make choices primarily based on their own judgements (Lewin, Lippit, White, 1939). Autocratic leaders seek out and consider only minimum input from their followers and rarely consult with them (Rotemberg & Saloner, 1993). Authoritarian leadership captures behaviors that “assert absolute authority and control over subordinates and demand unquestionable obedience” (Cheng, Chou, Wu, Huang, & Farh, 2004, p. 232). When immediate action is needed and situations of urgency are at hand, such as in crisis situations or when major financial decisions need to be made on demand, this style of leadership can be very effective.

Recent leadership literature often refers to the authoritarian leadership style as “Machiavellianism” behavior—manipulative, persuasive, highly motivated to lead in a charismatic way, domineering, exploitive to their followers (Bergman et al., 2008; Christie &
Geis, 1970; Hodson, Hogg, & MacInnis, 2009; Motowidlo et al., 1997). Historically, Machiavelli’s leadership theory (1468-1527) is one of the oldest recognized theories of leadership in world literature. Machiavellianism focuses on techniques for manipulation and remaining in power—including deceit, bribery, and murder—that gave way to its negative reputation in later centuries (Hofstede, 1980).

The democratic leadership style, the second style identified by Lewin, Lippit, and White (1939), was discussed as “distributed leadership”—that is, emergent, neutral, dispersed, integrational, and functional towards human capacities, participative, and organic (Woods, 2004). The distributed leadership perspective is a democratic framework for thinking and analyzing leadership which suggests that the work of leadership is dispersed among multiple leaders in both formally designed positions and informally lived experiences of an organization (Gronn, 2000; Spillane, 2005).

The democratic leadership style is viewed as a more consensus-based, decision-making approach. Even though the idea of democracy itself is broad (Carr & Hartnett, 1996), most would agree that democracy involves discussion, debate, and distribution of voice (Dryzek, 1996; Kim, 2002). In the field of education, one of the implications for school leaders is that they need to protect and promote the ideas, concepts, and values of democracy in education (Blasé & Blasé, 1999; Dryzek, 1996; Starratt, 2001; Woods, 2004). To this end, when participants in the organization are allowed to have a voice and “majority rules” is the norm, inspiration tends to follow (Gronn, 2000; Spillane, 2005). This potential involvement can be palpable in organizations and is often evidenced in a greater degree of happiness, relaxation, transparency, commitment, and warmth.
Laissez-faire leaders tend to believe that the best decisions a leader can make is to not be the one to make certain decisions at all. Laissez faire in French means to “let it be.” Researchers have argued whether laissez-faire leadership, the active avoidance of leadership, should be referred to as leadership at all (Bass & Avolio, 1991; Frischer & Larsson, 2000; Judge & Piccolo, 2004). Leaders who practice the laissez faire leadership style present an attitude of allowing things to take their own course with little interference from the leader. Literature on leadership styles often refer to laissez-faire leaders as delegative in their behavior—passive, “hands off”, indolent, frequently absent, lack of involvement at critical junctures, unconcerned, and withdrawn (Bass & Avolio, 1995; Lewin, Lippit, & White, 1939; Skogstad, Einarsen, Torsheim, Aasland, & Hetland, 2007). As mentioned previously, every leadership style, including laissez-faire leadership, has bright and dark sides.

The positive use of laissez-faire leadership can be particularly effective in situations where group members are in fact more knowledgeable than the group leader (Goodnight, 2004; Widener University, 2017). Furthermore, this leadership style works well in a work environment with highly competent, intrinsically motivated, and trusted peers (Bass & Avolio, 1991). Thus, in response to changing situational demands, there are times when laissez-faire behaviors may be ideal. For example, when the leader and group members become highly effective and the team can be allowed freedom to work independently with high commitment to their work. The negative results of the laissez-faire leadership style are plentiful: group member roles are poorly defined, projects tend to get off-track, lack of cohesiveness occurs within the group, productivity is questioned, and avoidance of personal responsibility and accountability are probable (Judge & Piccolo, 2004). In fact, researchers have found that the laissez faire leadership style leads to the lowest productivity among group members, such as poor job performance, less group
satisfaction, passivity and avoidance (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Lewin, Lippit, & White, 1939; Skogstad, Einarsen, Torsheim, Aasland, & Hetland, 2007). However, when the situation is appropriate, the laissez-faire style of leadership can be useful in organizations.

**Classic Leadership Theories**

For the greater part of the 20th century, the United States has been the world’s largest producer and exporter of management theories covering key areas such as leadership, motivation, and organization (Hofstede, 1980). Though the choice of leadership style is dependent on the circumstance, there are classic leadership theories that best inform leadership decisions. The four classic leadership theories are: trait, behavioral, contingency, and power/influence. The theoretical roots of each of the four leadership theories will be discussed in this literature review.

Leadership theories describe the salient aspects of leader behavior. As previously described, for decades, there are almost as many definitions of leadership as there are of persons who have attempted to define the concept (Stogdill, 1974). The leader of an organization communicates to followers messages, such as: emotional reactions, values, aspirations, and preferences, and models behaviors associated with them (Bass & Avolio, 1990; Bellah et al., 1985). The dominant theory that exemplifies the behavior of the leader is a point of reference not only for followers but also for the organization and the image it portrays.

The trait-leadership theory is one of the earliest theories of leadership. Classic models of this theory focused on traits or qualities of leaders associated with successful leadership in organizations, such as: assertiveness, adaptability, confidence, intelligence, and social skills (Bass, 1990; Yukl, 2010). Historically, scholars have argued that leadership is unique to only a select group of individuals who possess certain immutable traits that cannot be developed, only
inherited (Galton, 1869). This perception that great leaders are born has been greatly criticized over the past century.

In spite of individual differences in the personal characteristics of leaders, trait leadership is defined as integrated patterns of behavior that foster consistent leader effectiveness across a variety of group and organizational situations (Zaccaro, Kemp, & Bader, 2004). As the dominant theory in the early 1900s, the central premise of trait theory is that leadership emergence and effectiveness can be explained in terms of stable and consistent differences—heritable attributes—in how individuals behave, think, and feel (Kessler, 2013). In the 1930s, the “Great Man Theory” evolved into the trait theory. Trait leadership theory asserts that core personality traits predict leader effectiveness and can help organizations with selecting, training, and developing leaders (Derue et al., 2011). The underlying premise of trait-leadership theory is to identify discrete characteristics of effective leaders. Popular models of trait theory include Weber’s use of bureaucratization, emphasizing control of knowledge and a rigid chain of command, and Taylor’s scientific management, emphasizing economic efficiency by managing labor and workflows.

In the late 1940s and early 1950s, scholars began to realize that any trait’s effect on leadership behavior depends on the situation, and widespread critique of the trait-leadership theory began (Kessler, 2013). This line of research is drawn from one of the earliest types of investigations into the nature of effective leadership, The Great Man theory of leadership, first proposed by Thomas Carlyle in the mid-1800s (Stodgdill, 1948; Northouse, 2016). Researchers began to realize that personality traits are insufficient in predicting leader effectiveness (Mann, 1959; Stogdill, 1948;). Factors such as followers, the situation, and communication deem personality traits an inefficient way to characterize effective leadership.
During this same period of widespread rejection, other theories replaced trait-leadership theory such as Fiedler’s (1967) contingency model, Blake and Mouton’s (1964) managerial grid, Hersey and Blanchard’s (1969) situational leadership model, and transformational and transactional leadership models (Avolio, Sosik, Jung, & Berson, 2003; Bass, 1985; Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman, & Fetter, 1990). Though evidence exists that discounts trait-leadership theory, traits that support effective leadership and success in leadership environments have reemerged in research, such as charisma, extraversion, intelligence, motivation, and trustworthiness (Hoffman, Woehr, Maldgaen-Youngjohn, & Lyons, 2011; Judge et al., 2002; Judge, Colbert, & Ilies, 2004; Nichols & Cottrell, 2014). Trait-leadership is a classic theory and continues to garner attention as the natural and social sciences evolve in the 21st century.

In contrast to the notion that leaders are born, interest in the late 1940s and 1950s shifted to behavioral theories with the intent of determining specific behaviors that successful leaders portray with the focus on what they do, versus how they appear to others (Halpin & Winer, 1957; Northouse, 2016; Yukl, 2010). For behavioral theorists, leader behavior predicts the influence persons will have on their followers, which, in turn, determines leadership success (Blake & Mouton, 1985; Nichols & Cottrell, 2014). However, there are strengths and weaknesses to this approach.

Overall, the behavioral approach is not a refined theory that provides a neatly organized set of prescriptions for effective leadership behavior. Rather, the behavioral approach provides a valuable framework for asserting leadership in a broad way as assessing behavior with task and relationship dimensions. The behavioral approach reminds leaders that their impact on others occurs along both dimensions. (Northouse, 2016, p. 91)
The Ohio State studies of the late 1940s and the University of Michigan studies of the 1950s identified two fundamental dimensions of leader behavior associated with people or employee and task or production orientation, also referred to as consideration and initiation structures (Halpin & Winer, 1957; Katz et al., 1950; Northouse, 2016). Researchers at Ohio State University identified common leadership behaviors and developed the Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire (LBDQ) designed to measure nine different behavioral leadership dimensions (Stogdill, 1974).

These studies found that two central groups of behaviors were strongly correlated with effective leadership, people-orientation and task-orientation. People-oriented leaders show concern for human relations, such as ensuring that staff is motivated and intrinsically satisfied. Behaviors such as coaching, encouraging, listening, observing, and mentoring can motivate staff and lead to their satisfaction (Hersey & Blanchard, 1969). Task-oriented leaders show concern for directive behaviors and operating procedures, such as clarifying, initiating, information gathering, and organizing (Northouse, 2010, p. 91). These behaviors focus primarily on establishing performance tasks that achieve specific goals and outcomes.

The Ohio State and University of Michigan studies concluded that leaders with high consideration for people and high task orientation can be valuable in developing relationships in the organizational group process (Blake & Mouton, 1985; Misumni, 1985). However, depending on the people involved and the task at hand, other dynamics between the core behaviors of people-orientation and task-orientation could also be evident (Northouse, 2016). Conclusions drawn from this research indicate that seeking a universal theory of behavioral leadership for every situation can be inconsistent and unclear (Yukl, 2010). Nonetheless, studies carried out at
the Ohio and Michigan universities established the foundation for the reconceptualization and development of many additional studies and theories on behavioral leadership.

In the 1960s, as researchers began to consider the relevance of leader behavior in various situations, situational scales, models, and theories began to develop (Hersey & Blanchard, 1969). For example, led by Rensis Likert at the University of Michigan, devised the 5-point Likert scale as a way to determine the extent of a person’s attitudes, behaviors and feelings towards situations in public affairs (Likert, 1967) in order to support subtle differences within constructs. Based on a range of generally 5 choices, a person selects the most appropriate response to a statement or series of statements. These responses lead to data collecting information about respondent’s attitudes, which, in turn, leads to a better understanding of their behavior as leaders (Croasum & Ostrum, 2011). This behavior-focused approach to leadership led some researchers to assert that behaviors could be conditioned, or directly instructed, so that one can have a specific response regarding behavior or initiation to a specific stimulus or situation (Northouse, 2016). If this conditioning can take place, then perhaps anyone can be trained to be a leader by teaching the most appropriate behavioral response to situations. Scholars quickly realized that the fallacy of this prominent school of thought because of the countless situations, or contingencies which leaders must respond (Kettler & Blanchard, 1990).

As research progressed into the 1970s and 1980s, a third classic theory combined behavioral and trait theories and is described as the contingency, or situational, theory of leadership in which the environment influences the leader (Men, 2014). Assuming that leadership effectiveness varies from situation to situation, these contingent or situational variables often deny the ability of good leaders to change the situation before they decide on a response to it. Thus, the success of the leader is a function of various responses to contingencies
Popular models include Fred Fiedler’s contingency theory (1967) which focused on the fundamental concepts of leadership style and situational favorableness. Paul Hersey and Ken Blanchard’s situational theory (1969) similarly focused on the fundamental concepts of leadership style and individual or group maturity level. Lastly, Victor Vroom and Phillip Yetton (1973) also argued that the preferred style of leadership is contingent to the situation. The Vroom-Yetton contingency model emphasizes using logic models when making decisions regarding responses to various contingencies.

The fundamental underpinning of the contingency theory is that there is no best way to lead a group based on idealized traits or behaviors; rather, the optimal course of action is contingent upon the situation. Vroom and Sternberg (2002) attempted to clarify the best fit leadership style for group decision-making. After this phase of high emphasis on contingencies that govern leader decisions, the lexicon of leadership research shifted from situations defining a leader, to the influence leaders can have on followers’ behavior and, thus, the nature of the situation.

Nonetheless, contingency or situational theories remained popular as power and influence leadership theories also became popular, chief among them being transactional and transformational leadership. In 1991, Bass and Avolio presented the “Full Range Leadership Model” as measured by the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ). Power or influence theories of leadership motivate people to get the job done. Peck (2003) asserted that power or influence theories are evidenced in powerful visioning, listening, speaking, team-building, and using feedback.
The fourth classic leadership theory to be discussed is transactional leadership. Transactional leaders give clear structure and direction by managing through rewards and punishments (Bass, 1991). The three dimensions of transactional leadership include contingent reward, active management by exception, and passive management by exception (Howell & Avolio, 1993). Transactional leaders “set goals, articulate explicit agreements regarding what the leader expects from organizational members and how they will be rewarded for their efforts and commitment, and provide constructive feedback to keep everybody on task” (Vera & Crossan, 2004, p. 224). The challenge with transactional leadership is that people often feel micro-managed and stifled (Bass, 1991) which may lead to decreased morale and motivation.

Transformational leaders “transform the art of leadership into the science of results” as leadership becomes resonant (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2002), that is, bringing out everyone’s best by recognizing the emotional impact of leadership. The authors further describe resonant leaders are effectively attuned to emotions in order to connect with others and inspire success. By combining feeling and thought, effective leaders of the 21st century transform organizations through inspiring people to act towards change. Transformational leadership is often referred to as a broader construct of charismatic leadership (Bass & Avolio, 1994). In transformational leadership, leaders use charisma to inspire and thus move followers beyond immediate self-interests. To do so, they employ the four I’s of transformational leadership: idealized influence or charisma, inspiration, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration (Bass, 1999). A recent meta-analysis by Judge and Bono (2004) described the relationship between participant’s personality traits and the leaders’ display of transformational characteristics. The authors described the five factors of transformational leadership, often referenced in literature using the acronym OCEAN: openness to experience; conscientiousness;
extraversion, the strongest and most consistent correlate; agreeableness; and neuroticism, the weakest correlate.

Reducing leadership to a function of scientific or hierarchical management is a historic notion in today’s world of teamwork (Senge, 2006; Yukl, 2010). Perhaps 50 years ago, parents in the United States taught their children to passively obey authority without question. Today, most parents believe that children should be actively empowered and confident to take responsibility for their own actions, question authority when necessary, and accept the challenges that come from these decisions (Cullen et al., 2014). Workers want to be treated more as a respected colleague than a laborer with a boss.

Leader effectiveness in the 21st century refers to the amount of influence a leader has on individual or group performance, followers’ satisfaction, and overall effectiveness (Derue, Nahrgang, Wellman, & Humphrey, 2011; Penuel & Gallagher, 2017). Leaders earn the influence of their followers by gaining trust, demonstrating knowledge, and communicating their vision clearly and effectively. The power or influence theories assert that the leader inspires followers to transcend their self-interests and perceived limitations for the good of the organization. Essentially, parts of each leadership theory are effective and are used widely today. Researchers now understand that successful leaders of the 21st century use the best of leadership research and theories in a complementary manner.
Challenges in Leading Partnerships

*A new type of thinking is essential if mankind is to survive and move towards higher levels.*

*Albert Einstein (1946, p.13)*

Because many social problems are too complex for just one stakeholder to solve, communities and other local and national funders are investing resources to support the development of partnerships, particularly in education (National Academy of Education, 1999; Penuel & Gallagher, 2017). Through fostering innovative leadership and learning, partnerships can play a pivotal role in improving education and supporting student success (Donovan, Wigdor, & Snow, 2003; National Research Council, 2012). The present study analyzed researcher-practitioner partnerships (RPPs), a fairly new trend in the growing interest of partnership work (Penuel & Gallagher, 2017; Owen & Larson, 2017), in order to understand how people form partnerships to solve educational problems.

As challenging social issues are addressed, partnerships work together to establish shared value (Schein, 2004) in order to make a “collective impact” (Kania & Kramer, 2011, p. 36) in doing so. More specifically, with the goals of improving schools and school districts, “RPPs are long-term collaborations between practitioners and researchers that are organized to investigate problems of practice and solutions” (Coburn, Penuel, & Geil, 2013, p. 48). Collective impact is based on the idea that social problems arise from and persist because of a complex combination of actions and omissions by stakeholders in all sectors, and, therefore, can be solved only by the coordinated efforts of those stakeholders. Likewise, Covey (2005) referred to the collective efforts of partnerships as the synergy and operationalized shared values of a group of stakeholders to inform research, policy, and practice.
According to Schein (2004), a pattern of shared basic assumptions and values is learned by any group working together to solve problems. The culture of a group is created when internal integration and external adaptation are used as a product for joint learning. Schein referred to this integration and adaptation to the external environment as the development of mental models and organizational culture. Further, values and behaviors of any organization are evidenced in the tangible artifacts of the group, for example, any tangible, overt or verbally identifiable elements in an organization.

Establishing collaborative relationships between people of various knowledge, skills, and abilities can be challenging, including efforts to build capacity to support excellence in education. Negotiating the working relationship of different people and different groups is a process that requires continuous reflection and development (Schön, 1983). Further, challenging espoused and tacit assumptions and values of individuals can be problematic, especially if the assumptions are far-removed from the shared intentions of the group. Flexibility is necessary in collaborative work. Such challenges require the most difficult learning imaginable: “unlearning” (Drucker, 1995, p. 81). Unlearning involves changing habits and behaviors which are counterproductive in order to develop valuable and creative human relationships.

Drucker’s position on the challenge of organizational change is premised, in part, on the work of Kurt Lewin (Burke, 2010). Lewin described strategies for successful social and organizational development in order to foster interrelationships among research, training, and practice for the solution of human problems (Bennis, Benne, Chin, & Corey, 1976). Lewin’s work is significant to organizational change because his perspectives and theories led to research and spawned an entire body of literature in order to inform research, policy, and practice.
Partnerships are evident in a variety of educational settings. Growing attention has been given to the specific components that lead to overcoming challenges in working in partnership and creating successful collaboration in society’s complex social challenges (Bryson, Crosby & Stone, 2006; Luke, 1998). The historical perspectives of scholars such as Dewey (1933), Drucker (1995), Kania and Kramer (2011), Lewin, (1939) and Schein (2004) call attention to the need for further research and innovation in research and practice on partnership development.

The challenges of leading partnerships described in this section of the literature review reflects the barriers that RPPs face when striving towards meaningful partnership work (Penuel & Gallagher, 2017). This section is organized in five subsections. The first subsection highlights the need for allotting quality time and resources to foster continuous communication and productivity of the partnership. The second subsection addresses challenges partnerships face in developing a common vision and agenda. Subsection three synthesizes current research emphasizing the need for a commitment to shared performance accountability to evaluate the work of the partnership. The next subsection describes the importance of establishing mutually reinforced activities that support the organizational structure and functioning of the group. The fifth and final subsection addresses the challenge of fostering change when dealing with complex social issues.

**Dedicating Time and Resources for Continuous Communication**

The essence of partnering is sharing information and resources to progress toward a goal (Farrell et al., 2017). This process takes time. Two or more stakeholders dedicating time to collaboratively share information and resources to address solutions to social problems leads to greater potential to foster social change (Bryson, Crosby, & Stone, 2006). Maintaining the group momentum is a potential challenge in any partnership, especially when time is a limited
resource (Penuel & Gallagher, 2017). Without frequent communication and dedicated time for group work, participants may begin to feel detached from the common vision and agenda. Furthermore, existing research highlights the barrier of communication between researchers and practitioners, given the lack of a common language with which to talk about social issues (Sirotnik & Goodlad, 1998). Differences in expectations regarding sharing resources, norms, roles, and responsibilities can lead to confusion, uncertainty, and even conflict (Coburn et al., 2008; Rosen, 2010). Successful partnership work requires an infrastructure where time and resources for continuous communication are prioritized and sustained as the norm.

**Sharing a Common Vision and Agenda**

Research concerning organizational leadership and partnerships stresses the need to create and communicate a shared vision among these groups (Bass & Avolio, 1991; Crosby & Bryson, 2005; Northouse, 2007; Schein, 2004). A vision statement defines the optimal future state of an organization over time and provides succinct guidance and inspiration to stakeholders (Kouzes & Posner, 2009). A vision and a joint approach to achieving that vision allow individual efforts to be aligned to the shared goal of an organization, thus increasing the commitment of the participants. Setting aside time to establish coordination and compromise is important in initiating relationship building and in developing honest dialogue and a vision (Podsakoff et al., 1990; Wohlstetter, Hentschke, Malloy, & Smith, 2005). Power and responsibilities within a partnership should be strategically distributed among the partners as they work towards creating a shared vision and agenda.

Intense work is needed to guide the process of creating a shared vision and agenda within a partnership (Penuel & Gallagher, 2017). Moreover, leaders with a vision work with other people to co-create “communal stories” that help various stakeholders develop a sense of what
they have in common with each other and what they can do to address problems and create a better future (Shamir & House, 1994; Stone, 2001). Kouzes and Posner (2009) suggested that the best leaders are those who engage in the oldest form of research—observing the human condition. During this exchange process, the perspectives and interest of each participant should be appreciated and mutually respected, not only by the leader but also by the participants in the partnership.

This type of collaboration often presents a challenge when working to reach agreements among diverse stakeholders. Further, the potential for various partners to undermine the overarching interest and decisions of the group for the sake of political dominance challenges the exchange process of observation and understanding individual perspectives (Englert, Kean, & Scribner, 1977; Scott, Lubineski, DeBray, & Jabbar, 2014). Reaching a common understanding about joint problems and a shared approach to solving them through agreed upon actions is a necessary challenge worthy of additional research in understanding partnerships.

A Commitment to Shared Performance Accountability

Performance measures are designed to track the effectiveness of partnerships (Owen & Larson, 2017). Ideally, participants collaboratively create their own measurement system based on ongoing plans for assessments and improvement (Bryson, Crosby, & Stone, 2006; Thomson & Perry, 2006; Penuel & Gallagher, 2017). Developing performance measurement tools creates a shared commitment to completing work that is clearly aligned to the goals, vision, and agenda of the partnership. Furthermore, establishing shared evaluation measures with precise indicators fosters reflection, adaptation, and accountability within the partnership.

Though establishing a shared performance measurement system is important, developing precise indicators of success can be challenging (Owen & Larson, 2017; Penuel & Gallagher,
2017). Another potential problem is overuse of performance measurement; performance measures should not be used to anxiously collect and analyze data as proof of efficiency (Bryson, Crosby, & Stone, 2006). Elliot Eisner (2002) encapsulated this principle with a simple aphorism: “Not everything that matters can be measured, and not everything that is measured matters” (p. 178). However, commitment to a shared performance measurement system can be one way to evaluate the collective impact (Kania & Kramer, 2011) and performance of an organization.

**Mutually Reinforced Activities**

Working cooperatively around a clearly established vision and agenda is essential for creating effective working relationships in a partnership (Owen & Larson, 2017). Conflicting goals, missions, and activities may lead to mistrust, conflict, and power imbalances (Kania & Kramer, 2011). Considering this assumption, all partnership activities should be aligned to a common agenda and grounded in shared performance measures (Bryson, Crosby, & Stone, 2006; Burke, 2010; Penuel & Gallagher, 2017). A recurring challenge that prevents successful collaboration is the lack of mutual accountability regarding those activities within the partnerships (Babiak & Thubault, 2009; Garcia, Valdez, & Arinio, 2003; Penuel & Gallagher, 2017).
Fostering Leadership for Change

The role of leadership during change is to “put an engine on the whole change process” and to create urgency toward addressing big visions (Kotter, 2012, p. 2). Change management is distinctly different than change leadership because management is intended to keep change under control (Burke, 2010; Northouse, 2016). On the other hand, change leadership implies change to the status quo. This process is challenging because it requires change in the way people work and because people need to adjust their well-formed habits.

The role of change in partnerships is multi-faceted. Setting goals fosters change (Burke, 2010; Evans, 1970; Kotter & Cohen, 2002). In partnerships, the interdependent responsibilities of participants link the organizations together as a system moving towards common goals (Bryson, Crosby, & Stone, 2006; Senge, 2006). Together, partnerships have the potential to make changes in a community. For example, university-based researchers and community-based organizations can work towards change by developing necessary skills, such as strategic planning, community assessment, advocacy, resource management, and development of community evaluations (Penuel & Gallagher, 2017). Sustaining change requires cross-sector problem-solving with a collective impact (Burke, 2010; Coburn & Penuel, 2016; Kania & Kramer, 2011).

Lewin’s Freeze Phases model was developed in the early 20th century and still forms the underlying basis of many modern change management theories, models, and strategies (Burke, 2010). Lewin, Lippit, and White (1939) referred to leadership during change as “unfreezing” the organization. A body of research suggests that the central issue in leading change is the emotional dimension of changing the behavior of people by relating to their feelings (Cai, 2011; Covey, 2005; Darwin, 1965; Kotter & Cohen, 2002; Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Therefore,
addressing resistance to change is necessary and requires time and the use of emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1995). Thus, understanding the factors that lead to change can be perceived as a challenge in leadership and organizational development.

No single model for leading change exists. Kotter’s (2012) empirical research on change theories yielded a model entitled “The 8 Step Process for Leading Change.” He found that 70% of all major change efforts in organizations fail and that the critical differences between success and failure involved eight steps.

Kotter’s 8-step methodology of change leadership begins with creating a sense of urgency to move people out of their comfort zones. The second step is forming a powerful guiding coalition team with energy and authority to lead the change effort. This step requires emotionally astute and socially intelligent individuals to analyze their own thinking and behaviors, as well as other people’s feelings and emotions (Day, 2000; Goleman, 1995). The third step is for participants to create a clear vision expressed simply. The next step is to communicate the vision and strategies for change to stakeholders and the community; development is impossible without the buy-in and participation of people willing to develop and sustain it.

The fifth step is to empower others to act on the vision. This step involves removing obstacles to change and encouraging risk-taking. Kotter’s sixth step in leading the process of change is to plan for and create short-term, visible performance improvements that can be recognized and rewarded. The seventh step implements larger change efforts by building on positive improvements already in place. The eighth and final step is to institutionalize the new approaches by articulating the connections between new behaviors and organizational success and by developing ways to ensure leadership development and succession. New behaviors
rooted in accepted social norms and shared values help to anchor change in the culture of any organization.

**Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework for the present study was developed from theoretical ideas and empirical elements supporting the role of leadership and the process of partnership development. The conceptual framework illustrates the need for partnership development to improve the quality of public education. Developing successful partnerships is informed by change theories in organizational development and leadership theories such as transformational leadership and shared leadership. The need for partnership development requires the implementation of full-range leadership strategies, intentional organizational development, strategic planning, and reflective practice. Conceptualizing the need for partnership development in this way leads to sustainable partnerships that collectively impact problems of practice in education. Figure 2 represents the relationship between these elements.
Figure 2: A conceptual framework for leading partnership development
Chapter Summary

The purpose of the literature review was to examine the topics of partnerships, leadership, and the challenges of leading partnerships in order to provide a foundation for the present study in the knowledge base of relevant theory and research. As complex problems of practice are addressed, understanding the process of developing partnerships can inform research, policy, and practice. The first section of the review discussed the concept of partnerships, particularly researcher-practitioner partnerships in education (Kania & Kramer, 2011; Penuel & Gallagher, 2017; Senge, 2006). Literature indicated that partnerships involve shared leadership and empowerment among respected individuals working in learning organizations as a system (Senge, 2006). Therefore, the second section of this literature review examined the many concepts and styles of leadership, particularly shared leadership and transformational leadership (Bass, 1985; Bryson, Crosby, & Stone, 2006; Costa & McCrae, 1992). Finally, the third section of the literature discussed challenges of leading partnerships (Burke, 2010; Penuel & Gallagher, 2017; Schein, 2004), such as creating trust, strategic planning given shared leadership, and the careful management of resources for implementing partnerships and supporting change.

Chapter 3 describes the research methodology for the present study. It includes both descriptions of and justifications for the research design, research methodology, data subsection, and an overview of potential data strategies. The role of leadership and the process of developing partnerships in education as documented in the context of a set of grant proposals, final reports, and other descriptions of their efforts were examined using directed content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005; Patton, 2002) as a qualitative research approach.
CHAPTER 3: STUDY DESIGN AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In the previous chapter, the literature review explored the dynamics of partnerships, the impact of leader and leadership development on partnerships, and the challenges of leading partnerships. Furthermore, Chapter 2 provided evidence regarding the importance and growing interest in the influence of partnerships on research and practice in communities that lead to educational improvement (Coburn & Penuel, 2016; Kania & Kramer, 2011; United States Department of Education, 2017; Penuel & Gallagher, 2017).

A review of the literature indicated a limited amount of research that focuses on the challenges of partnership development and the leadership strategies used to overcome them. Therefore, additional knowledge regarding specific strategies to develop and facilitate partnerships could inform practice. Thus, this chapter describes the study design and research methodology followed in order to answer the research question: How are the role of leadership and the process of developing sustainable partnerships in education documented in the context of a set of grant proposals, their final reports, and other descriptions of their efforts? Evidence that supports the study design and its research methodology is presented in six sections: research design, researcher as tool, selection of the case, data collection, data analysis, and credibility.

Research methodology can be described as the systematic collection, analysis, interpretation, and presentation of research data in a study design (Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Patton, 2002). Research must clearly explain the very idea of re-search—a systematic repeated search for apparent patterns through the identification and selection of information-rich resources (Krippendorff, 2004; Patton, 2002). Further, the explicit description of the design and research methodology used in a given study can clarify the logical processes that influenced rigorous and acceptable data collection and data analysis strategies. This logical process guides decisions of
the researcher at every phase of the study. Researchers often refer to this concept as “determining credibility” and trustworthiness, a standard to be met by all research (Howe & Eisenhart, 1990). Howe and Eisenhart further described the requirements to be met in the design and conduct of any rigorous study: (a) an alignment between the research question and the study design; (b) adherence to transparency in the literature review; (c) a disclosure of the researcher’s point of view; (d) adherence to strict standards for rigorous data collection and analysis; (e) evidence of overall warrant and validity in the study; and (f) the recognition of ethical standards in carrying out the research. The careful design of rigorous research will increase understanding of complex phenomenon and contribute rich information to the body of knowledge under investigation.

The present study focused on the role of leadership and the process of developing sustainable partnerships in education as documented in the context of grant applications. The assumption is that grant proposals, their final reports, and related descriptions provide data relevant to the focus of this study. As noted in Chapter 1, the focus of this study developed from the premise that understanding the complex endeavor of leadership and collaboration among partnerships can inform research and practice. Directed content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005; Kaid & Johnston-Wadsworth, 1989) will enable the researcher to analyze text in order to contribute to the knowledge base of transformational, shared, and change leadership theories and research.
Research Design

The purpose of qualitative research is to seek the knowledge of understanding (Patton, 2002) regarding complex social phenomena. Merriam (1998) stated that “qualitative research seeks to discover and understand a phenomenon, a process, or the perspectives of the people involved” (p. 11). The most common sources of qualitative data include interviews, observations, and documents (Patton, 2002). Based on an analysis of the literature as presented in Chapter 2 and given the focus of the research question on the role of leadership and the process of developing sustainable partnerships in education, documents about those processes from planning to implementation can provide insight into effective leadership and partnership development strategies in education. Thus, the research method employed to gain the desired insight is directed content analysis (Weber, 1990) as a qualitative research approach.

Qualitative content analysis, or document analysis, can be a useful technique to describe and clarify the focus of individual, group, institutional, or social issues as documented in text (Weber, 1990). Furthermore, as Merriam (1988) pointed out, “documents of all types can help the researcher uncover meaning, develop understanding, and discover insights relevant to the research problem” (p. 118). Some researchers refer to directed content analysis as deductive content analysis because existing data are tested using categories, concepts, models, or hypotheses present in literature (Marshall & Rossman, 2011).

A set of documents can be considered as a case study where the researcher seeks to find processes, outcomes, and patterning in variables that transcends particular cases (Meriam, 1998; Miles & Huberman, 1994). Several cases may also be examined as in cross-case analysis. The goal of cross-case analysis is “to build a general explanation that fits each of the individual cases, even though the cases will vary in their details” (Yin, 1994, p. 112). Yin (2014) suggested that
Researchers view cases as an opportunity to share collective viewpoints of participants by using multiple types of data, such as analyzing documents produced by six partnerships that were awarded funding in 2013 by the U.S. Department of Education Institute of Education Sciences (IES) Researcher-Practitioner Partnerships (RPP) in Education Research program.

In content analysis, a collection of judgments, perceptions and narratives “serve as substitutes for records of activity that the researcher could not observe directly” (Stake, 1995, p. 68). In the present study, the research focused on identifying leadership and collaboration strategies that best enable researchers and practitioners to develop and maintain effective partnerships as represented in grant proposals, final reports, and related descriptions of their efforts.

Content analysis was appropriate for the present study because the design provides a rich description of a single phenomenon or program (Bowen, 2009; Yin, 1994). Furthermore, content analysis offers a “flexible, pragmatic method for developing and extending knowledge of the human experience” (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1286). Bowen (2009) suggested that documented content provides background and context, additional questions to be asked, supplementary data, a means of tracking change and development, and verification of findings. Thus, content analysis allows for rich and “thick” (Denzin, 1989) data regarding the research question.

The first of seven classic steps to conducting a content analysis is forming a research question (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005; Kaid & Johnston-Wadsworth, 1989). In the present study the research question was: How are the role of leadership and the process of developing sustainable partnerships in education documented in the context of a set of grant proposals, final reports, and
other descriptions of their efforts? In an unobtrusive and nonreactive way, content analysis provides a means to address this research question.

Recommendations from Hsieh and Shannon (2005) and Patton (2002) significantly influenced the development of the content analysis research design and the process for data analysis to be used in the present study. The seven classic steps in the process of content analysis are: “formulating the research question to be answered, selecting the sample to be analyzed, defining the categories to be applied, outlining the coding process and coder training, implementing the coding process, determining trustworthiness, and analyzing the results of the coding process” (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1285). More specifically, to make “valid inferences from text” (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1278), criteria are used to question the data and to thus serve as systematic, replicable techniques for compressing many words of text into fewer content categories based on explicit rules of coding (Krippendorff, 2004; Stemler, 2001). The steps noted above guide all components of the content analysis process, from retrieving the data, to inferring, and finally providing answers to the research question (Krippendorff, 2004).

**Researcher as Tool**

Eisner (1998) emphasized that the researcher should give a great deal of thought and careful judgement regarding the development of research by acknowledging the researcher’s own personal connoisseurship, that is, the ways in which we perceive, describe, interpret, and appraise the world. Self-reflection is an essential part of qualitative research (Burnard, 1995). One of the principal qualifications for qualitative researchers is to “develop expertise largely through reflective practice” (Stake, 1995, p. 50). Subtle judgements and interpretations have the potential to enhance and inform the practice of education (Schön, 1983); therefore, researchers must acknowledge their own perceptions and influence on the research process. Denzin (2007)
discussed this acknowledgement of perceptions as the “special way of seeing” that is needed to “capture and re-present” the present (p. 32). Further, Strauss and Corbin (1990) argued that “the touchstone of your own experience may be more valuable an indicator to you of a potentially successful research endeavor” (p. 35).

One way that capturing the researcher’s “special way of seeing” occurs through recognizing the importance of “voice” in research because the researcher’s “voice must be heard in the text, alliteration allowed, and cadence encouraged” (Eisner, 1998, p. 3). Likewise, Kaid & Johnston-Wadsworth (1989) added the benefit of the researcher bringing certain “values and predispositions to the judgement of the content’s purposes and motives” (p. 198). Therefore, as a tool in the research process, I must acknowledge my professional experience and perspectives regarding partnerships as a program manager, teacher, and grants developer.

My interest in developing grassroots community partnerships began during my formative years in 1998, during middle school. After the tragic and sudden loss of my father in 1998, my loving and insightful mother and deeply supportive teachers encouraged me to immerse myself in positive academic and enrichment activities that would help redirect challenges faced during this critical stage of my young life. A health advocate from the Florida Department of Health (DOH) invited me to participate in the Tobacco Prevention Coalition of Flagler County as a youth advocate in Students Working Against Tobacco (SWAT) and the truth campaign. The coalition was funded by local stakeholder investments, DOH funding, and an 11.3 billion dollar landmark settlement from a lawsuit (Rosenberg, 2011) by the State of Florida against the tobacco companies.

This personal invitation from a community advocate with a sound vision for developing healthy schools and communities led to my first introduction to the core of partnership work.
From the ground up, this coalition of adults and youth established the Teen Center of Flagler County. Over the course of five years, throughout high school, I served as the youth representative for the Flagler Teen Center and eventually the Chair of the Florida State Youth Board of Directors representing more than 50,000 students and partnerships statewide. In terms of personal academic achievement, with the knowledge and guidance of excellent teachers and mentors in Palm Coast, I graduated with honors from high school and, at the same time, earned my associate’s degree in May 2002.

My interest in partnership development and community activism continued throughout my university career and into my current professional responsibilities as a K-12 science and health teacher. At the university level, I majored in Health Administration and minored in Biological Sciences. I worked with students, university staff, and community members as a Health Advocate at the university level. These experiences led to a natural progression into my teaching career as I was afforded the opportunity to educate, influence, and motivate students to achieve their highest potential as scholars and responsible citizens. Partnering with my fellow educators, I work diligently to experience and understand what really occurs in schools and classrooms and to reflect on ways that we can improve pedagogy.

The desire to improve the practice of education at a broader level led to my interest in grants development at the school district level working as a grants developer. Grants development is based on collaborative partnership work around an issue of shared interest. This type of work complements my deeply rooted interest in developing grassroots community partnership initiatives, strategic planning, and program development. Gaining sound knowledge about human behavior (Burke, 2010) and working together in partnerships help to better facilitate organizational change.
I have a theoretical and practical commitment to partnerships. This value structure impacts every part of my life. After almost two decades of working in partnership development, education, and community activism, the doctoral work which I began in 2012 has led to studies in research and practice to which I have become deeply committed as I have learned to “see.” Eisner described this learning to see as educational connoisseurship—seeing rather than mere looking (Eisner, 1998, p. 1). As Eisner argued (1998), developing one’s personal connoisseurship is the obligation of professionals so that they may share their learning with others. It is my hope that through my personal connoisseurship and continued learning, the present study can enable others to “see.”

**Selection of Case**

The purpose for this qualitative study was to understand the role of leadership and the process of developing sustainable partnerships in education as documented in the context of a set of grant proposals, their final reports, and other descriptions of their efforts. Defining the parameters of data to be explored is the second classic step in content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Several reasons justify the selection of grant applications as documents for the present study. Applying for a grant lends itself to clearly documenting the intended research process. Grant applications involving partnerships require participants to document the context of their work and plans for working together. These documents provide specific data for content analysis.

The federal government, as well as private philanthropies and corporations, increasingly invest in a variety of education initiatives. In response to calls for proposals, eligible applicants have the option of creating partnership opportunities for stakeholders as a rich opportunity to develop quality programs that lead to increased student success. For this research, the federal
grant selected for review is the U.S. Department of Education Institute of Education Sciences (IES) Researcher-Practitioner Partnerships (RPP) in Education Research program. The mission of IES is to provide rigorous evidence on which to ground education practice and policy—connecting research, policy, and practice. The focus of this grant is to support partnership strategies that enable rigorous, relevant research in order to build capacity in local communities. Documents produced from this federal program are openly available to the public, and participants agreed to the release of this information for the benefit of the public good when they submitted their proposals.

The intent of this funding opportunity is to support research conducted by research institutions and U.S state and local education agencies working collaboratively in partnership to address problems of practice of high priority to education agencies (U.S. Department of Education, 2017). Though many grants mention the need to partner, working together in partnership is a requirement in this particular program. Under this federal grant program, partnerships work together to increase the relevance of research and practice through the required inclusion of education agencies as partners from the inception of the work through dissemination of results.

The chosen data set for the present study included a purposive sample (Stake, 2004) of six grants awarded in 2013 by the U.S. Department of Education Institute of Education Sciences Researcher-Practitioner Partnerships (RPP) in Education Research program. This specific federal grant was chosen because the application requirements align with the focus of the research question on the process of leadership and collaboration, particularly pertaining to the need for partnerships. It is a requirement of the Research Partnerships in Education Research program for researchers to partner with education agencies from the start of the work with the
exploration and identification of research questions, to the design of the project, to carrying out the research, and then to adoption and dissemination of the results (U.S. Department of Education, 2012). Funding opportunities, such as the Institute of Education Sciences Research Collaborations Program explored in this research study, typically are awarded to eligible partnerships with an organized interest and strategic plan to address complex social issues (Potoski & Talbert, 2002). Declaring the sample to be analyzed is the second classic step in content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). This qualitative study focused on the documented approaches of partnership development in fostering researcher-practitioner partnerships in education.

The RPPs identified for this research were chosen for several reasons. The Researcher-Practitioner Partnerships in Education Research program differs from other grant programs in its “requirement for a partnership between research institutions and education agencies” (U.S. Department of Education, 2012, p. 4). Therefore, using this set of proposals provides cases in which partnerships are central. These grants provided the opportunity for funding to develop new partnerships or to support the expansion of existing partnerships into new areas of educational research. Also, the focus of the partnership is for the benefit of public education and community development. The end goal of this grant award is to improve students’ educational outcomes by identifying an education issue or problem of high priority that can be addressed through research partnerships.

Furthermore, the data reflect a purposive sample of six partnerships from the 2013 award year. Specific documents to be analyzed from the 2013 award year include the original proposals, final reports of the research projects, and any publications resulting from the research work of the partnerships. The award year 2013 allows for data collection involving the final
reports and any early publications or conference presentations regarding the partnership projects. Indeed, the Request for Funding Proposal (RFP) from the U.S. Department of Education Institute of Education Sciences Researcher-Practitioner Partnerships (RPP) in Education Research program specifically cites the requirement of disseminating scholarly publications through the ERIC database.

Each Research Partnership application includes a project narrative and awards manuscript. The project narrative includes five sections: Significance, Partnership, Research Plan, Personnel, and Resources (U.S. Department of Education, 2012). Narratives begin with an explanation of the rationale for the proposed research funding, including an explanation of current work and joint work the education agency and researchers plan to conduct. Secondly, the partnership section must specifically explain the “partnership development plan” (U.S. Department of Education, 2012, p. 14) that describes the collaboration of the partnership from inception to the strategies for implementation of the research. The research plan section of the RPP program grant application includes a description of the design, data analysis procedures, and plan for developing future research involving the partnership after the grant ends. The fourth component of the narrative includes the relevant expertise of the partnership, including the Principal Investigator (PI) or Co-PI from the research institution, the PI or Co-PI from the state or local educational agency, and any remaining key personnel. Finally, in an effort to demonstrate institutional capacity for implementing the plans of the partnership, necessary resources for managing the grant must be described.

The awards section of the proposal includes a description of the duration and costs associated with the grant. The maximum duration of a Research Partnership project is two years. The maximum award for a Research Partnership project is $400,000.
Another requirement of the award is “Public Availability of Data and Results.” To achieve the purpose of aiding other state and local education agencies in making decisions regarding specific education issues, practices, and programs, recipients of this reward are “required to disseminate their work in peer-reviewed scholarly publications to the ERIC (Education Resources Information Center) database” (U.S. Department of Education, 2012, p. 44). Furthermore, all applications submitted are available by request to the U.S. Department of Education under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). Sharing resources in education is essential to improving teaching, learning, and the policies that influence practice.

**Data Collection**

In order to understand the role of leadership and the process of developing partnerships in education as documented in the context of grant proposals, final reports, and other descriptions of their efforts, data collection occurred using directed content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). By design, content analysis is “a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use” (Krippendorff, 2004, p. 18). The goal of a directed content analysis approach is to validate or extend a conceptual or theoretical framework or theory (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). To do so, directed content analysis begins by identifying key concepts or variables from the literature as initial coding categories (Potter & Levine-Donnerstein, 1999). Some researchers refer to directed content analysis as deductive content analysis because existing data are tested using categories, concepts, models, or hypotheses extant in the literature (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Findings from a directed content analysis offer supporting and non-supporting evidence for theory that will refine, extend, and enrich acquired knowledge. Hsieh and Shannon (2005) suggested that this is the main strength of a directed approach to content analysis.
Beginning with defining the categories to be evaluated, the data collection process in the present study followed the seven classic steps to content analysis as conceptualized by Kaid & Johnston-Wadsworth (1989) and Hseih & Shannon (2005). Categories from the literature are patterns or themes that were expressed directly in the literature review or derived through the synthesis of multiple sources of research. Knowledge gleaned from the literature review in the previous chapter informed the development of the key categories used to collect the data from the texts identified for the present study. Categories were designed to align the collection and analysis of data with the research question. Using directed content analysis, data were extracted from the successful grant proposals and final reports of the six partnerships from the 2013 award period of the U.S. Department of Education Institute of Education Sciences (IES) Research Collaborations Program.

I began acquainting myself with the RPP program on July 24, 2015, when I wrote a request to the FOIA office requesting awarded proposals from a set of 10 RPP in Education Research program (FOIA Request No. 15-01919-F). Documents were received in September 2015. To procure the documents relevant to the present study, on November 27, 2017, I wrote a request to the FOIA (Freedom of Information Act) office of the U.S. Department of Education (Appendix A: FOIA Request No. 18-00538-F) for copies of the six successful grant applications and final reports from the 2013 Researcher-Practitioner Partnerships (RPP) in Education Research Program (CFDA-84.305H). On December 5, 2017, I requested final reports and publications from each RPP via contacting the Principal Investigator (PI) or Co-PI of each partnership directly via email (Appendix B: Data Collection Chart via PIs). The U.S. Department of Education fulfilled my FOIA information request on May 7, 2018 and May 10, 2018 (Appendix C: FOIA Response to Request No. 18-00538-F).
Once the relevant documents or data are received, the process of document analysis requires establishing a framework for organizing and examining the data for the development of interpretation, analysis, and meaning-making from the text (Kaid & Johnston-Wadsworth, 1989). The framework of categories and questions that inform data collection were developed using conceptual components from a thorough review of the literature in order to extract data from the six grant proposals and final reports awarded in 2013. These questions serve as a data-collection protocol where “the information and interpretation categories are driven by the research question” (Stake, 1995, p. 51).

The basic coding process in content analysis is to organize large quantities of text into fewer content categories (Poole & Folger, 1981; Weber, 1990). Determining content categories begins with developing expert knowledge of current research in the field of study. Assumptions derived from robust and respected theoretical perspectives discussed in the review of the literature in Chapter 2 shaped the focus of data collection and analysis.

Categories from the literature range from the identification and roles of stakeholders involved to specific decisions evidenced in leadership theories that support the strategies for developing and sustaining a partnership. The following questions guided data collection, organization, and analysis:

1. Who are the stakeholders involved in the partnership?
   (Bryson, Crosby, & Stone, 2006; Kania and Kramer, 2011; Penuel & Gallagher, 2017)
2. What (new or established) role do they play in the partnership?
   (Bryson, Crosby, & Stone, 2006; Kania and Kramer, 2011; Penuel & Gallagher, 2017)
3. What reward/incentive does each stakeholder have to participate in the partnership?
   (Penuel & Gallagher, 2017)
4. How will working with the partnership impact the group a stakeholder represents? 
   (Burke, 2010; Kotter, 2012; Lewin, 1947; Northouse, 2007)

5. How did particular stakeholders take the lead in developing the partnership, and how did they model and facilitate building leadership and partnership dynamics? 
   (Bass & Stogdill, 1990; Coburn & Penuel, 2016; Kania & Kramer, 2011; Penuel & Gallagher, 2017)

6. How did the partnership work together to establish a shared vision, goals and objectives, and evaluation standards? (Bryson, Crosby, & Stone, 2006; Kania & Kramer, 2011; Katz & Kahn, 1978; Schein, 2004; Senge, 2006).

7. How were transformational leadership behaviors, such as idealized influence (charisma), inspiration, intellectual stimulation, or individual consideration—demonstrated in the behavior of the stakeholders (Bass, 1999; Bass & Avolio, 1991)

8. What evidence supports that the group shared leadership? (Bowen & Martens, 2006; Bryson, Crosby, & Stone, 2006; Kania & Kramer, 2011)

9. What vision and goals of the partnership were established to address sustainability in the school and community? (Burke, 2010; Lewin, 1947; Northhouse, 2007; Schein, 2004; Zaleznik, 1992)

10. What accountability measures were established to ensure that the goals of the partnerships were accomplished? (Bryson, Crosby, & Stone, 2006; Burke, 2010; Northhouse, 2007; Penuel & Gallagher, 2017)

These questions reflect key components of the conceptual framework as reflected in the three sections of the literature review discussed in the previous chapter: the concept of partnerships in education, leadership in collaborative communities, and challenges in leading partnerships.
Data Analysis

In content analysis, the goal of data analysis is to reduce the volume of text collected and coded, to identify and group categories together, and to seek understanding of the textual data by drawing realistic conclusions from the data (Patton, 2002). In the present study, the successful grant proposals and final reports represent the role of leadership and the process of developing researcher-practitioner partnerships in education to improve student outcomes.

Data analyzed for this research can be viewed as the documented results of ongoing conversations leading to documented actions and decisions. This qualitative study focused on understanding the role of leadership and the process of developing partnerships in education as documented in the context of successful grant proposals, final reports, and other descriptions of their efforts. In other words, I “interviewed” the data according to categories based upon knowledge gleaned from the review of the literature and my own connoisseurship. Krippendorff (2004) concurred that texts are more durable than speech, and thus, the original documented form may be reread and analyzed repeatedly and by several analysts.

In analyzing data, the ability to know and “see” is based on the ability to appreciate and construct meaning from experiences (Day, 2000; Dewey, 1933; Eisner, 1998; Senge, 2011). Eisner (1998) described this evaluative process as developing one’s connoisseurship. Though an individual’s connoisseurship is a private act, the professional responsibility of the individual is to make public his or her understanding of experiences. Eisner characterized such a process as educational criticism. Educational criticism is thus “the process of enabling others to see the qualities inherent in a work of art and serves as a midwife to perception” (Eisner, 1998, p. 6).

To use educational criticism as a framework for data analysis, Eisner (1998) identifies four stages: description, interpretation, evaluation, and thematics.
Data analysis in the present study used the four stages of educational criticism described by Eisner (2002). Those stages include description, interpretation, evaluation, and thematics. In the present study, to maintain the quality and trustworthiness of the data, description of the data enables the reader to visualize the knowledge and experience of each partnership separately and then as a cross-case analysis. Interpretation brings meaning to the data by placing descriptions into context in the form of valid inferences (Krippendorff, 2004). Evaluation, the third dimension of educational criticism, assesses the value of what is evident in the analysis of the data based upon what was described and interpreted. The final stage of educational criticism, thematics, develops themes which synthesize salient findings evident throughout the textual data.

Credibility

From planning to presentation, credibility and trustworthiness are synonymous in research (Bowen, 2009). Decisions made must be logical, clear, and appropriately justified in order to understand the phenomena to be studied (Eisner, 1990; Kaid & Johnston-Wadsworth, 1989; Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Lincoln and Guba (1985) described credibility within the naturalistic paradigm as being established through activities such as prolonged engagement, persistent observation, and triangulation. As reflected upon in the previous subsection, “Researcher as Tool,” I deeply value partnership development from both the practitioner and researcher perspectives and have worked in this area of research for almost 20 years, four of which I devoted as a doctoral student to studying leadership and partnership development. This extended participation allowed for adequate time to learn and invest time in understanding the literature. My experiential and theoretical foundation have grounded the present study in the knowledge base and “background assumptions” of the field (Howe & Eisenhart, 1990, p. 7).
ensure credibility throughout this research, I will remain mindful of representing the research material fairly and with sensitivity in responding to subtle cues to meaning.

    Triangulation of the data, according to Patton (1990) helps the researcher guard against the assumption that a study’s findings are simply a result of a single method, a single source, or a single investigator’s bias. Stake (1995) suggests that triangulation is the key to validity. In the present study, triangulation of data occurred using multiple documents from different partnerships. Eisner (1991) pointed out that by triangulating data, the researcher attempts to provide a “confluence of evidence that breeds credibility” (p. 100). A purposive sample of six different grant applications of the U.S. Department of Education Institute of Education Sciences Researcher-Practitioner Partnerships (RPP) in Education Research program will be evaluated. In qualitative data gathering, “episodes of unique relationships” create a story or unique description of a case (Stake, 1995, p. 63), as in the role of leadership and the process of developing partnerships as recorded in grant proposals, final reports, and other descriptions of their efforts. As content is analyzed, regular consultation with a “critical friend” with expertise in qualitative data analysis will occur (Marshall & Rossman, 2011, p. 253). Given the purpose and design of this study, data collected are anticipated to be rich in quality, and thus, the evidence needed to corroborate data and elicit interpretations are anticipated to support the results of this research.
Chapter Summary

The goal of the present study was to better understand the phenomenon of the role of leadership and the process of developing sustainable partnerships in education as documented in the context of a set of grant proposals, their final reports, and other descriptions of their efforts. To this end, qualitative research using a naturalistic paradigm was conducted (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 2002). In an effort to extend the conceptual and theoretical frameworks presented in Chapter 2, directed content analysis was the research approach that was used (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). My role as a tool for research was explained to describe the knowledge and values that contributed to this research process. Eisner (1998) refers to these attributes the demonstration of connoisseurship. I also discussed my previous work in collaboration that influenced my interest in leadership and partnership development.

Aspects of the research methodology and study design were described, including the decision to conduct a directed content analysis study. Also, the steps taken to identify a purposive sample (Stake, 1995) of documents was explained in detail. The documents associated with six different grant applications of the U.S. Department of Education Institute of Education Sciences Researcher-Practitioner Partnerships (RPP) in Education Research Program were analyzed through directed content analysis. These data reflected a purposive sample of six grants reflecting all award recipients in the 2013 year. Each of the six RPPs will be viewed as a separate case study and analyzed independently of the others (Merriam, 1998). Finally, as gleaned from the literature review, the study protocol that governed collecting and evaluating the data was described and justified. This chapter concluded with a discussion of credibility within qualitative research as it can apply to the present study.
CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS

The purpose of the present study was to understand the role of leadership in the process of developing sustainable partnerships in education as documented in the context of a set of federal grant-related documents. Data analyzed were collected from documents associated with a purposive sample, the six funded 2013 grant applications to the U.S. Department of Education Institute of Education Sciences Researcher-Practitioner Partnerships (RPP) in Education program. I requested these documents from the U.S. Department of Education Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Center in November 2017 that were provided to me on May 4, 2018 and May 10, 2018 (see Appendix C, FOIA Response to Request 18-00538-F). In addition, other data sources related to these grants included articles, reports, and a book in which two partnerships documented their experiences.

I printed the documents and read through these data sources over a period of seven days in order to familiarize myself with the material. I then read through the data sources and identified where material evident in these data sources related to the 10 questions previously developed from the review of related literature (see Chapter 3 for a discussion of data collection). This process comprised data collection for the present study (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). That is, the data collected for the present study were extracted from the documents using the 10 questions described in Chapter 3 to identify data relevant to the present study.

Once the data were collected, deliberate data analysis began. In order to capture salient qualities or characteristics within the data as a whole, I again read through the data collected and then identified “big ideas” which were evident across the data. These “big ideas” were influenced by the 10 questions used to collect the data; however, they were not constrained by these questions (Constas, 1992). Doing so permitted examination of data collected which were
not directly aligned with the 10 questions used in data collection. Scholarly data analysis also uses the researcher’s knowledge, perspective, and professional experiences, that is, her “educational connoisseurship” (Eisner, 1998, pp. 63-64). Furthermore, identifying the “big ideas” recognized that the process of examining data is a “largely intuitive process, but it is also systematic and informed by the study’s purpose, [and] the investigator’s orientation and knowledge” (Patton, 2002, p. 179). Thus, the “big ideas” from these initial processes led to four tentative typologies to “anchor further analysis” (Hatch, 2002, p. 153).

Data analysis employed Eisner’s process of educational criticism (1998) as the overall framework, supported by typological classification (Hatch, 2002). Eisner’s educational criticism includes four dimensions—description, interpretation, evaluation, and thematics—as a way to “articulate, justify, or explain” significant qualities of an event, situation, or object (Eisner, 1998, p. 85). The first and second dimensions, description and interpretation, organize data to reveal essential factors and to vividly express “what it would feel like if we were there, . . . to help the reader know” (Eisner, 1998, p. 89). Further, because “description of experience and interpretations are so intertwined that they often become one” (Patton, 2002, p. 106), description and interpretation are frequently combined. The evaluative dimension, Eisner’s third dimension, brings value and significance to the descriptive and interpretative accounts. In the fourth dimension of educational criticism, thematics, the researcher identifies major themes or “recurring messages” (p. 104) that may guide future observations and insights.

Content analysis intersects with Eisner’s process of educational criticism by also providing “descriptive evidence” highlighted from the data and expressed in categories and subcategories (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1282). The process of content analysis requires
establishing a framework for organizing and examining the data for the development of interpretation, analysis, and meaning-making from the text (Kaid & Johnston-Wadsworth, 1989).

Furthermore, Marshall and Rossman (2011) asserted that “content analysis is viewed as a method for describing and interpreting the written productions of a society or social group” (p. 161). Thus, the context in which researcher-practitioner partnerships collaborate is described and interpreted as “readers participate vicariously in the events described” (Eisner, 1998, p. 89).

The third and fourth dimensions of educational criticism are evaluation and thematics. Eisner’s concepts of evaluation and thematics are vital to forming meaning from mere descriptions. Eisner’s (1998) dimensions of description, interpretation, and evaluation lead to the development of “recurring messages” or “dominant features,” that is, the themes pervasive in the data (p. 104).

Data analysis in the present study reflects essential elements, or themes, that are useful to researchers and practitioners seeking to partner to address complex problems of practice.

**Data Analysis Processes**

Eisner’s (1998) process of educational criticism provides the overall framework that guided the process of data analysis in the present study. The four dimensions of educational criticism—description, interpretation, evaluation, and thematics—provide a framework for gleaning insight to understanding the role of leadership and the process of partnership development in education. The process of educational criticism relies on the researcher’s educational connoisseurship, drawn from professional knowledge and experience, in the description and appraisal of material (Constas, 1992; Eisner, 1998). Combining knowledge and artistry, educational criticism takes the private and quiet act of connoisseurship and makes them public to bring appreciation to “complex and subtle aspects of educational phenomena” (Eisner, 1998, p. 86).
As Dewey writes, “In the discourse about an experience, we must make use of adjectives of interpretation” (1934, p. 415). In expressing subtle details and understanding, the first and second dimensions of educational criticism reflect robust description and interpretation of contextual data. Information becomes data only if the researcher is able to make it meaningful (Eisner, 1998; Kaid & Johnston-Wadsworth, 1989). Presenting meaningful data can be accomplished by providing robust descriptions and interpretations of the evidence.

Description and interpretations are the first two phase of educational criticism (Eisner, 1998). In the present study, the description and interpretation dimensions of educational criticism are combined because interpreting meaning occurs with construing “perceptivity” as described in the documents (Eisner, 1998, p. 89). Eisner describes perceptivity as focusing on the nuances and details of the world. Patton (2002) supports the importance of vivid description and interpretation requiring “critical thinking from hundreds of pages of data collected for the study” that creates the framework for explaining and predicting patterns and other construction of knowledge” (p. 178).

**Description and Interpretation**

As previously stated, four typologies were identified by which to describe and interpret the data. The following section describes and interprets the data using typologies and sub-typologies. The four typologies used to organize data in this study include:

- building capacity;
- strategies for partnership development;
- approaches to communication; and
- the role of reflection in partnership development.
The common structure for each section includes a brief introduction to the typology, detailed descriptions of evidence from the data that reveal essential qualities of the typologies, and interpretations of these descriptions.

**Typology # 1: Building Capacity**

_The modern organization cannot be an organization of boss and subordinate. If the organization is to perform, it must be organized as a team of associates._

*Peter Drucker (2003, p. 121)*

The following narrative offers description and interpretation regarding data associated with the first typology. This typology focuses on building the capacity of partnerships, that is, formulating plans and strategies in support of working relationships that sustain partnership development and organizational change (Banks & Shenton, 2001; Pearson & Craig, 2001). The very definition of a partnership implies shared leadership among respected individuals who are empowered to build capacity (Bowen & Martens, 2006; Bryson, Crosby, & Stone, 2006; Penuel & Gallagher, 2017). In addition, Penuel & Gallagher (2017) defined a partnership as “a joint endeavor to produce new knowledge” (p. 20). More specifically, the authors further described “three telltale signs of a researcher-practitioner partnership”: problems of practice are jointly decided through deliberation and negotiation; the shared aims and activities meet the distinctive needs of each partner; and intentional strategies are developed together to decide upon the aims of joint work and problems to be solved (p. 22).

The importance of building capacity was documented in the present study within the six federal grant proposals, final reports, and other documented descriptions of their efforts from the Researcher-Practitioner Partnership (RPP) in Education program. One example occurred in the
partnership between the Spokane Public Schools and the Center for Education Data and Research (CEDR) at the University of Washington. This partnership held “capacity building meetings” with key personnel, staff, and stakeholders for strengthening the relationship between Spokane and CEDR (Goldhaber, 2012, p.12). In so doing, Spokane Public Schools and CEDR created a learning organization (Senge, 2006).

In addition, the Washoe County School District (WCSD) and Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) partnership prioritized building capacity as a part of their vision from the onset of their work (Weissberg, 2017). Documented in lessons learned, CASEL noted “the importance of focusing on building capacity and sustainability from the beginning” (Owen & Larson, 2017, p. 80). Building capacity has the potential to sustain partnerships between researchers and practitioners and collectively impact the common good (Penuel & Gallagher, 2017).

The following subsections reflect four different complementary dimensions associated with the typology of building capacity. The four subsections are: nurturing relationships with stakeholders; sharing and valuing expertise by actively engaging various stakeholders at multiple levels; engaging upper-level leadership in the plans of the partnership; and seeking multiple funding sources and resources to support the development of building the capacity of the partnership.

**Nurturing relationships with stakeholders**

With the intent of developing a possible partnership, all six researcher-practitioner partnerships documented the value in intentionally seeking and nurturing relationships with other passionate, like-minded, and willing stakeholders. Often, partnerships used relationships that had been previously developed with stakeholders. For example, the Arizona Practitioner-
Researcher Educational Partnership (AzPREP) stated that, “Prior to the start of this project, key ASU team members [e.g., Kurz, Elliott] had an 8-year track record of successful collaboration with the Arizona Department of Education [ADE]” (Kurz, 2016, p.34). The Arizona partnership used their 8-year history in working with each other as a foundation for establishing the infrastructure for future work together. Yet another example is found in the San Diego Education Research Alliance at University of California at San Diego (UCSD) researcher-practitioner partnership (SanDERA) when they noted the desire to “build upon and strengthen a 12-year long collaboration between researchers at UCSD and at the San Diego Unified School District [SDUSD]” (Betts, 2012, p. 3).

On the other hand, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) and the Research and Development (RAND) Corporation researcher-practitioner partnership described their partnership model as influenced by previous interactions between their co-principal investigators as the evolving partnership strategically planned specific tasks for their partnership (Miller, 2016, p. 51). They recognized their strategic relationship between two researchers in order to expand it to develop further collaborative efforts.

In addition, the Washoe County School District (WCSD) and Collaborative for Academic and Social Emotional Learning (CASEL) researcher-practitioner partnership nurtured their relationships by acknowledging their “common interests and complementary abilities . . . to create and execute a shared research agenda” (Weissberg, 2011, p.2). This example underscores the building of a partnership based on members’ shared commitments. Such efforts reflect relationships that support and enable people working together efficiently (Penuel & Gallagher, 2017).
Partnerships in the present study also realized that their partnership development efforts must be supported by building nurturing relationships. Such relationships imply that in partnership development, leadership and influence must be shared (Penuel & Gallagher, 2017). The Arizona Practitioner-Researcher Educational Partnership (AzPREP) acknowledged that “shared leadership between practitioners and researchers keeps the focus on important educational problems” (Kurz, 2016, p. 50). Thus, shared leadership builds the capacity to address shared interests and concerns.

For example, a co-PI of the New York City Partnership for College Readiness and Success initiated the development of the partnership through sharing leadership. The partnership engaged colleagues from numerous institutions to “increas[e] the capacity of diverse stakeholders in education to make decisions based on rigorous research” (Kemple, 2016, p. 141). Using research to make decisions relevant to the partnership enabled this partnership to foster connections and engage members to promote motivation and leadership in their work (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Spillane, 2005).

All six researcher-practitioner partnerships documented the need to develop and enhance relationships, thus building the capacity of the partnership (Banks & Shenton, 2001; Pearson & Craig, 2001). Previous chapters in the present study support this assertion that the core of leadership within partnerships is based upon building nurturing relationships and shared understanding (Costa & McCrae, 1992; Gladwell, 2000; Goleman, 1995; Penuel & Gallagher, 2017). Partnership development is inherently connected to nurturing relationships between partners and other like-minded stakeholders. Investing in relationships provides the foundation for effective partnership development and robust leadership.
Sharing and valuing expertise by actively engaging various stakeholders at multiple levels

In the present study, seeking and nurturing prior relationships with interested stakeholders was an important strategy to develop researcher-practitioner partnerships. In addition, partnership members needed to value and share their expertise in order to establish the infrastructure for partnership development. Specifically, the partnership between the Spokane Public Schools and Center for Education Data and Research (CEDR) at the University of Washington provided one example of how shared expertise could be useful to the partnership: “We sought to include a diverse group of stakeholders [on the advisory board who were] interested in the research and could play a role in the dissemination of findings” (Goldhaber, 2012, p. 12). Partnerships representing a community of diverse researchers and practitioners can be a robust source of knowledge and expertise (Coburn, Penuel, & Geil, 2013; Penuel & Gallagher, 2017).

Documents from the partnership between the Washoe County School District (WCSD) and the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) described engaging stakeholders and valuing expertise as a “critical ingredient for high quality work” (Weissberg, 2017, p. 16). This partnership referenced their shared development of a survey instrument as an example of the importance of different forms of expertise in partnership work:

The partnership approach was a critical ingredient that helped reduce the substantial gulf that often exists between psychometricians who primarily develop survey instruments, and practitioners, who use data to guide decision-making. Because the partnership created a group with diverse expertise and a structured approach to sharing knowledge with one another, the project led to not only a more defensible and useful instrument, but also better psychometric tools, more thoughtful data-sharing approaches with educators,
and better strategies for partnering with students in school improvement efforts.

(Weissberg, 2017, p. 7)

This partnership recognized the “substantial gulf” between researchers and practitioners which needed a “structured approach to sharing knowledge”. Efforts documented by this partnership emphasized sharing and valuing expertise of various stakeholders at all phases of collaboration.

The Arizona Practitioner-Researcher Educational Partnership (AzPREP) also shared expertise.

Each person had valuable information to contribute that was necessary to build shared understanding of the data. For example, staff members from School Improvement and Intervention were important in providing a history of changes in the criteria for identifying Priority Schools resulting from changes in federal and state policy . . . .

Similarly, other Arizona Department of Education (ADE) Assessments Research and Evaluation staff members were key in explaining changes in the reading and mathematics state assessments as a result of the new standard. (Kurz, 2016, p. 35)

Here, individuals provided specific knowledge to facilitate the work of the group.

Engaging stakeholders and valuing their expertise encompasses components of the 4 I’s of transformational leadership, particularly individual consideration and inspirational motivation (Bass & Avolio, 1994). Transformational leaders value individual contributions when they: find time to listen to others, make it pleasant to work together with these persons, develop purpose and show interest in other persons and their work, compliment the work of others, have an open ear, and have others share in making decisions (Guba & Bidwell, 1957).

The San Diego Education Research Alliance (SanDERA) at the University of California, San Diego (UCSD) researcher-practitioner partnership documented the importance of
developing and finding value in relationships to build capacity as “individual members bring the background knowledge and expertise of their home organizations to the table.” (Betts, 2016, p. 10). Building and nurturing relationships is a valuable strategy used to sustain successful partnerships.

Julian Betts, co-PI of SanDERA and researcher at UCSD, exemplified his commitment to continuously value the expertise of stakeholders throughout the development of the work:

Dr. Betts promised and delivered on a “no surprises” policy in which district colleagues were kept informed of research findings and were provided with a chance to comment on drafts of research before submission for publication or for conferences. In short, Dr. Betts and his team spent nearly a decade demonstrating their competence, integrity, and commitment to maintaining a good working relationship with the San Diego Unified School District. (Owen & Larson, 2017, p. 74)

Offering an invitation to comment on proposals before they were published supports placing value on professional expertise. Doing so also fosters trust and respect, both of which are necessary in partnership work (Bass & Avolio, 2003; Darling-Hammond, 2010). This example therefore demonstrates the importance of strategically establishing trust and respect when engaging multiple stakeholders with diverse expertise in the process of developing partnerships. Doing so leads to shared ownership in realizing the vision of any given partnership.

**Engaging upper-level leadership**

Involving upper-level leadership promotes support for partnerships (Owen & Larson, 2017). In the present study, five of six partnerships documented the importance of engaging upper-level leadership in the plans of their partnership. The Arizona Practitioner-Researcher Educational Partnership (AzPREP) is the only case that presented a limited view of engaging
upper-level leadership in the plans of their partnership. AzPREP documented, “As part of developing the grant application, the co-PI’s had articulated two concrete initial goals…to quickly facilitate a positive working alliance among AzPREP team members” (Kurz, 2016, p. 34). Contrary to the “quick” establishment of a working relationship by AzPREP, organizational change theory challenges the idea of rapid, transformational change (Burns, 2004; Kippenberger, 1998). In other words, engaging upper-level leadership is a partnership development strategy that should occur continuously during the conceptualization and implementation of the partnership.

Partnership work requires long-term commitment (Coburn, Penuel, & Geil, 2013). However, personnel changes do occur. Planned change requires preparation, transitioning, and establishing new habits and stability (Lewin, 1947). Dr. Giovannone, AzPREP co-PI, further explained challenges their partnership experienced with changes in upper-level leadership, “Both parties were disappointed at the end that we hit a roadblock on the research but at the time the ADE also had a change in direction directed by a new Superintendent…” (C. Giovannone-Jordan, personal communication, December 5, 2017).

Unlike the case of AzPREP, the Spokane partnership recognized the importance of including upper-level leadership in the work of the partnership. For example, “Personnel adjustments could have been disruptive, but the project has benefited from having strong support from district leadership including the Superintendent. Ultimately, the changes in personnel were not detrimental to the project” (Goldhaber, 2012, p. 31). Such intentional engagement of upper-level leadership was not documented in the work of the AzPREP partnership.

In addition to engaging upper-level leadership in proposal development, support from upper-level leadership is even more critical during the implementation stage of partnership work.
For example, to promote such engagement, the partnership between the Washoe County School District (WCSD) and the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) involved leadership teams in workshops, small-group sessions, and data review meetings in order to promote dialogue and decision-making regarding next steps in project implementation (Weissberg, 2017, p. 19). Furthermore, the WCSD-CASEL partnership documented involving district superintendents, curriculum and instructional leaders, board members, policymakers, and other leaders specializing in social and emotional learning. Another example is evident in the New York City Partnership for College Readiness and Success partnership as they attributed the ongoing involvement of senior administrators and leaders of the institutional research offices as critical features to the success of their collaborative work (Kemple, 2016).

Fostering support from leaders provides opportunities for communication, understanding, and building capacity on multiple levels (Penuel & Gallagher, 2017). Effective partnerships establish formal administrative connections and structures across multiple levels that support the success of ongoing partnership work (Owen & Larson, 2017). Such connections are described by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) and the Research and Development (RAND) Corporation researcher-practitioner partnership. The partnership described “RAND and THECB teams engaged in a number of activities to better integrate RAND within THECB’s organizational structure, to foster agreement with and build capacity of THECB staff agency-wide” (Miller, 2016, p. 33). The RAND Corporation principal investigator met regularly with local Texas researchers, policymakers, non-profits, institutions, and other stakeholders in education to develop relationships.

The San Diego Education Research Alliance at UCSD (SanDERA) researcher-practitioner partnership also noted the importance of involving upper-level leadership in order to
“share initial findings, provide clarification of district policies and practices to assist in research, and to support emerging relationships of trust and mutual goals” (Owen & Larson, 2017, p.74).

Finally, the New York City Partnership described the presence of senior administrators from all three collaborating organizations from the beginning of the partnership as being a “critical feature” to the success of their collaboration (Kemple, 2016, p. 19), particularly when working through challenges. Engaging upper-level leadership is a strategic decision that supports effective working relationships and partnership development.

**Seeking multiple funding sources and resources**

Analysis of the documents provided evidence that planning for sustainability is documented as a deliberate and formal process in developing partnerships. Establishing sustainability implies the use of resources to support the stability of the partnerships (Penuel & Gallagher, 2017). Specifically, four of the six partnerships documented seeking multiple funding sources and resources to support their relationships within the partnerships. That decision, in turn, builds capacity to carry out their work.

For example, the New York City Partnership described their grant as “expanding our capacity to conduct quality research more efficiently, opening new avenues for research, and allowing us to compete for research and program funding” (Kemple, 2016, p. 18). Here the emphasis on nurturing relationships to build capacity was not only within their present work of a single project but also within partnership efforts beyond their current focus.

Another example of seeking partnership sustainability can be found in the Washoe County School District (WCSD) with CASEL as they clearly stated that they “intend[ed] to apply for additional grant funds to conduct larger studies and to ultimately build, implement, and continually refine a new monitoring system” (Weissberg, 2012, p. 5). The decision to expand
working relationships and resources available to the partnership beyond the scope of the period of the grant associated with the present study is a strategic choice that supports current work and gains stability to build capacity for future partnership work.

As demonstrated in these examples, the continuation of partnership work requires pursuing multiple funding sources and resources. Many partnerships described leaders within the group as having track records for obtaining funding sources and resources. The deliberate decision for leaders to recognize and develop opportunities to garner support underscores the importance of building the capacity of partnerships. For example, the co-PI of the partnership between the Spokane Public Schools and the Center for Education Data and Research (CEDR) at the University of Washington established the partnership based on prior experience in obtaining multiple grant funding (Goldhaber, 2012). In another example, the researcher-practitioner partnership between the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) and the Research and Development (RAND) Corporation described co-PIs taking the initiative to secure funding for additional joint research projects to extend their current partnership goals (Miller, 2016, p. 12). These examples indicate that the process of grant development can be seen as a continuum of work beyond the scope of a single grant application and build on past efforts while also anticipating future efforts.

Although obtaining federal and private funding and resources plays a vital role in supporting researcher-practitioner partnerships, investing in sustaining relationships in partnerships serves other purposes (Owen & Larson, 2017). The strategic choice to “expand lines of partnership work” supports deeper relationships and ongoing engagement in the activities of partnerships (Penuel & Gallagher, 2017, p. 112). Analysis of the data in the present study indicated that strengthening partnerships could enhance the way in which complex social
issues are addressed. Therefore, the following section of data analysis focuses on specific strategies for partnership development that can become part of the partners’ organizational cultures.

**Typology # 2: Strategies for Partnership Development**

The second typology to organize the description and interpretation of the data focused on developing partners’ commitment to strategies for partnership development. In the present study, documents described how partnerships in education used specific strategies for their development. The description and interpretation of the data in the second typology included five categories: identification of mutual interests and benefits among partners; leaders’ role in facilitating the culture of the partnership; establishment of a shared understanding of the purpose and specific goals and outcomes of the partnership; clarifying roles and responsibilities within the partnership; and incorporating partnership work into participants’ norms.

**Identification of mutual interests and benefits among partners**

All of the partnerships in the present study described the importance of mutual interests and benefits among stakeholders (Penuel & Geil, 2013). Effective partnerships focus on collaboratively identifying and defining mutual problems of practice. Literature supports data analyzed in the present study in recognizing the wishes and circumstances of various stakeholders in order to achieve a synergy of purpose and successful outcomes (Penuel & Gallagher, 2017; Senge, 2006; Tett, 2005). When researchers and practitioners share interests, they are “productive and dynamic, greater than the sum of their parts” (Owen & Larson, 2017, p. 10).

The partnership between the Spokane Public Schools and the Center for Education Data and Research (CEDR) at the University of Washington documented the initial
cultivation of their mutual interests in improving district hiring of teachers. The co-PIs initiated contact with the Superintendent of Human Resources in the district and shared a vision of the partnership: “to identify teachers in need of supplemental assistance (e.g., mentoring) and to find better ways to assess the potential of teacher applicants to the school district” (Goldhaber, 2012, p. 3). In this example from the Spokane partnership, both partners were interested in the mutual goal of improving teacher hiring and retention practices.

Along with strategically developing mutual vision and goals, some partnerships focused on mission as the focus of their mutual interests. The New York City Partnership for College Readiness and Success underscored the importance of partners having a mutual investment in the mission “Although the exact mechanics of our ongoing collaboration are still under construction, we have a well-established set of processes for collaboration and, in all three cases, mission-driven interest in maintaining the relationships” (Kemple, 2016, p. 23).

Likewise, the partnership between the Washoe County School District (WCSD) and the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) described their mission-driven interest in social-emotional learning as the core content of their partnership work. The school district and researchers emphasized the “strong ingredient” of their complementary interests in social, emotional, and academic learning (SEL) indicators. Embracing partnership work grounded in their mutual interests allowed the district to expand its efforts to foster students’ social-emotional learning (SEL). The partnership further explained:
CASEL is the leading content expert in the field of SEL, and has extensive experience collaborating with partners nationally to improve student outcomes. Working together to develop a monitoring system that can serve WCSD and ultimately serve districts at scale is at the core of CASEL's mission. (Weissberg, 2012, p. 5)

As documented in the expertise and collaborative work of CASEL, most definitions of groups working together refer to mutual recognition of members contributions and a sense of belonging to the group (Forsyth, 1999; Johnson & Johnson, 2012). Partnerships should be interested in the work in order to develop and support a clear and mutual understanding of their partnership (Penuel & Geil, 2013). Both the NYC and WCSD/CASEL partnerships documented the importance of identifying mission-driven interests as the basis for establishing a process for collaboration.

When participants value a joint approach to achieving a shared mission, their commitment increases. Documents from the researcher-practitioner partnership between the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) and the Research and Development (RAND) Corporation indicated that, “For a partnership to really work, the practitioner or policymaker partner must see that the research partner's interests are sufficiently aligned with his/her own, and that the partnership is benefiting him/her” (Miller, 2016, p. 31). As the Arizona Practitioner-Researcher Educational Partnership (AzPREP) further explained, “The concrete goals established in the initial days of the partnership fortunately helped new members find their place quickly in the partnership” (Kurz, 2016, p. 36). Clarifying the interests and focus of the partnership provides an opportunity for new members to decide if their personal and professional interests contribute to and enhance the
collaborative mission and priorities of the larger group. These examples indicate that identifying mutual interests can lead to a shared commitment to the mission of the partnership.

The experience of the San Diego Education Research Alliance at UCSD (SanDERA) researcher-practitioner partnership documents the need for mutual respect as a prerequisite for establishing a long-term, mutually beneficial partnership. SanDERA noted that, “All of the prerequisites were in place, skilled researchers at the university and district levels, a long history of effective university-district collaboration, and both parties' desire to expand the research partnership beyond the traditional project-driven model” (Betts, 2012, p. 8). This excerpt indicates that identifying strategic relationships and nurturing existing connections is a strategy that is mutually beneficial between partnerships.

Another strategy to support partnership development was evident in the partnership between the Spokane Public Schools and the Center for Data and Research (CEDR) at the University of Washington. They established an advisory board “with the expertise and experience necessary to carry out a high-quality study” (Goldhaber, 2012, p. 4) at the beginning of their work together. The partnership further recognized the value in each partner’s interest “CEDR and Spokane propose to strengthen an existing relationship by engaging in research important to the district, with each partner bringing a complement of experience, skills, and resources to bear on the topic” (Goldhaber, 2012, p. 4). Partnership development is supported when skilled researchers and practitioners are involved as advisors and consultants to the work of the partnership.
These examples indicate that mutually beneficial expectations for working together is a valuable strategy in the process of developing successful partnerships.

**The leaders’ role in facilitating the culture of the partnership**

The documents regarding partnerships indicate that the culture of their work was facilitated by the strategic and direct actions of the principal investigators. In addition, documents analyzed in the present study reflected the use of shared leadership, that is, “leadership that emanates from members of teams and not simply from an appointed leader” (Pearce & Sims, 2001, p. 132). The New York City Partnership for College Readiness and Success partnership documented “shared leadership infrastructures” to support their partnership work in the form of an alliance, analytic team, and a research advisory and review committee (Kemple, 2016, p. 30). Principal investigators demonstrated their desire to share leadership when they set aside their titular authority and willingly shared leadership (Owen & Larson, 2017).

The deliberate facilitation of partnership dynamics was strategically planned and nurtured primarily by the principal investigators. For example, documents from the partnership between the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) and the Research and Development (RAND) Corporation asserted that their Principal Investigators “set the overall research strategy and process” for the partnership (Miller, 2016, p. 56). Literature has acknowledged this view of leaders’ actions setting the “tone,” or culture, of an organization in order to influence its effectiveness (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2001; Sy, Cote, & Saavedra, 2005). Partnership development is supported when leaders share power and influence.
Another example regarding leaders facilitating the culture of the partnership is evident in the efforts of the principal investigator of the New York City Partnership for College Readiness and Success. The principal investigator worked with the state department of education to conceptualize and implement current and future research projects, thus supporting partnership development. Further, the partnership documents indicated that the PI “fosters connections between research, policy, and practice, engaging colleagues from other institutions in the work of NYC's educators and policymakers, increasing the capacity of diverse education stakeholders to make decisions based on rigorous research” (Kemple, 2016, p. 141). This example indicates the intentional and strategic work of a leader to foster connections and to maintain and strengthen the work of the partnership. Fostering connections enables stakeholders to address complex problems of practice (Bryson, Crosby, & Stone, 2006; Penuel & Gallagher, 2017).

Documents from the San Diego Education Research Alliance at UCSD (SanDERA) researcher-practitioner partnership provide another example of leaders’ facilitating the culture and direction of the partnership: “After nine-years of equally keen collaboration, Betts and Bachofer [co-PI’s] wanted to ensure the stability and longevity of the partnership. The PIs understood the need to formalize their relationship so that it would survive future changes in leadership” (Owen & Larson, 2017, p. 76). When PIs engage partners and foster connections between them, researcher-practitioner partnerships become formalized, productive, and stable.

Documents from SanDERA further described how the principal investigators promoted connections within the partnership. At meetings of partnership members, the co-PIs worked with partners to refine the research agenda, to disaggregate data, and to plan
ways to communicate findings in order “to strategize on the best ways to convey our joint findings about trajectories, achievement gaps, and on track indicators, to quite diverse audiences” (Betts, 2012, p. 13). Thus, decisions were fostered by the PIs who engaged others in refining the research question and tracking progress in accomplishing project goals. Such leadership practices can set the tone of the partnership.

Partnerships further described a “long track record” of relationships between researchers and practitioners, facilitated by the principal investigators. For example, the partnership between the Spokane Public Schools and the Center for Education Data and Research (CEDR) at the University of Washington documented the long track record of rigorous applied research with practitioners in subsequent publications conducted by the co-PIs that supported the work of the partnership. With previous focus on K-12 school reform, they had experience in funded projects regarding teacher quality and links between K-12 school experiences and subsequent success at the post-secondary level (Goldhaber, 2012).

As a PI and university researcher, Goldhaber strategically positioned his work within the K-12 setting for a period of years to establish relationships with school district practitioners. Doing so allowed the culture of the partnership to evolve, not only from the leaders’ highly-regarded work, but also from the shared work of researchers and practitioners.

Likewise, the principal investigator of the Washoe County School District (WCSD) and the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) partnership had a record of collaboration with practitioners and other researchers. His previous work with CASEL’s efforts on social and emotional learning ‘provided the foundation
for training educators and researchers across the United States” (Weissberg, 2012, p. 94). In their *Managing in the Partnership* protocol, this partnership also asserted the “executive decision-making authority” of the principal investigators (Weissberg, 2012, p. 13). Though leadership was shared, this partnership clearly documented that final decision-making authority is the responsibility of the PIs.

Leading by nurturing and building relationships garners respect, recognition, and further support from constituents in communities they serve. Partners commitment to the vision of the partnership increases when leaders foster communication, understanding, and respect (Lewin, 1947). Building such an organization requires time, trust, and respect (Burke, 2010). Principal investigators facilitate the culture of the partnership by strategically building relationships.

**Establishment of shared understanding in the work of the partnership**

Clearly understanding the goals, purpose, and outcomes of a partnership is another necessary aspect of cultivating a mutual commitment to the specific goals and strategies of a partnership. The Arizona Practitioner-Researcher Educational Partnership (AzPREP) documented a critical need to establish “specific benchmarks (interim goals) to meet regarding data preparation and analysis” (Kurz, 2016, p. 49). These specific benchmarks served as interim goals established by the partnership to promote a shared understanding of their work. Furthermore, the AzPREP partnership explained that “each person had valuable information to contribute that was necessary to build a shared understanding of the data” (Kurz, 2016, p. 35). Recognizing and valuing contributions of each partner in the process of establishing goals is a strategy that promotes shared understanding of the work of the partnership (Owen & Larson, 2017).
Likewise, the documents of the partnership between the Spokane Public Schools and the Center for Education Data and Research (CEDR) at the University of Washington described the importance of partners agreeing on the purpose of their partnership which focused on current hiring practices of effective teachers. The partnership further explained, “Such research is likely to be far richer, and more useful to practitioners, if it is the product of collaboration between researchers and educational agencies” (Goldhaber, 2012, p. 8). Both the Arizona and Spokane partnerships invested in cultivating partners’ understanding of the direction of their partnerships in order to garner shared commitment to the work of the partnership.

The work of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) and the Research and Development (RAND) Corporation provides yet another example of the importance of creating a shared understanding of the purpose, specific goals, and outcomes in partnership work. This partnership emphasized the goal of creating sustainable and long-lasting relationships between RAND Corporation and THECB. They began with the agencies working together to “understand each agency’s mission, goals, and current and future research and planning priorities” (Miller, 2016, p. 5). Once a better understanding of each partner was established, the THECB and RAND Corporation partnership then worked to create and clarify their own specific outcomes to support the work of their partnership, some of which included “improving relationships with local researchers, policymakers, non-profits, institutions and other organizations (Miller, 2016, p. 33). This partnership also submitted additional research proposals and obtained funded research projects based upon the shared understanding they established in the initial phases of their partnership development. This example indicates that goals of the partnership are supported
when partnerships share their expectations and understanding for research and practice beyond a specific project.

Establishing a shared foundation for understanding is a strategy that supports the development of current and prospective partnership activities. The documents of the San Diego Education Research Alliance at UCSD (SanDERA) researcher-practitioner partnership described the investments of each partner as contributing to the purpose and goals of the researcher-practitioner partnership itself. The SanDERA partnership described the value in consulting with teachers, counselors, and content experts to inform and improve the understanding of partnership members and to aid in their decision-making. The partnership involved practitioners from various sectors of the community believing that they “could strengthen our understanding of the central issues” (Betts, 2012, p. 14). Further, in addressing the “central issues” of the partnership, SanDERA payed “particular attention to project milestones and deliverables to stay on track” (Betts, 2016, p. 29). This example indicates that identifying and tracking milestones and deliverables supports a shared understanding as the work of the partnership progresses.

Shared vision, goals, and outcomes lead to the strategic process of partnership development. More specifically, identifying milestones, deliverables, and future grant proposals help to clarify the development of the partnership.

**Clarifying roles and responsibilities within the partnership**

Most of the partnerships documented the importance of clearly aligning and formalizing defined roles and responsibilities as part of developing the partnerships. Working cooperatively with clearly established expectations is essential for creating effective working relationships in any partnership (Owen & Larson, 2017). All partnership activities should be aligned to a
common agenda and grounded in shared strategies that support the action plan of the partnership (Bryson, Crosby, & Stone, 2006; Burke, 2010; Penuel & Gallagher, 2017). The partnership documents in the present study described the effort to build and formalize organizational structures to support their work.

The partnership between the Washoe County School District (WCSD) and the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) proposed one such approach in their grant application:

The processes and procedures through which the RPT and the AC will conduct their work will be based on a set of protocols that have been developed from best practices described in the education literature. Formal, agreed upon protocols will be developed that will serve as written procedures that will guide how the Partnership makes decisions, governs itself and resolves disagreements, incorporates and socializes new members, uses the research evidence that is generated, and disseminates results. Such protocols allow participants to share, test, and generalize local learning. (Weissberg, 2012, p. 135)

This excerpt described how the WCSD and CASEL partnership intended and implemented “formal, agreed upon protocols” which would define roles and responsibilities within their partnership. As such, partners not only were aware of their individual place in the partnership, but also understood the connection of their efforts to the work of the partnership itself. Indeed, literature on implementing effective partnerships suggests creating formal organizational components that are “reliable structure[s] and methods for interaction” (Owen & Larson, 2017, p. 50). The shared understanding of the structure and methods for interaction within a partnership helps to clarify the roles and responsibilities of partners. As
a result, such an approach provides a robust foundation for collaboration towards effective partnership development and the meeting of partnership goals.

Yet another example of aligning and formalizing defined roles and responsibilities within partnerships is found in the New York City Partnership for College Readiness and Success.

In the first year of the project, the partners made significant progress toward establishing a solid foundation for long-term collaboration, in spite of unforeseen delays in receiving critical data. The first year's activities were focused on establishing the partnership's human resources (leadership team, analytic team, advisory and review committee), building the infrastructure to support a shared database, . . . and conducting preliminary research activities to support the development of a research agenda. (Kemple, 2016, p. 28)

The NYC Partnership for College Readiness and Success described building an infrastructure including teams and committees which clarified roles and responsibilities. The San Diego Education Research Alliance at UCSD (SanDERA) researcher-practitioner partnership referred to their working relationships and responsibilities within the researcher-practitioner partnership as forming the “blood and muscle that enable the research” (Owen & Larson, 2017, p. 76). Establishing a solid infrastructure within any partnership supports shared strategies that enable the work to take place (Bryson, Crosby, & Stone, 2006; Katz & Kahn, 1978; Owen & Larson, 2017).

**Incorporating partnership work into participants’ norms**

In the present study, partnership documents indicated that sustainability was an important goal in their work. As such, the process of planned change and partnership development were
encouraged. According to Lewin’s principles, planned change requires preparation, transitioning, and establishing new habits, routines, and stability (Lewin, 1947). Thus, successful partnership work requires an infrastructure where the priorities of the partnership are integrated into the norms of participants (Coburn et al., 2008; Penuel & Gallagher, 2017; Rosen, 2010). For example, to incorporate their long-term plans, the New York City Partnership for College Readiness and Success noted:

In all three of the partner organizations, the Partnership work has been increasingly integrated into normal operations. For DOE and CUNY, this means that the Partnership work is embedded in the work cycles of their institutional research offices, and at the Research Alliance, maintenance of the Partnership dataset is increasingly handled through our normal data processing plans.

(Kemple, 2016, p. 23)

In this example, the focus on normal operations and normal data processing plans is indicative of deliberately establishing ongoing, daily patterns of behavior that become norms that can impact the subsequent work of participants. Partnerships therefore emphasized not only the strategic decision to embed their efforts into the norms of participants, but also efforts to operationalize them. In further support of integrated partnership work into normal operations, the NYC partnership documented that they “trained new staff on the project to process new data and/or updates on old data, carry out core analyses, and build capacity at their respective institutions to continue this collaborative work” (p. 29). This excerpt reflects intentional decisions to develop the capacity of participants at multiple levels in an effort to sustain the work of the partnership.
Similarly, the San Diego Education Research Alliance at UCSD (SanDERA) researcher-practitioner partnership described the benefit of connecting the strategies of the partnership to the norms of participants. SanDERA reported encouraging this process by influencing reform at the classroom level:

We hope, but cannot promise as part of the currently proposed work, that this flood of rich new information will induce teachers and perhaps entire schools to reform the way they teach and work with individual students. In time, this could lead to better knowledge of best practices, or ‘what works.’ (Betts, 2012, p. 24)

This excerpt indicates the desire of the partnership to embed their work into the norm of participants by involving students and teachers in the process of change. SanDERA promoted the process of change by supporting best practices that became meaningful to participants at the school level and could become norms within their everyday work.

Further, to improve outcomes for students and communities, the initial phase of change in developing researcher-practitioner partnerships should recognize and associate the priorities of the research to the practical needs of their target audience (Penuel & Gallagher, 2017). The partnership between the Washoe County School District (WCSD) and the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) acknowledged this assertion when they documented deliberately meeting the needs of practitioners first:

The goal from the outset was to develop a tool [to assess social-emotional learning] that educators could use to identify student needs and supports along the path to graduation, and to assess aggregate needs across schools and grade levels. To this end, WCSD and CASEL worked deliberately to ensure that educators and students were key partners in
the development of the tool throughout the process, and that the resulting instrument met
their needs first.

(Weissberg, 2017, p. 15)

WCSD and CASEL strategically involved educators working with students in the
development of their work. In summary, data reflected important connections among the
goals of the partnerships, the needs of practitioners, and best practices and norms that support
their work.

This second typology described the guiding principles for strategic partnership
development. A central focus was the involvement of strategic and purposeful partnering with
the vision of improving educational practice (Cech, 2008). Citing firsthand accounts of
researchers and practitioners, Owen and Larson (2017) described the importance of identifying
mutual interests and benefits among partners when they emphasized working cooperatively
around a clearly established vision and agenda in order to create effective working relationships
in a partnership. Successful organizations make strategic planning a part of their standard
repertoire by empowering informed participants, creating precise short and long-reaching goals
with evaluation measures, detailing strategies for meeting those goals, and creating agility to
adapt to sudden changes in the internal or external environment of the organization (Penuel &
Gallagher, 2017; Senge, 2006).

Planning should not be mistaken for strategizing (Martin, 2014; Penuel & Gallagher,
2017). Strategic planning requires an iterative process in which shared communication leads to
strategic organizing in the form of action (Nadler, 1994; Penuel & Gallagher, 2017; Wilson,
1994). Strategic planning involving the integration of knowledge and resources is often what
policymakers, funders, researchers, and practitioners seek when collaborating for social change
Strategic planning requires intentional and effective communication. As such, typology three describes and interprets the dimension of communication in understanding the role of leadership and the process of partnership development.

**Typology # 3: Approaches to Communication**

The third typology to organize the description and interpretation of the data focused on clear and consistent approaches to communication, both internally within the partnership and externally with the public. In practice, communication among people with various knowledge, skills, and abilities can be challenging. Without frequent communication, participants may begin to feel detached from the common vision and agenda of the partnership (Penuel & Gallagher, 2017). Further, differences in expectations regarding sharing resources, norms, roles, and responsibilities can lead to confusion, uncertainty, and even conflict (Coburn et al., 2008; Rosen, 2010). Instead, partnerships are strengthened when regular communication takes place.

At the forefront of leadership and fostering change is communication, albeit directly or indirectly (Burke, 2010; Fullan, 2001; Lewin, 1947). The literature in many disciplines includes the recognition that shared communication leads to strategic organization in the form of action (Nadler, 1994; Penuel & Gallagher, 2017; Spee & Jarzabkowski, 2011).

In the present study, all partnerships described the importance of communication for partnership development. Description and interpretation of the data in the third typology included three categories: planning regular opportunities for communication; publically sharing the work of the partnership at various phases of partnership development and implementation; and advocating for legislative awareness and political change.
Providing Regular opportunities for communication

All partnerships documented the importance of planning regular opportunities for communication. Likewise, literature indicates that at the forefront of leadership and organizational development is communication. Such understanding also supports shared leadership (Burke, 2010; Fullan, 2001; Hersey, Blanchard, & Johnson, 2008).

The partnership between the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) and the Research and Development (RAND) Corporation hosted regular lunches for participants and other interested stakeholders to provide opportunities for THECB staff to learn about research methodologies and practice (Miller, 2016). This example indicates that providing opportunities for communication could lead to increased understanding of the individual and shared perspectives necessary to develop the partnership. Given the commitment to shared leadership within partnerships, the THECB and RAND Corporation prioritized regular communication in order to enhance working relationships among all participants and thus to further the mission of the partnership.

The partnership between the Washoe County School District (WCSD) and the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) partnership provided another example. They described communication as a critical foundation for their partnership: “The partnership was not a one-way street of research to practice but a two-way street between research and practice with constant interchange among researchers and practitioners both within and across the organizations. . . . The WCSD team members worked hand-in-hand with CASEL researchers, clinicians, and practitioners” (Owen & Larson, 2017, p. 65). In addition, the New York City Partnership for College Readiness and Success was explicit in describing how
“frequent communication. . . helped to establish a framework for collaborative analytic work moving forward” (Kemple, 2016, p. 30).

These examples provide evidence that frequent communication fosters supportive relationships and the strategic development of partnership work. Partnerships in the present study described gaining a better understanding of their efforts by intentionally planning communication sessions between researchers and practitioners to inform the conceptualization and implementation of their efforts.

Another example of the importance of communication is found in the partnership between the Spokane Public Schools (SPS) and the Center for Education Data and Research (CEDR) at the University of Washington:

Working relationships between key personnel at the American Institute of Research (AIR), CEDR, and SPS were strengthened by regular interactions during phases of the project. Meetings held in Spokane involved a broader set of SPS personnel and provided a forum to present data and findings to SPS as the project progressed…. While discussion at the stakeholder meetings focused on the current project, some sections moved into areas not directly related to the research project. The open-ended discussions fostered by the stakeholder meeting format were important to the partnership as illustrated by the two additional grants pursued and won. (Goldhaber, 2017, p. 25)

This example depicts frequent and varied opportunities for communication among stakeholders at various levels that led to strengthening the partnership and thus advancing their work. As such, it supports the literature regarding the need to plan regular interactions between partnership members and stakeholders whom they serve in order to foster a supportive environment of
shared understanding between empowered and respected individuals (Bryson, Crosby, & Stone, 2006; Katz & Kahn, 1978).

The Arizona Practitioner-Researcher Educational Partnership (AzPREP) also documented the continuity and varied methods of their communications as sustaining their partnership work:

Having a planned meeting schedule was important in sustaining the partnership across the course of the project. Although there were monthly meetings, the meetings alternated between three types that were distinguished by the number of persons involved and their purpose [full, leadership, and executive meetings] . . . . Alternating types of meetings allowed continuity in communication and good use of time, as not all team members needed to assemble for every meeting. E-mails summarizing meetings were sent to all members to help keep non-attending members apprised of the group’s overall progress. (Kurz, 2016, p. 35)

These comments reflect the importance of planning regular opportunities for communication to occur. The AZPREP partnership planned regular meetings of various types and communicated regularly via e-mail. Indeed, Owen and Larson (2017) emphasized the need for partnerships to communicate strategically and plan for the involvement of researchers, practitioners, policymakers, and funders when collaborating for social change. Successful partnership work requires establishing an infrastructure where time and resources for continuous communication are prioritized and sustained as the norm.
Publically sharing the work of the partnership at all phases of development

Partnerships described intentionally communicating the work of the partnership to stakeholders and the public as a strategy both to share their work and to receive feedback that could improve their work. The San Diego Education Research Alliance at UCSD (SanDERA) researcher-practitioner partnership described efforts to connect with stakeholders by “spiraling out” news of the project. “At the outset, focus groups with principals and teachers will be useful not just for publicizing the [academic trajectories] data we are generating, but also to learn from future users what would be most useful to them” (Betts, 2012, p. 24). In this example, project personnel saw communication with principals and teachers as helping to stabilize and promote the vision of their project. Further, this partnership publically communicated the process of their work by publishing a chapter about their partnership in *Researcher-Policymaker Partnerships: Strategies for Launching and Sustaining Successful Collaborations* (2017). In doing so, the partnership contributed to the RPP research community and beyond as they publically communicated the conceptualization, implementation, and sustainability of their work.

Partnerships documented the benefit of engaging the public, particularly those interested in RPP work, in conversations designed to better understand complex social issues that were important to them. This communication is particularly beneficial to researchers and practitioners interested in developing their own partnership. The partnership between the Washoe County School District (WCSD) and the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) provided one example:

The intent of this manuscript is not to demonstrate the creation of a perfectly valid and reliable measure of [social and emotional competencies] SEC. Rather, it is our
hope that the project described herein will provide a framework for future research-practice teams to approach their measure development work in ways that will help bridge the substantial divide that often exists between the psychometricians who develop the measures and the educators who use the data to guide their practice. In this way, we believe the manuscript will add value to the larger field of SEC measurement.

(Weissberg, 2017, p. 124)

This example indicates the intentional desire to internally and externally communicate valuable lessons learned and tangible strategies that may be useful to other partnerships and communities. In addition to addressing their shared vision, this partnership communicated the process of their work in an effort to bring understanding and insight to other partnerships.

The partnership between the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) and the Research and Development (RAND) Corporation researcher-practitioner also cited disseminating their partnership work to the broader community “as a potential development strategy that other researchers may use to develop impactful research projects with state and local agencies in other policy areas” (Miller, 2016, p. 15). This statement reflects the desire of the partnerships to publically communicate their work to help other educators develop and enhance their own researcher-practitioner partnerships.

In addition to written publications, partnerships documented sharing their work at conferences. The New York City Partnership for College Readiness and Success explained:

The partners presented ongoing work at two conferences: the Fall 2015 conference of the Association for Public Policy and Management and the Spring 2015 AERA conference. These sessions focused on questions of equity and access . . . and
permitted the partners to engage in a public conversation about the larger set of findings suggested by each of the studies. (Kemple, 2016, p. 33)

A co-Principal Investigator of the Arizona Practitioner-Researcher Educational Partnership (AzPREP) also shared her partnership work at a conference: “We had mutual respect for each other's roles and responsibilities and worked well together. Alex and I were invited by the United States DOE to present on the success of the partnership in Washington, DC at a national conference sponsored by IES” (C. Giovannone-Jordan, personal communication, December 5, 2017).

In the present study, all partnerships cited the importance of strategically sharing their work with the public at various phases of the development and the implementation of their grants. Such communication encouraged input from the public as “voice” was given to partners and stakeholders (Burke, 2010; Coburn & Penuel, 2016; Covey, 2005; Kania & Kramer, 2011). Many partnerships noted the benefit for stakeholders when complex issues were publically shared with the broader community at all phases of their development.

**Advocating for legislative awareness and political changes**

Trends in the evidence-based policy movement are grounded in key components of “what works” in research and practice (Owen & Larson, 2017; Penuel & Gallagher, 2017). Thus, when confronted with complex social issues, the nature of researcher-practitioner partnership development can appeal to policymakers who want to understand their constituents. Investing in research is an investment in evidence-based political decisions. Likewise, engaging with policy can be beneficial to researchers and practitioners seek in support of their work.

Some partnerships included engaging with policymakers as a specific goal of their work. The partnership between the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) and the
Research and Development (RAND) Corporation identified collaborating with policymakers as a central goal:

The ultimate goal of the two [Institute of Education Sciences] IES studies that came out of this initial partnership grant is to work with policymakers at THECB to make refinements to developmental education (DE) policy. . . . We have had opportunities to provide public testimony before policymaking bodies [including specific legislative recommendations] and to brief institutions on interim research findings. (Miller, 2016, p. 14)

This example indicates that working with policymakers creates opportunities to inform key issues that impact legislative decisions. Likewise, the San Diego Education Research Alliance at UCSD (SanDERA) researcher-practitioner partnership documented their “specific aim to conduct rigorous and relevant research that contributes to the development of education policy and informs, supports, and sustains high-quality educational opportunities for all students in San Diego and beyond” (Owen & Larson, 2017, p. 76). Such specification of the intent to impact policy communicates the desire to engage legislatures in complex social issues. Connecting with multiple stakeholders and nurturing relationships with them is paramount in research, policy, and practice.

Some policymakers were directly involved with the research as partners and, as in the case of the New York City Partnership for College Readiness and Success, were thus “well positioned to translate any of the group’s research findings into immediate policy and practice” (Kemple, 2016, p. 19). Further, this partnership affirmed that, given the active inclusion of policymakers, “we made tremendous headway in advancing our research agenda in the understanding of college access, readiness and success in New York City, selecting the three
main foci for project deliverables and discussing the longer-term policy questions facing DOE and CUNY.” Thus, direct involvement of policymakers can lead to new perspectives and increased awareness and engagement in political processes. As such, advocating for legislative awareness and policymaking are planned changes. Planned change requires preparation, transitioning, and establishing new habits and stability (Fullan, 2001). Change should be institutionalized through new policies, procedures, and protocols.

In planning for the change process, the partnership between the Spokane Public Schools and the Center for Education Data and Research (CEDR) at the University of Washington strategically involved key leaders with political influence. “The point person for Spokane on this project is Angela Jones. As director of Employment Services, she is in a position to translate research findings into policy action by adjusting hiring procedures in Spokane” (Goldhaber, 2012, p. 3). Further connecting policy to practice, the partnership between the Washoe County School District (WCSD) and Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) documented that “sharing results and communicating findings to the broader community will encourage changes in policy and practice” (Weissberg, 2012, p. 13). These statements reflect sustaining change when policy anchors and reinforces the norms of an organization.

The third typology described approaches to communication, both internally within the partnership and externally with the public. Clear and consistent communication nurtures motivation and trust. All partnerships deliberately provided regular opportunities for communication, publically shared their work at all phases, and advocated for legislative awareness and political changes.
Typology # 4: The role of Reflection in Partnership Development

We are inclined to think about reflection as something quiet and personal. My argument is that reflection is action-oriented, social, and political. Its product is praxis (informed, committed action), the most eloquent and socially significant form of human action.

Stephen Kemmis, 1985, p. 141

The fourth typology to organize the description and interpretation of the data focused on encouraging learning through frequent reflection. The goal of reflection should be continuous improvement (Costa & McCrae, 1992; Day, 2000; Senge, 2006). Improvement requires consideration of alternative thought processes than what may be perceived as usual and acceptable. Learning by way of metacognition can be conceptualized as part of an action plan to develop a plan, act on it, observe the effects, and reflect on them (Kemmis, 1985). The will to practice reflection in partnership work is an intentional process. Reflection in partnerships became evident within the data in two ways: willingness to be reflective and flexible, and, then, the commitment to do so through active and ongoing evaluation to address problems of practice.

The willingness to be reflective and flexible

Evaluation is a form of reflection (Goleman, 1995; Schön, 1984). Before reflection can take place, priority must be placed on the necessity to evaluate. However, “teaching smart people how to learn” and to critically examine and evaluate their own behavior can be rather challenging (Argyris, 2008). In the present study, the willingness to be reflective and flexible was frequently documented by the six researcher-practitioner partnerships.

Reflection is an intentional approach to partnership development that takes time. The partnership between the Washoe County School District (WCSD) and the Collaborative for
Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) designated “several rounds” of scheduled meetings for reflection and assessment of the survey instrument that they created.

The WCSD-CASEL partnership team engaged in an intensive process of revising and generating items for the student rating of social and emotional competence. . . The research-practice team both independently, and as a group, studied these SEL [social and emotional learning] standards, writing new items to fill any gaps in coverage of the standards that existed. Several rounds of discussion and consensus occurred, with particular emphasis given to ensuring that high and low SEC abilities were captured by the items, and that items assessed all SEC domains.

(Weissberg, 2017, p. 2)

This example indicates the willingness of the WCSD-CASEL partnership to publically reflect as evidenced in time devoted to “intensive” meetings to develop consensus, to review questions pertaining to their data instrument, and to ensure that the final assessment tool reflected the SEL indicators that it intended to measure.

Partnerships should realize and accept the need for multiple approaches to addressing challenges as critical to reflection. This process takes time and patience, virtues of transformational leadership. The partnership between the Spokane Public Schools and the Center for Education Data and Research (CEDR) at the University of Washington documented in their grant proposal the allocation of scheduled meeting times for reflection and assessment.

Key personnel and staff from Spokane and CEDR will hold a two-hour meeting twice a month. The purpose of these meetings will be to regularly assess progress on the project and address any problems or concerns held by either institution.

(Goldhaber, 2012, p. 12)
Partnerships exemplified the willingness to reflect by scheduling meetings specifically to evaluate their progress. Further, the partnerships also documented the implementation of those plans in final reports. Such reflection and evaluation provides opportunities to analyze the conceptualization and development of the work of their partnerships.

In their final grant report, the Arizona Practitioner-Researcher Educational Partnership (AzPREP) shared that their efforts “provided an in-depth look at processes that have been in place for years and the new initiatives that the state had to quickly put into place as mandated by federal policy” (Kurz, 2016, p. 50). This partnership demonstrated the willingness to reflect and evaluate long-standing organizational processes and procedures in juxtaposition to new requirements, an activity that can lead to change. Though the AzPREP efforts to reflect on their work ultimately did not lead to their sustainability, members of the partnership documented applying metacognition and reflection to their future endeavors.

The partnership between the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) and the Research and Development (RAND) Corporation reflected upon and noted the limitations of their work: “While the Partnership has generated significant research informing THECB’s planning [and] decision-making, its current framework has limited the research it pursues” (Miller, 2016, p. 30). This partnership noted that their research agenda was “driven primarily by Co-PIs and the development office. . . .This structure often fails to adequately incorporate valuable input from THECB staff, practitioners, and other researchers, and has in some cases led to duplicative efforts” (Miller, 2016, p. 30). As in the case of the THECB and the RAND Corporation partnership, the willingness to reflect often requires an organization to examine their leadership and decision-making structures. In this example, upon evaluation, the partnership realized that the titular authority of the co-principal investigators greatly influenced the agenda
of the partnership. Considering the imbalance of influence, this partnership may consider increasing the involvement of other partnership members in decision-making (Bryson, Crosby, & Stone, 2006; Goldsmith, 2010; Penuel & Gallagher, 2017).

Reflection alone is not enough. Reflection should lead to action, which often requires “unlearning” (Drucker, 1995, p. 81). Unlearning involves changing habits and behaviors which are counterproductive in order to develop valuable and creative human relationships. Particularly when multiple stakeholders are involved, the process of unlearning can be challenging (Argyris, 2008). The case of the NYC Partnership for College Readiness and Success exemplified how partnerships must confront challenges with flexibility as they reflect upon their work. This partnership struggled with producing research that served the needs of both the state department of education and the public university system of New York.

Ultimately, we continue to wrestle with questions [relating to ownership of data, identifying groups of stakeholders to be served, and pursuing research contributions to college success] as we attempt to strike a balance between our research goals. Addressing these different goals often requires different analytic approaches and decisions. These questions continue to crop up in our conversations about how to use research or translate it from one context to another. (Kemple, 2016, p. 20)

Addressing challenges requires flexibility. The New York partnership examined their processes for developing their research goals and realized that changes should be made.

In summary, analysis of the data in the present study indicates that these researcher-practitioner partnerships reported their commitment to reflection as a willingness to change and to be transformed. Flexibility is necessary in leadership and partnership development (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Penuel & Gallagher, 2017; Schön, 1984). Transformational leaders are perceived
as reflective and flexible so that they can be strategic managers of change (Amanchukwu, Stanley, & Olube, 2015). Partnerships can be perceived in the same way (Owen & Larson, 2017).

**Seeking to improve through active, ongoing evaluation**

Reflection is a metacognitive process that leads to learning and improvement (Costa & McCrae, 1992; Senge, 2006). In partnership work, reflection leads to improved outcomes when participants learn through the processes of metacognition and continuous evaluation (Argyris, 2003; Schön, 1983). The phases of evaluation in researcher-practitioner partnerships is one way to encourage reflection, accountability, and transformation (Penuel & Gallagher, 2017).

The partnership between the Washoe County School District (WCSD) and the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) documented their ongoing evaluation efforts and continuous learning as a critical step in improving their work. The partnership changed their original plan for creating a student self-report social-emotional learning (SEL) measure because the original prototype of their psychometric survey instrument did not lead to the reliable data that they intended to collect (Weissberg, 2017). The partnership continued to explain that, with the help of an outside consulting group, they revised their SEL tool to a point where the data, educators, and students all agreed the measurements were yielding meaningful and useful enough information to begin use in regression models and decision-making. They explained: “Along this path, we learned the importance of making the measurement project understandable and relevant to educators implementing social and emotional learning each day in their classrooms” (Weissberg, 2017, p. 16). The WCSD-CASEL partnership vividly described the impact of meaningful
evaluation on improving their partnership work and acknowledged the critical role of the resulting reflection.

Some partnerships documented reflection and evaluation as specific goals. For example, the partnership between the Spokane Public Schools and the Center for Education Data and Research (CEDR) at the University of Washington explained that one of their goals was to use what was previously learned from researchers in the partnership “to inform a rigorous statistical analysis of where Spokane's applicant selection process succeeds and fails in identifying applicants who will be successful in the classroom” (Goldhaber, 2012, p. 9). Using what has previously been learned to inform change is often referred to as “double-loop learning”. Double-loop learning questions mental models and various solutions to complex issues in an effort to achieve a goal (Argyris, 2003). Double-loop learning is a continuous evaluative process that encourages reflection, metacognition, and learning.

The partnership between the Washoe County School District (WCSD) and Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) documented the importance of creating formal structures that facilitated feedback and analysis of their work. This partnership described frequent interaction with stakeholders to assist them in “develop[ing] strategies to address the issues raised through analyses and focus groups” (Weissberg, 2017, p. 18). In this example, the partnership documented the action-oriented, social, and political aspect of reflection (Kemmis, 1985). That is, this partnership intentionally sought to improve their work by creating opportunities to obtain feedback.

The San Diego Education Research Alliance at UCSD (SanDERA) researcher-practitioner partnership also described their efforts “to refine our models and displays based on practitioner feedback” (Betts, 2016, p. 7). This evaluative process, followed by
evoking meaningful change, is the “action-oriented” aspect of reflection emphasized in the literature (Dewey, 1933; Kemmis, 1985; Schön, 1983).

Most partnerships documented the desire to evaluate the processes of their work with the goal of improvement. One example was described in a personal communication from the New York City Partnership for College Readiness and Success: “We also hope to publish a report in early 2018 that will summarize some lessons learned from the early years of the partnership—that paper isn't available yet, but we would be happy to send you a note when it is released.” In this example, with the goal of improvement, the NYC partnership intended to reflect on their work and to summarize lessons learned. Further, the partnership offered to share what they learned from their evaluative processes in an effort to also help improve other partnerships.

In another example, the partnership between the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) and the Research and Development (RAND) Corporation realized the necessity to reorganize their partnership in order to improve it when they stated:

With funding from the Spencer Foundation, RAND and THECB propose to expand upon and restructure our successful Partnership to increase its impact on [higher education] HE and ensure its long-term stability. The Partnership is a primary resource that THECB will draw upon as it develops and implements policies to meet the goals of 60x30TX [By 2030, at least 60% of Texans ages 25-34 will have a certificate or higher degree]. (Miller, 2016, p. 61)

These statements reflect efforts to seek improvement through ongoing evaluation leading to intentional decisions and the advancement of partnership work. Such actions are dependent upon the use of reflection.
In the present study, data analysis indicated that the process of sustainable partnership development is improved when leaders place a priority on various levels of reflection, metacognition, and evaluation. Each partnership documented improving their relationships by being open to reflection. Each recognized that negotiating the working relationships of different people and different groups is a process that requires participants to continuously develop their learning and to reflect (Schön, 1983). Leaders in learning organizations are responsible for providing opportunities for people to reflect in order to continuously learn and evaluate the work at hand (Day, 2000; Schön, 1983; Senge, 2011). The role of reflection requires a willingness to learn, the flexibility to adjust, and the deliberate awareness of the role of leadership in this aspect of partnership development.

**Evaluation**

The previous section provided description and interpretation of the data through the use of four typologies derived from initial analysis of the data. This process reflected the first and second dimensions of Eisner’s (1998) process of educational criticism. Beyond description and interpretation of data, Eisner emphasized that it is “vital” for educational critics to evaluate “what is seen” (Eisner, 1998, p. 99). Therefore, a goal of educational criticism is to appraise the data that represented partnership experiences for their value and significance. This process is the third dimension of educational criticism.

For Eisner, an experience should be educative, one that “fosters the growth of human intelligence, nurtures curiosity, and yields satisfactions in the doing of those things worth doing” (p. 99). Therefore, data from the documented experiences of partnerships were examined in terms of whether these experiences were “educative” in regards to the role of leadership and effective partnership development to serve the needs of students in public schools.
The role of leadership

Though not explicitly identified as a typology, shared leadership was frequently described within the six federal grant proposals, final reports, and other documented descriptions of participants’ efforts. Leadership is shared when power and responsibilities are broadly distributed so that people in a group influence and lead each other to maximize effectiveness; such leadership is a process that extends beyond just one appointed leader (Bolden, 2011; Yukl, 1989).

In each partnership within the present study, documents reported that members willingly engaged with each other as significant knowledge, skills, and abilities were identified, recognized, and applied for the advancement of the group. In doing so, leadership characteristics benefited the partnership as well as the professional development of all involved. Documents from the partnership between the Washoe County School District (WCSD) and the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) described the interchange and mutual respect within their partnership. “The partnership was not a one-way street. . . .[There was] constant interchange among researchers and practitioners both within and across the organizations” (Owen & Larson, 2017, p. 80). In this case, the foundation for developing and implementing a grant provided an opportunity for strategic alignment of common interests and, ultimately, the development of shared leadership.

Though all six principal investigators in the researcher-practitioner partnerships played an important role in establishing the culture of the partnerships, as previously described in the second typology, they did not dominate the leadership within the partnerships. Instead, they demonstrated shared leadership. For example, the researcher-practitioner partnership between the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) and the Research and Development
RAND Corporation reported that “the overall success of our partnership is a result of the ability to leverage unique expertise and complementary skill sets with a joint willingness to work together to build practice” (Miller, 2016, p. 49). Similarly, the Arizona Practitioner-Researcher Educational Partnership (AzPREP) acknowledged that “shared leadership between practitioners and researchers keeps the focus on important educational problems” (Kurz, 2016, p. 50). Further underscoring the importance of shared leadership, the San Diego Education Research Alliance (SanDERA) partnership described their work as follows: “Each member of the team is an equal partner, and each feels free to challenge and question data, findings, processes, or plans, resulting in much stronger outcomes” (Owen & Larson, 2017, p. 92). In these partnerships, shared leadership enabled partnership development to address significant educational challenges.

In addition, shared leadership implies concomitantly using emotional intelligence to understand feelings and to build relationships (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2002; Solovey & Mayer, 1990). Leadership becomes “resonant” when one is effectively attuned to emotions in order to connect with others and inspire success. Such relationships facilitate the attainment of organizational goals. Each partnership in the present study documented the shared notion that relationships matter in their work.

For leaders to be successful, they must exercise emotional intelligence in order to motivate people to achieve team goals. Emotional intelligence is defined as "the subset of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one's own and other's feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions" (Solovey & Mayer, 1990, p. 189). In this manner, leaders provide a transformational influence over other people (Bass & Avolio, 2010). In the present study, leaders in each researcher-
practitioner partnership connected with partnership members and other stakeholders to attain goals they intended to achieve.

Emotionally intelligent leaders understand the critical role of feelings and emotions when working with people. This realization is of particular value in the present study as partnership members shared leadership to motivate and influence each other. One example is found in the partnership between the Washoe County School District (WCSD) and the Collaborative for Academic and Social Emotional Learning (CASEL) as they documented “maintaining and deepening the partnership” by strengthening the working relationships within the partnership (Weissberg, 2011, p. 14).

Another example of the use of emotional intelligence in developing partnerships is found in the partnership between the Spokane Public Schools and the Center for Education Data and Research (CEDR) at the University of Washington. This partnership noted that their principal investigator applied emotional intelligence by connecting with the needs and emotions of leaders in the Spokane school district. The principal investigator began by discussing a research partnership with the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent in his school district, learned about their strategic plans, and aligned his research agenda to it; he then coordinated community meetings to discuss specific questions and issues that were common to potential partners and stakeholders (Goldhaber, 2012, p. 6). In this case, an emotionally intelligent leader connected his professional passion with that of life-minded influential leaders and diverse stakeholders. Doing so enables partnerships to develop their work towards achieving shared goals.
The process of partnership development toward collective impact

Partnerships documented the need to recognize and nurture commonalities not only within their current partnership, but also with supporters of their work. In doing so, goals of the partnership were strengthened and the mission of the partnership was extended into the community (Kania & Kramer, 2011; Penuel & Gallagher, 2017). The partnership of the San Diego Education Research Alliance at UCSD (SanDERA) deliberately held public forums and community presentations where research findings were disseminated to gain feedback from the broader San-Diego community (Bett, 2016). Such communication can help to broaden the partnership beyond the limited scope of members who were directly involved in the formal grant effort.

Analysis of the data also indicated a shared commitment to improve education. This shared commitment is often described as “collective impact” (Kania & Kramer, 2011). That is in working towards making a collective impact, partners become motivated to address complex social issues through sharing mutual interests and developing a common agenda to address those complex social issues. The New York City Partnership for College Readiness and Success underscored the importance of their partnership being “built directly on the strong foundation for data sharing and research collaboration to meet established goals” (Kemple, 2016, p. 10). These efforts reflected a shared commitment to working towards a collective impact. The researcher-practitioner partnership between the Washoe County School District (WCSD) and the Collaborative for Academic and Social Emotional Learning (CASEL) provided another example regarding collective impact. The partnership stated the aim of their research to “ultimately use research-based evidence that promotes academic learning to guide interventions and decision making at the individual, classroom, and building level” (Weissberg, 2012, p. 10). Here,
collective impact was intentional. Thus, analysis of the data indicated that the RPPs valued shared commitments to work together in meeting important educational goals.

In summary, the evaluation dimension of educational criticism provided an additional perspective within the analysis of the data by offering “value judgements” (Eisner, 1998, p. 80) regarding the process of partnership development and the role of leadership within such efforts. Evident in the data was the value placed on building relationships in partnerships. In building such relationships, leaders demonstrated emotional intelligence in working with all partners to facilitate a culture of shared leadership. Partnership development also focused on fostering a shared commitment among stakeholders towards making a collective impact to benefit the education of the students they served.

**Thematics**

The fourth dimension of Eisner’s process of educational criticism is thematics (1998). Thematic notions lead to statements of general principles or naturalistic generalizations based on interpretations of the data (Stake, 1995; Patton, 2002). Distilled from patterns and “recurring messages” gleaned from the data (Eisner, 1998, p. 104), a theme has recurring relevance that extends beyond a particular situation. Analysis of data in the present study led to the development of three themes: (a) partnerships anchored their work within an understanding and appreciation for rigorous research and reflective practice; (b) leaders engaged partners in establishing the infrastructure and strategic plans of the partnership; and (c) partnerships galvanized broad support for addressing complex social issues beyond their formal organizational structure. The following sections discuss each of those themes.
Theme 1: Partnerships anchored their work with a dynamic understanding and appreciation for rigorous research and reflective practice.

A common theme in the present study was the need to keep partners engaged in the work and thus motivated to continue with the purpose of the partnership. Documents from the researcher-practitioner partnership between the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) and the Research and Development (RAND) Corporation described the importance of participants being committed to the purpose of the partnership. These partners believed that understanding and appreciation for the work of the partnerships occurs if “the partner see(s) that the research interests are sufficiently aligned with his/her own, and, that the partnership is benefiting him/her” (Miller, 2016, p. 31). Research indicates that people are motivated to work towards the vision of an organization when understanding and appreciation for the work are made clear (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Burke, 2010; Owen & Larson, 2017; Penuel & Gallagher, 2017). Along with the partnership between THECB and RAND, other partnerships in the present study anchored their work within a dynamic understanding and appreciation for rigorous research and reflective practice.

In addition, the Arizona Researcher-Practitioner Educational Partnership (AzPREP) shared their intentions to ground their work in understanding issues of mutual concern in the process of developing an effective researcher-practitioner partnership.

The key task was for the researchers to first understand all the contextual factors that had implications for design choices, for practitioners to become more familiar with what factors are important in research design, and options to address these factors. (Kurz, 2016, p. 37)
Key to the work of this partnership was the research partner’s understanding of the needs of the practitioners and the practitioner’s understanding of the standards for quality research.

The researcher-practitioner partnership between the Washoe County School District (WCSD) and the Collaborative for Academic and Social Emotional Learning (CASEL) kept understanding the purpose of their work central from both the practice and research perspectives. They noted that

a cornerstone of the partnership’s success was its focus on social and emotional learning. Throughout each day, members of the partnership attended to group dynamics while always keeping the focus of our work on implications for practice. (Owen & Larson, 2017, p. 66).

Furthermore, in addition to the impact on practice, written materials from this partnership documented that “reflections at the closing of each day built optimism and group commitment to the work and was very conducive to research-practice integration” (Owen & Larson, 2017, p. 67). This partnership cultivated a purpose-driven motivation that inspired members to conduct both rigorous research and reflective practice.

The partnership between the Spokane Public Schools and the Center for Education Data and Research (CEDR) at the University of Washington provides yet another example of partnerships anchoring their work in understanding and appreciating rigorous research and reflective practice.

The connection to local districts through education research and policy improvement is a special focus that has advanced CEDR's understanding of the education issues pertinent to practitioners, and, we hope, the ability of school districts to use their data to inform educational decisions. (Goldhaber, 2012, p. 22)
As a result, this partnership engaged their partners by reinforcing their mutual interests and appreciation for rigorous research and informed practice.

In summary, partnerships in the present study documented value in keeping the purpose of their work deeply grounded in both the motivation to produce rigorous research and the importance of quality reflective practice. In doing so, all participants could feel synergistically connected to the greater purpose of their collaborative work.

Theme 2: Leaders authentically and strategically engaged partners in establishing the foundations of the partnership.

Partnerships in the present study developed a clear infrastructure that supported the strategic plans of the partnership. Leaders authentically engaged partners in clearly defining specific strategies that enabled the partnerships to bring their purpose to reality (i.e., vision, mission, objectives, and action plans). For example, documents from the partnership between the Washoe County School District (WCSD) and the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) explained that “the alignment of purpose, goals, and teamwork were essential elements of our successful partnership” (Owen & Larson, 2017, p. 65). Using shared leadership to develop strategic plans allow individual efforts to be aligned to the broad purpose of the partnership. In doing so, these efforts increased the commitment of the participants.

Documents from the New York City Partnership for College Readiness and Success described their efforts as “creating an infrastructure that includes a management team, agreements, short and long-term research agendas, review committees, and forums for sharing work in progress” (Kemple, 2016, p.9). Likewise, the researcher-practitioner partnership of the San Diego Education Research Alliance (SanDERA) at University of California provided
another example of leaders engaging partners at multiple levels in the development and ownership of their work.

Researchers with the SanDERA Executive Committee, in consultation with other advisors, established and maintained a research agenda that is aligned with the [school] district's mission, goals, and strategic plan, is focused on high-priority issues of problems facing the district, and informs the work of educators and policymakers in San Diego and beyond. (Betts, 2016, p. 75)

As in the cases of NYC and CASEL, the SanDERA partnership also realized the “essential element” of developing a solid infrastructure in order to support the strategic planning and advancement of their work.

Theme 3: Partnerships galvanized broad support for addressing complex social issues beyond their formal organizational structures.

Leaders and partners nurtured relationships and rapport among themselves and with other stakeholders. Documents from the present study offered a plethora of examples reflecting the importance of developing and maintaining positive relationships across all levels of the partnerships in this study and with constituencies beyond. Such a focus on rapport within the partnerships provides a foundation necessary for addressing complex social issues beyond the immediate setting (Bryson, Crosby, & Stone, 2006; Penuel & Gallagher, 2017).

For example, the partnership between the Spokane Public Schools and the Center for Education Data and Research (CEDR) at the University of Washington emphasized building support for their work by “targeting a broader set of stakeholders who are interested in the project’s work in particular, or in understanding research possibilities in general” (Goldhaber,
2012, p. 24). This excerpt documents their focus on establishing relationships and rapport with multiple stakeholders beyond their immediate partnership.

In another example, the San Diego Education Research Alliance at UCSD (SanDERA) partnership specifically galvanized broad support for their efforts by hosting “regular public forums to enhance outreach to and engage the San Diego community to increase the relevance of the research” (San Diego Education Research Alliance, 2018). Similar to the Center for Education Data and Research (CEDR), SanDERA realized that providing opportunities for the broader community to engage with their work would both increase the support for their work and provide a base for extending their work.

Further emphasizing the value community involvement, the Washoe County School District (WCSD) and Collaborative for Academic and Social Emotional Learning (CASEL) researcher-practitioner partnership described their outreach efforts to the broader community as an effort to “grow the social capital of the partnership by engaging the broad community and establishing linkages with local stakeholders” (Weissberg, 2012, p. 24) in order to address complex social issues. These examples underscore the partnerships’ realization that authentic engagement of diverse groups of stakeholders should be an ongoing process in the conceptualization and implementation of their work. Further, successful partnership work will not occur without authentic rapport and meaningful relationships among stakeholders.

In summary of thematic notions in the present study, the role of leadership and the process of partnership development is indeed a complex and dynamic undertaking. Making a collective impact requires astute knowledge, skills, and abilities beyond the
capability of any one individual. Therefore, as leadership is shared, partnerships must anchor their work with a dynamic understanding and appreciation for rigorous research and reflective practice. Additionally, leaders must engage partners in establishing the infrastructure and strategic plans of the partnership. And finally, partnerships must galvanize broad support for addressing complex social issues not only within but also beyond their formal organizational structure.

**Chapter Summary**

This chapter described the process of data analysis used in the present study to understand the role of leadership in the process of developing sustainable partnerships in education as documented in the context of a set of federal grant-related documents. Eisner’s (1998) four dimensions of educational criticism served as the overall structure for data analysis by organizing the discussion according to description, interpretation, evaluation, and thematics. Typological analysis supported the process of educational criticism by organizing the data for description and interpretation (Hatch, 2002). Typological analysis led to the development of four typologies relevant to the role of leadership and the process of partnership development: (a) building capacity; (b) strategies for partnership development; (c) approaches to communication; and (d) the role of reflection in partnership development.

Data analysis revealed how the work of the partnerships reflected important educational values. Thematics, the fourth dimension of educational criticism, gleaned the development of three themes: (a) partnerships anchored their work with an understanding and appreciation for rigorous research and reflective practice; (b) leaders authentically and strategically engaged partners in establishing the foundations of the
partnership; and (c) partnerships galvanized broad support for addressing complex social issues beyond their formal organizational structure. These themes offered general principles or naturalistic generalizations derived from data interpretation (Patton, 2002; Stake, 1995) that might inform the work of other partnership organizations.

Chapter 5 contains a summary of the present study, recommendations for the practice of educational leadership, recommendations for the practice of partnership development, limitations of the present study, recommendations for future research, and conclusions regarding the role of leadership and the process of partnership development in education.
CHAPTER FIVE:
SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of the present study was to understand the role of leadership in the process of developing sustainable partnerships in education as documented in the context of a set of grant proposals, their final reports, and other descriptions of their efforts. In order to investigate how documents reflected the role of leadership in the process of partnership development, content analysis focused on, documents related to a purposive sample of six partnerships that were awarded funding in 2013 by the U.S. Department of Education Institute of Education Sciences (IES) Researcher-Practitioner Partnerships (RPP) in Education Research program. These partnerships provided documents (see Appendix B & Appendix C) that reflected strategic partnership development and leadership practices to address the educational needs of students.

Summary of the Present Study

Introduction and Background—Partnerships require understanding and implementing collaborative approaches to address social issues (Bryson, Crosby, & Stone, 2006; Kania & Kramer, 2011; Owen & Larson, 2017). The practice of partnership development and research that supports it have become increasingly important topics in the field of education (Berlinder & Biddle, 1995; U.S. Department of Education, 2017). Though various conceptual and theoretical models of leadership and partnership development exist, attributes regarding the role of leadership and the process of partnership development were identified in the present study, such as: valuing rigorous research and reflective practice, strategically engaging partners in the
development of the partnership, and gaining broad support for relevant social issues beyond the immediate focus of the partnership.

Understanding strategies that support effective partnership development can inform research and practice. Therefore, greater emphasis is being placed on the process of developing and implementing successful partnerships (Coburn, Penuel, & Geil, 2013). Partnerships have become useful in addressing complex social needs, such as providing equitable education for all children. Moreover, “We are entering a period of time where national leadership is setting the stage for broad expectations for multiple areas of government to be increasingly attuned to evidence of what works in policy and practice” (Owen & Larson, 2017, p. 217). Understanding “what works in policy and practice” (Owen & Larson, 2017) can lead to identifying elements and strategies for successful leadership and collaboration within partnership development that can inform efforts to address complex educational problems.

Educational leaders are in a position to guide organizational change as they influence the research and practice of partnership work (Burke, 2010; Harding, 2014; Jackson & Parry, 2011; Kotter & Schlesinger, 1979). To address this need for understanding leadership and collaboration, the present study investigated the following research question: How are the role of leadership and the process of developing sustainable partnerships in education documented in the context of a set of grant proposals, their final reports, and other descriptions of their efforts?

Review of Related Literature—Chapter 2 examined the topics of partnerships, leadership, and the challenges of leading partnerships. The concept of partnerships in education implies shared leadership and collective impact among stakeholders with
shared ideals and outcomes (Coburn & Penuel, 2016; Senge, 2006; Kania & Kramer, 2011). Further, partnership effectiveness depends upon stakeholders working together as a learning organization while exchanging power, expertise, and influence (Senge, 2006; Yukl, 1989). Such collaboration is essential for partnerships to make a collective impact (Kania & Kramer, 2011; Penuel & Gallagher, 2017). The current educational climate exhibits growing interest in a very specific form of partnership between people who believe in the value of research applied to practice, that is, researcher-practitioner partnerships (RPPs). RPPs are defined as “long-term collaborations between practitioners and researchers, organized to investigate problems of practice and solutions for improving schools and school districts” (Colburn, Penuel, & Geil, 2013, p. 2). RPPs serve as a means to leverage research and improve practice.

To this end, effective leadership is a critical factor in the development and transformation of organizations (Hersey, Blanchard, & Johnson, 2008), including organizations such as researcher-practitioner partnerships. Contrary to the hierarchical, task-oriented models of leadership (Pettigrew, 2003), people are led, not managed (Costa & McCrae, 1992). The definition of leadership asserted by Bass and Stogdill (1990), Hersey, Blanchard, and Johnson (2008), and Northouse (2007) contributed to the conceptual and theoretical frameworks guiding the present study: leadership is the exercise of influence individually or in a group context.

Leadership in the context of influencing individuals within partnerships requires keen attention to constituents’ perceptions (Moorman, 1991; Peters & Waterman, 1982) and emotions (Goleman, 1995; Schön, 1983). Considering the multitude of traditional and classical leadership theories (Bass, 1990a), leaders must ultimately adapt their
leadership strategies to the individual(s) and the context of the given situation (Northouse, 2016; Vroom & Sternberg, 2002). Likewise, leaders in researcher-practitioner partnerships must develop clear perspectives about their own perceptions, emotions, and leadership strategies.

Therefore, the theoretical framework guiding the present study supported the adoption of transformational leadership to facilitate partnership development, shared leadership to influence partnership development, and change theory to understand the process of partnership development to meet educational needs. Transformational leaders “transform the art of leadership into the science of results” as leadership becomes “resonant” (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2002, p. 20). that is, bringing out the best in individuals through recognizing the emotional impact of leadership on the leader as well as other people.

By combining feeling and thought, effective leaders of the 21st century transform organizations through inspiring people to work towards change. Shared leadership theory is relevant to partnership work because the latter implies the need for people to concede some power and control to other people (Bryson, Crosby, & Stone, 2006; Goldsmith, 2010). Shared leadership is “leadership that emanates from members of teams and not simply from an appointed leader” (Pearce & Sims, 2001, p. 132). Developing successful partnerships is also informed by change theories in organizational development such as Lewin’s (1947) 3-stage model and Kotter’s (2012) 8-step process for leading change. These change theories espouse the importance of having an awareness of the need to change, specific preparations for change, and
organizational reinforcements established in order for the intended change to be successful.

Partnership development requires understanding and implementing leadership and processes that support and lead to sustainable partnerships that collectively impact problems of practice in education. Indeed, the conceptual framework for leading partnership development begins with the need to improve the quality of public education. This realization leads to adopting change theories from the field of organizational development, along with recognizing shared and transformational leadership to inform the processes for partnership development (Burke, 2010; Fullan, 2001; Lewin, 1947).

**Study Design and Research Methodology**— Qualitative research seeks the knowledge of understanding (Patton, 2002) regarding complex social phenomena. Qualitative content analysis, or document analysis, can be a useful technique to describe and clarify the focus of individual, group, institutional, or social issues as documented in text (Weber, 1990). Because documents were the data sources in the present study, content analysis served as the research design to investigate how researcher-practitioner partnerships examined the role of leadership and the process of partnership development (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005; Kaid & Johnson-Wadsworth, 1989).

Furthermore, as Merriam (1988) pointed out, “documents of all types can help the researcher uncover meaning, develop understanding, and discover insights relevant to the research problem” (p. 118). Some researchers have referred to directed content analysis, a type of content analysis, as deductive content analysis because existing data
Elements of case-study research also influenced the research process. Because the focus of the present study was on analyzing documents produced by six partnerships awarded funding in 2013 by the U.S. Department of Education Institute of Education Sciences (IES) Researcher-Practitioner Partnerships (RPP) in Education Research program, these six partnerships together comprised a case of researcher-practitioner partnerships in education (Patton, 2002; Yin, 2004).

Data Analysis— The data analyses processes employed Eisner’s four dimensions of educational criticism—description, interpretation, evaluation, and thematics (Eisner, 1998). This framework supported content analysis because it provided “descriptive evidence” from the data through the use of categories and subcategories (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1282) in order to capture salient qualities in the data. Four typologies, or categories, were developed to describe the data and to then “anchor further analysis” (Hatch, 2002, p. 153) of the data. Because “description of experience and interpretation are so intertwined that they often become one” (Patton, 2002, p. 106), Eisner’s description and interpretation dimensions were combined. The four typologies used to organize data in this study included: (a) building capacity in partnerships; (b) the process of developing partnerships; (c) approaches to communication within partnerships; and (d) the role of reflection in partnership work.

Analysis of the data led to the development of three themes or “recurring messages” (Patton, 2002, p. 104) that may inform the process of partnership development and the role of leadership in researcher-practitioner partnerships in
education in other contexts. These themes included: (a) researcher-practitioner partnerships valued the role of rigorous research in their work and the importance of reflective practice in their work; (b) the leaders of RPPs authentically and strategically engaged partners in establishing the foundation of their partnership; and (c) partnerships not only addressed the immediate goals they sought to achieve, but they also galvanized broad support for relevant social issues beyond the immediate focus of their projects.

**Recommendations for the Practice of Educational Leadership within Partnerships**

*Leadership is all about people. It is not about organizations. It is not about plans. It is not about strategies. It is all about people motivating people to get the job done.*

Colin L. Powell (2003, para. 14)

Few could argue that any partnership or organization is successful without the influence of an effective leader (Bass & Stogdill, 1990; Northhouse, 2016; Senge, 2006). Improving educational leadership is an essential priority and focus for any school and community interested in improving individuals and outcomes in education (Luke, 1998; Marzano, McNutty, & Waters, 2005). Leaders do make a difference, especially in terms of organizational change (Burke, 2010; Costa & McCrae, 1970). Results from the present study parallel dominant themes also present in the literature.

Developing robust opportunities for effective partnerships in education therefore requires a conscious investment in developing effective leaders. Data analysis from the present study leads to several recommendations for the practice of educational leadership within researcher-practitioner partnerships. Leaders should: invest in understanding and communicating the needs of stakeholders, learn to cultivate meaningful professional relationships, and facilitate meaningful opportunities to embrace change.
First, educational leaders should understand, communicate, and commit to addressing the needs of stakeholders whom they intend to serve (Coburn, Penuel, & Geil, 2013). In the same article, a researcher described this process as leaders providing opportunities for partners to “talk about, internalize, and understand” (Coburn, Penuel, & Geil, 2013, p. 4) issues and solutions that are central to their work. The process of understanding and communicating the needs of others requires keen perceptions, patience, and focus (Covey, 2005; Day, 2001; Goleman, 1995). Gaining understanding and communicating the needs of stakeholders to others leads to mutual trust, transparency, quality research, fidelity of practice, mutual benefits, and an overall greater collective impact. This intentional strategy requires constantly monitoring the internal and external environment of an organization (Burke, 2010).

Partnerships in the present study described communication challenges as “inherent” in this type of work, and thus they required constant attention (Betts, 2002, p. 13). Effective communication connecting the work of the partnership to the needs of stakeholders makes research more useful to educators, parents, and community members seeking to improve outcomes for children and youth (Penuel & Gallagher, 2017).

Secondly, cultivating meaningful professional relationships must be at the core of effective leadership (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Bolman & Deal, 2008). Each partnership in the present study described the influence and impact of relationships at various phases of their work, particularly communication among senior leaders. For example, with a desire to cultivate meaningful relationships aligned with like-interests, the lead researcher of the partnership between the Spokane Public Schools and the Center for
Education Data and Research (CEDR) at the University of Washington explained his decision to maintain a network of education practitioners who use and value his work in order to garner support for his professional interests (Goldhaber, 2012).

Moreover, in providing recommendations for sustainable partnerships, the researcher-practitioner partnership between the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) and the Research and Development (RAND) Corporation asserted that, “partnerships require a strong policy/practitioner partner who is comfortable with some degree of risk and has the authority to navigate a complex bureaucracy” (Miller, 2016, p. 31). The RAND partnership implemented this recommendation. Educational leaders are positioned to build and nurture relationships with constituents that benefit the partnerships as they endeavor to develop and sustain their work.

Further supporting the need for meaningful professional relationships, documents from the partnership between the Spokane Public Schools and the Center for Education Data and Research (CEDR) at the University of Washington indicated that their organization remained stable as a partnership despite several changes to key personnel (Goldhaber, 2017). Cultivating the ongoing commitment of upper-level leaders and key stakeholders in the development of the partnership creates a culture of meaningful professional relationships that can withstand the inevitable changes in personnel. In another example, the NYC Partnership for College Readiness and Success described engaging the interest and commitment of constituents as “adding weight to the collaborative work of the group” (Kemple, 2016, p. 21). The intentional decision for educational leaders to invest in building authentic and meaningful professional relationships facilitated productive and healthy partnerships.
Third, it would behoove educational leaders interested in developing partnerships to connect those efforts to the process of educational change. With the intent of sustaining the change, educational leaders should apply theoretical and research knowledge in the complex task of leading organizational change (Burke, 2010). Educational leaders should consider the readiness of their organization for the phases of change so that new behaviors become rooted as accepted social norms in the culture of the organization.

In the present study, partnerships described facilitating activities to promote the process of change such as engaging partners around questions pertaining to self-awareness, goal setting, empathy, and reflection (Owen & Larson, 2017). Literature suggests that educational leaders approach change from the viewpoint of a stakeholder who will be affected by the change (Bryson, Crosby, & Stone, 2006; Burke, 2010; Gardner, 2004). In the case of partnership development in education, educational leaders should consider the impact of their decisions on members of the partnership and by extension, students, teachers, parents, and the community whom they represent.

**Recommendations for the Development of Effective Partnerships**

*Teamwork is the ability to work together toward a common vision. The ability to direct individual accomplishments towards organizational objectives. It is the fuel that allows common people to attain uncommon results.*

Andrew Carnegie (year, pg)

The importance of developing effective partnerships in education cannot be overlooked. State and local education agencies need the partnership of research institutions in order to improve programs, processes, practices, assessments, and
policies (Coburn, Penuel, & Geil, 2013; Owen & Larson, 2017). Further, because schools do not exist independently from their communities, partnership development should include multiple levels of community-based stakeholders (Penuel & Gallagher, 2017).

In the present study, documents reflecting the work of partnerships echoed the position taken by partnership between the Washoe County School District (WCSD) and the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL): “Vibrant effective partnerships can be intentionally built and effectively nurtured” (Owen & Larson, 2017). This statement supports the decision of the partnership that viable partnerships can indeed be cultivated. Further, data analysis from the present study led to recommendations regarding how to develop effective partnerships. Participants in RPPs should: a) identify the primary issue addressed by the partnership and the impact on the researchers and practitioners involved; b) clarify mutually beneficial outcomes for constituents whom the partnership serves; and c) strategically focus on the direction of the work of the partnership to support sustainability beyond the funding period of the grant.

Because partnership work has become desirable in efforts to improve education, many complex social issues could be addressed by any given partnership. Therefore, based on data analysis in the current study, a partnership needs to clearly identify its primary focus. That is, partnerships should “focus a set of research initiatives on some common problems or ‘grand challenges’” (Penuel & Gallagher, 2017, p. 149). As documented within the data analysis of the present study, when partnerships strategize
together to identify primary issues of concern, a framework for mutual commitment and long-term engagement can be cultivated.

Often, researchers and practitioners join a partnership with very passionate feelings about issues and agendas to which they are committed. For the practice of partnership development, determining the primary focus for the partnership is a strategy that takes time and tact (Kania & Kramer, 2011; Penuel & Gallagher, 2017). For example, the documents from the researcher-practitioner partnership between the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) and Research and Development (RAND) Corporation reflected on their assessment of partnership work. Participants in the partnership recognized that, in order to develop a successful partnership, researchers and practitioners must negotiate topics of primary concern and devote time to developing a long-term agenda that may not lead directly to their initial individual intentions (Miller, 2016).

Further, the partnership between the Spokane Public Schools and the Center for Education Data and Research (CEDR) at the University of Washington documented the importance of partners “sharing a common interest in assessing policies and practices that have the potential to affect student outcomes and influence the quality of teaching and learning” (Goldhaber, 2012, p. 3). This strategy of developing a shared purpose helped stabilize the work of this partnership. Such fostering of mutual commitment to a central issue is found in the work of the researcher-practitioner partnership of the San Diego Education Research Alliance at University of California at San Diego (UCSD) researcher-practitioner partnership (SanDERA). They described the benefits: “The excitement, commitment, and pride about this work among all collaborators is palpable
and contributes to the project’s success and continued level of engagement” (Owen & Larson, 2017, p. 72). Working together to establish a commitment to a clear educational focus is a recommendation for the practice of partnership development that can support all short and long-term plans of the collaborative.

Analysis of the data from the present study leads to a second recommendation. Partnership development involves clarification of mutually beneficial outcomes for both researchers and practitioners. The partnership between the Washoe County School District (WCSD) and the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) determined “mutually interesting, important, and beneficial outcomes to the proposed partnership” (Owen & Larson, 2017, p. 24). This strategy is a central consideration if partnerships are to be successful (Buchanan, 1994; Bryson, Crosby, & Stone, 2006; Kania & Kramer, 2011). In addition to the time and tact necessary to identify the primary issue that a partnership addresses, determining mutually beneficial outcomes also takes significant patience and careful negotiation in order to maintain the commitment of partners and to build a future for the partnership.

The practice of developing mutually beneficial outcomes in partnerships also requires flexibility. Particularly in educational partnerships, circumstances often occur in the course of a project that are beyond the control of researchers and practitioners (Burke, 2010; Drucker, 1995; Penuel & Gallagher, 2017). Based on their experiences, the researcher-practitioner partnership of the San Diego Education Research Alliance (SanDERA) at University of California at San Diego (UCSD) suggested that “partnerships develop strategies to stay on track, but stay flexible. Hold participants accountable, but be mindful of accommodating changing district priorities and
unexpected events” (Betts, 2016, p. 29). As such, this partnership developed detailed meeting schedules, created timelines with project milestones and deliverables to stay on track, and payed attention to changing conditions in their district that could impact the progress of their work. Likewise, based on their partnership work, the New York City Partnership for College Readiness and Success acknowledged the need to “consider agenda setting an ongoing and evolving activity. Allowing the balance of inward- and outward-facing research to vary as needed may mean frequent adjustments to the research agenda” (Kemple, 2016, p. 21). These examples indicate the need for partnerships to anticipate changing circumstances and to exercise flexibility when determining mutually beneficial outcomes for the researchers and practitioners involved.

A third recommendation for developing partnerships is to plan strategically for the future direction of the partnership beyond the funding period of the grant. When partnerships approach the conceptualization and implementation of their work as a sustainable arrangement, addressing the mutually determined goals and outcomes becomes a long-term process of transformation.

For example, the partnership between the Washoe County School District (WCSD) and Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) considered the direct benefit of their partnership work to “organizations, schools or stakeholders, in the form of trainings, products, or actionable information” (Owen & Larson, 2017, p. 52). In doing so, this partnership included these groups of stakeholders in the planned activities of their project. The researcher-practitioner partnership of the San Diego Education Research Alliance (SanDERA) at the University of California at San Diego (UCSD) also adopted a long-term
view. “The superintendent acknowledged that the series of SanDERA reports helped the
district to mobilize an extraordinary series of interventions which could help more San Diego
students become eligible to attend college” (Owen & Larson, 2017, p. 91). When partnership
work proves to be effectively useful and sustainable in mobilizing the interests of stakeholders
beyond the immediate focus of the project, participants have expanded their work and impact.

Partnership development can indeed be cultivated when participants launch and
sustain effective strategies that promote sustainability. Researcher-practitioner
partnerships should: a) identify the primary issue addressed by the partnership and the
impact on the researchers and practitioners involved; b) clarify mutually beneficial
outcomes for constituents whom the partnership serves; and c) strategically focus on the
direction of the work of the partnership to support sustainability beyond the funding
period of the grant.

**Limitations**

Limitations of research presents conditions of the study that cannot be controlled
by the researcher (Creswell, 2012; Patton, 2002). Inherent to qualitative research,
interpretation of findings requires subjective analysis including rich descriptions and
discussions about complex phenomena (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). The identification
of limitations in research reinforces transparency in the research process and
acknowledges opportunities to further research.

The examination of grant proposals, final reports, and other documented
descriptions of RPP efforts included materials from grants awarded from the 2013
funding announcement of the U.S. Department of Education Institute of Education
Sciences (IES) Researcher-Practitioner Partnerships (RPP) in Education Research
program. These documents reflected the work of federally funded projects awarded in the first year that the IES at the National Center for Education Research (NCER) provided this researcher-practitioner grant opportunity. As only one set of documents from a specific IES grant program and year, this study provided only one perspective of how funded partnerships develop and function. Other sets of grant documents from this funding source, specifically grants funded after the inaugural year of the program, could provide additional depth regarding the role of leadership and the process of partnership development in education. Furthermore, grants from state funding sources and/or private foundations could also be examined. Much is left to be learned in the study of leadership in partnership development.

**Recommendations for Further Research**

The present study focused on researching the role of leadership and the process of developing sustainable partnerships in education as documented within a particular set of materials related to successful grant applications from the 2013 U.S. Department of Education Institute of Education Sciences (IES) Researcher-Practitioner Partnerships (RPP) in Education Research program. The present study focused on one specific type of federal grant and the documented process of developing partnerships within those projects. Further contributions would include study of materials related to different types of partnership development grants, for example, examining grant documents related to other federal, state, local, and private funding sources. Gaining perspective regarding the documented descriptions of other partnerships would provide additional knowledge for designing and implementing effective collaborative work.
Content analysis as the research approach in the present study provided knowledge about how these particular partnerships developed and were sustained as represented in the documents promulgated by the participants involved. However, other approaches to research could also be useful in better understanding what occurred in developing such partnerships. For example, interviewing partnership participants could provide their perspectives regarding partnership development and sustainability. Observational studies of RPP processes could also provide a deeper understanding regarding the role of leadership and the process of partnership development. Articulating interpretations from other sources of data can be relevant to researchers and practitioners with similar interest in partnership development work.

**Conclusions**

Leadership and partnership development are complex processes used in achieving educational goals. Scholars have supported the use of partnerships for many years. Research has documented that partnerships can be powerful organizational forms for bringing about change in practice. In leveraging such change, understanding and implementing strategies for effective partnership development must be a deliberate process. However, because there is no one right way to apply the knowledge of theory and practice relevant to leadership to partnership development, documentation of best practices can inform researchers and practitioners as they use their knowledge, skills, and abilities in their work.

Therefore, the present study focused on understanding and describing the processes of developing partnerships in education and the role of leadership in those processes as documented in the context of one set of federal grant-related documents. Thus, the present study provided concrete examples of how RPPs have reported their actual work. In other words, present study
concretizes and enriches the extant literature of research and practice within partnership development as researchers and practitioners forge synergistic relationships.

The current study presented a plethora of evidence and strategies that promote building relationships in partnerships, that is, the need to foster communication among stakeholders and partners, to practice reflection, and to galvanize support from a broad base of constituents. Data analysis addressing the research question led to conclusions regarding the importance of building the shared capacity of leaders and partners alike, further supporting leadership and partnership development literature which emphasizes that relationships matter. Moreover, the current study revealed that partnership development is an investment beyond the present, immediate focus of a grant. Further, data analysis emphasized the importance of all partners valuing evidence-based research and practice as the expertise of both researchers and practitioners is recognized, appreciated, and cultivated.

Researcher-practitioner partnerships in the present study documented how people strategically worked together to improve the educational opportunities in our schools and communities. Grounded in rigorous research and reflective practice, learning from these contributions of successful collaborative work can guide others as they develop researcher-practitioner partnerships and can inform educational leaders as they support the complex process of cultivating sustainable partnerships.
Chapter Summary

This final chapter of the present study summarized its purpose and context, the review of the literature, study design and research methodology, and data analysis. The chapter also included a discussion of recommendations for the practice of educational leadership within partnerships, recommendations for the process of effective partnership development, limitations of the study, recommendations for future research, and final conclusions from the present study.
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http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/0960039110007644


doi:10.1177/1049732305276687


doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.1207/s15327043hup1002_1


doi:https://doi.org/10.1108/eb054480


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Appendix A: FOIA Request No. 18-00538-F

2/18/2019

From: tamaraigibson <tamaraigibson@aol.com>
To: EDOFOIManager <EDFOIManager@ed.gov>
Cc: Me (T) <N00865350@ospreys.unf.edu>
Subject: FOIA Request form, RPP in Ed Research, 2013
Date: Mon, Nov 27, 2017 2:55 pm

Good afternoon,

Please see the attached FOIA request form. Would you happen to know approximately how long it will take to receive these documents? As noted on the request form, I plan to examine these grant applications and final manuscripts for the purpose of graduate school research.

Thank you in advance,

~Tamara Gibson-Alonso

Good afternoon,
Please see the attached FOIA request form. Would you happen to know approximately how long it will take to receive these documents? As noted on the request form, I plan to examine these grant applications and final manuscripts for the purpose of graduate school research.
Thank you in advance,

~Tamara Gibson-Alonso
Items marked with an asterisk (*) are required.

* Your Street Address: [Redacted]
* Your City, State, Zip Code: Jacksonville, FL 32223

Today's Date: Nov 27, 2017

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Management
Regulatory Information Management Services
400 Maryland Avenue, SW, LBJ 2W220
Washington, DC 20202-4536
ATTN: FOIA Public Liaison

Dear FOIA Public Liaison:

This is a request under the Freedom of Information Act.

* I request that a copy of the following documents (or documents containing the following information) be provided to me (identify the documents or information as specifically as possible):

All 2013 Researcher-Practitioner Partnerships in Education Research grant applications and final reports/manuscripts from year 2013 (6 total) as listed on the IES website noted below.

2013 RPP in Education Research Awardees:
https://ies.ed.gov/funding/grantsearch/index.asp?mode=1&sort=1&order=1&searchvals=&SearchType=or&checktitle=on&checkaffiliation=on&checkprincipal=on&checkquestion=on&checkprogram=on&checkawardnumber=on&slctAffiliation=0&slctPrincipal=0&slctYear=2013&slctProgram=81&slctGoal=0&slctCenter=0&FundType=1&FundType=2

* In order to help to determine my status to assess fees, you should know that I am (select one - required):

○ An individual seeking information for personal use.

○ Affiliated with an educational or noncommercial scientific institution, and this request is made for a scholarly purpose.

○ Affiliated with a private corporation and seeking information for use in the company's business.

○ A representative of the news media/press and this request is made as part of news gathering and not for commercial use.

○ Affiliated with a public interest group and this request is not for commercial use.
* The maximum dollar amount I am willing to pay for this request is $____. Please notify me if the fees will exceed $25.00 or the maximum dollar amount I entered.

☐ I request a waiver of all fees for this request. Disclosure of the requested information to me is in the public interest because it is likely to contribute significantly to public understanding of the operations or activities of the government and is not primarily in my commercial interest.

* Specific explanation for waiver of fees (required if a waiver is requested):

For dissertation research at the University of North Florida, I plan to examine the six partnerships from the year 2013 RPP grant award. I am requesting the applications submitted by each partnership as well as any final reports submitted by these partnerships.

Additional comments:

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

* Signature

Title: Mrs.

* First name: Tamara

Middle Initial: 

* Last name: Gibson-Alonzo

* Daytime telephone number: [Redacted]

Fax number: 

Email address: TamaraGibson@aol.com
FOIA Request and Appeal Instructions

FOIA requests and appeals may be submitted online, via email, fax, or mail. Instructions for all methods are listed below.

Submit Online

- FOIA request form (.pdf) [PDF: 2.2MB]
  - Request U.S. Department of Education records or information
- FOIA appeal form (.pdf) [PDF: 1.9MB]
  - Appeal the Department's response to your request

Submit Via Email, Fax, or Mail

1. Review the templates (.template) to compose your request.
2. Be as specific as possible with regard to names, dates, places, events, subjects, etc. If known, you should include any file designations, descriptions of the records that you want. Review the FOIA Request and Appeal Checklist (.template) for a list of items we require and recommend that you include in your request and appeal letters.
3. Send FOIA requests via email to: EFOIAManager@ed.gov (mailto: EFOIAManager@ed.gov)
4. Send FOIA appeals via email to: EFOIAAppeals@ed.gov (mailto: EFOIAAppeals@ed.gov)

Send requests and appeals via fax to: (202) 401-3000

Send FOIA requests via mail to:

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Management
Office of the Chief Privacy Officer
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202
ATTN: FOIA Public Liaison

Send FOIA appeals via mail to:

U.S. Department of Education
Office of the Chief Privacy Officer
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202
ATTN: FOIA Appeals Office

4. To avoid delay, be sure to display "FOIA Request" or "FOIA Appeal" prominently on the envelope, fax cover sheet, or email subject line.

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The computer system employed by the Department offers a high degree of resistance to tampering and circumvention. This security system limits data access to Department and contract staff on a need-to-know basis, and controls individual users' ability to access and alter records within the system. All licensed users of this system of records are given a unique user ID with personal identifiers. All interactions by individual users within the system are recorded.

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- Student loans, forgiveness (.template)
- College accreditation (.template)
- Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) (.template)
- FERPA (.template)

https://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/gcl/foia/request_foa.html
### Appendix B: Data Collection Chart via PIs

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<td><strong>NOTES:</strong> Dr. Weissberg (UIC connection) referred me to Celene Domitrovich, 12/5/2017; LaMarca is Co-Investigator (Washoe County School District, Nevada); At the request of Dr. LaMarca, Dr. Laura Davidson,</td>
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<td><strong>TITLE:</strong> Designing a RCT Experiment to Test the Impact of Innovative Interventions and Policies for Postsecondary Developmental Education: A RAND—TX Higher Education Coordinating Board Research Partnership</td>
<td>PI REPLY TO 12/5/2017 EMAIL INFO REQ: N</td>
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<td><strong>YEAR:</strong> 2013</td>
<td>GRANT APPLICATION RECEIVED (REQ 11/17): N</td>
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<td><strong>NAME OF INSTITUTION:</strong> RAND Corporation</td>
<td>PUBLISHED ARTICLES: 0</td>
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<td><strong>PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:</strong> Miller, Trey</td>
<td>WORKING PAPERS: 0</td>
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<td><strong>AWARD AMOUNT:</strong> $399,360</td>
<td>BOOK CHAPTERS: 0</td>
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<td><strong>AWARD PERIOD:</strong> 2 years (7/1/13-6/30/15)</td>
<td>CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS: 0</td>
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<td>FINAL PERF REPORT RECEIVED (REQ 11/17): Y</td>
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<td>NOTES: Co-PI David Gardner, Texas Higher Ed Coordinating Board, e-mail message sent on 12/5/2017. Follow up with phone calls?</td>
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<tr>
<th>TITLE: New York City Partnership for College Readiness and Success</th>
<th>PI REPLY TO 12/5/2017 EMAIL INFO REQ: Y</th>
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<td><strong>NAME OF INSTITUTION:</strong> New York University</td>
<td>PUBLISHED ARTICLES: 2</td>
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<td><strong>PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:</strong> Kemple, James</td>
<td>WORKING PAPERS: 3</td>
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<td><strong>AWARD AMOUNT:</strong> $399,824</td>
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<td></td>
<td>NOTES: 12/15/2017 Reply from Chelsea Farley, Communications Director, NYU. Working on a 2018 report. Report requested via e-mail to C.F., 6/20/2018</td>
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<th>TITLE: What Works for Title I Schools: Understanding the Contributors and Barriers to School Improvement</th>
<th>PI REPLY TO 12/5/2017 EMAIL INFO REQ: Y</th>
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<td><strong>YEAR:</strong> 2013</td>
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<td><strong>NAME OF INSTITUTION:</strong> Arizona State University</td>
<td>PUBLISHED ARTICLES: 0</td>
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<td><strong>PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:</strong> Kurz, Alexander</td>
<td>WORKING PAPERS: 0</td>
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<td><strong>AWARD AMOUNT:</strong> $385,739</td>
<td>BOOK CHAPTERS: 0</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FINAL PERF REPORT RECEIVED (REQ 11/17): Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NOTES: Co-PI, Carrie Giovannone-Jordan, replied 12/5/2017</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Good morning Mr. Rode,

My name is Tamara Gibson-Alonso. Over the past two decades I have worked in partnership development within the Florida Department of Health and the Florida Department of Education in many different roles. Currently I am studying Researcher-Practitioner Partnerships for my dissertation research at the University of North Florida (UNF). I plan to conduct a qualitative content analysis of select U.S. Department of Education IES RPPs that were funded between the time period of 2013 and 2015.

Dr. Allen Ruby and Dr. Sarah Brasiel at the U.S. Department of Education suggested that I contact you directly concerning my interest in obtaining any publications, final reports, or websites that you’ve made available from the 2013 award year for which you served as Principal Investigator (or Co-PI) in the RPP collaboration. I sincerely appreciate any and all information that you would be willing to share with me.

If you would like further details about my dissertation work, feel free to also contact Elinor A. Scheirer, Ph.D, Professor Emerita of Curriculum and Leadership in the College of Education and Human Services at UNF: (904) 620-1803; escheire@unf.edu.

Thank you in advance.

Respectfully,

~Tamara Gibson-Alonso
ABD, Ed.D Program at UNF
(386) 569-5649


-----Original Message-----
From: Rode Ron <rrode@sandi.net>
To: Tamara G. <tamaragibson@aol.com>
Cc: escheire <escheire@unf.edu>
Sent: Thu, Dec 21, 2017 7:00 pm
Subject: Re: Request for Information: RPP, 2013 award year

Tamara,

Thank you for your interest in our work. My colleague, Julian Betts, will be forwarding some materials/links to you. I wish you well with your studies. —Ron
---
Ron Rode, Director
Research and Evaluation Department
San Diego Unified School District
https://sandera.ucsd.edu/research-and-publications/

-----Original Message-----
From: Tamara G. <tamaraigibson@aol.com>
To: kbachofer <kbachofer@ucsd.edu>
Sent: Fri, Jan 26, 2018 10:21 am
Subject: Request for Information: RPP, 2013 award year

Request for Information: RPP, 2013 award year

1/26/2018

Good morning Mrs. Volz Bachofer…

-----Original Message-----
From: Bachofer, Karen <kbachofer@ucsd.edu>
To: Tamara G. <tamaraigibson@aol.com>
Sent: Thu, Feb 15, 2018 1:44 pm
Subject: Re: Request for Information: RPP, 2013 award year

Hello Tamara,
I am sorry for my delay in responding to your query. I attach a book chapter related to our partnership work. I hope you find it helpful. Best, Karen Bachofer

On Jan 26, 2018, at 7:21 AM, Tamara G. <tamaraigibson@aol.com> wrote:

-----Original Message-----
From: Dan Goldhaber <dgoldhab@uw.edu>
To: Tamara G. <tamaraigibson@aol.com>
Sent: Mon, Jan 22, 2018 5:23 pm
Subject: Re: Request for Information: RPP, 2013 award year

Sure, here are some links to published papers, working papers, and other published pieces that are related to the RPP work:
https://www.mitpressjournals.org/doi/abs/10.1162/EDFP_a_00200
http://www.cedr.us/papers/working/CEDR%20WP%202015-7.pdf
https://www.the74million.org/article/getting-a-grasp-on-one-of-the-most-critical-and-least-studied-decisions-in-education-teacher-hiring/

I hope that helps!
Hi Tamara,

**Dr. LaMarca** forwarded along your email. We have quite a few work products that we’ve released from that project, but here are some of the larger ones:

1. Article in special issue on SEL assessments in the Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology (attached)

2. Chapter on RPPs in Researcher-Policymaker Partnerships: Strategies for Launching and Sustaining Successful Collaborations edited by Jenni W. Owen and Anita M. Larson (Draft of that chapter attached above “IES Case Study”)

3. Website featuring the SEL assessment data: [http://www.wcsddata.net/data-topics/sel/](http://www.wcsddata.net/data-topics/sel/)

4. Few conference presentations at SRA, SREE, and the Collaborating Districts Initiative Convening (attached).

There are also several less formal products (webinars, blogs, assessments themselves), and a few manuscripts in production as well. Hope that helps and best of luck with your dissertation!

Laura Davidson, Ph.D.
Director of Research and Evaluation
Office of Accountability
Washoe County School District

-----Original Message-----
From: Davidson, Laura <LDavidson@WashoeSchools.net>
To: 'tamaraigibson@aol.com' <tamaraigibson@aol.com>
Cc: Hayes, Ben <BHayes@washoeschools.net>; LaMarca, Paul <PLaMarca@washoeschools.net>
Sent: Tue, Dec 5, 2017 1:13 pm
Subject: RE: Request for Information: RPP, 2013 award year

-----Original Message-----
From: Chelsea Farley <chelsea.farley@nyu.edu>
To: tamarai gibbon <tamarai gibbon@aol.com>
Cc: James J Kemple <james.kemple@nyu.edu>; Kayla Stewart <ks191@nyu.edu>
Sent: Fri, Dec 15, 2017 12:13 pm
Subject: Fwd: FW: Request for Information: RPP, 2013 award year

Hi Tamara,
Jim Kemple asked me to respond to your inquiry about the Research Alliance's IES-funded NYC Partnership for College Readiness and Success. The IES grant allowed us to build on and further develop an existing collaboration between the Research Alliance for NYC Schools, the NYC Department of Education and the City University of New York (CUNY). You can read more about the project here on our website:
https://steinhardt.nyu.edu/research_alliance/research/projects/college_partnership
We also published a series of working papers from the partnership, available here:
https://steinhardt.nyu.edu/research_alliance/publications/College_Partnership_Working_Papers
Finally, the partnership enabled us to produce a series of publications examining patterns of college access and success in NYC:
New York City Goes to College: A First Look
New York City Goes to College: New Findings and Framework
We also hope to publish a report in early 2018 that will summarize some lessons from the early years of the partnership--that paper isn't available yet, but we would be happy to send you a note when it is released.

Please feel free to contact me or my colleague Kayla Stewart (cc'd above), if you have any other questions, Chelsea
--
Chelsea Farley. Communications Director. Research Alliance for New York City Schools
New York University. chelsea.farley@nyu.edu | 212.998.5887

-----Original Message-----
From: Carrie Giovannone-Jordan <info@programeval.solutions>
To: Tamara G. tamaraigibson@aol.com Cc: escheire escheire@unf.edu received
Sent: Tue, Dec 5, 2017 1:46 pm
Subject: Re: Attn: Dr. Giovannone. Re: Request for Information: RPP, 2013 award year

Dear Tamara,

Our partnership grant was of an exploratory nature. We were looking at low performing versus high performing Title I schools to draw some conclusions on best practices. In the end, however, the data we were using from the AZ Department of Education (ASU) did not give us enough information to draw the conclusions we set out to acquire. We partnered with researchers at Arizona State University so our Co-PI from ASU was Alexander Kurz. He set up a "division" at ASU for our partnership and set up a website (https://thesanfordsschool.asu.edu/AzPREP/initiatives).The partnership was called, "Arizona Practitioner-Researcher Educational Partnership Office" (AzPREP). We mutually agreed to house the partnership at ASU because of the political nature of a state government agency. At the ADE we have elected officials moving in and out every 4 years. Both parties were disappointed at the end that we hit a roadblock on the research but at the time the ADE also had a change in direction directed by a new Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Our partnership and working relationship with ASU at that time was wonderful! We had mutual respect for each other's roles and responsibilities and worked well together. Alex and I were invited by the US DOE to present on the success of the partnership in Washington, D.C. at a conference sponsored by IES. The USDOE may have the presentation or perhaps Alex still has access to it. Aside from the final report we sent to the US DOE we did not produce any publications. The final report from our work together may be on the US DOE website but I do not have any access to files from the ADE since I left in May, 2017.

I hope this information aides in your work. I wish you the best - navigating through the doctoral candidate journey! ~Carrie
Appendix C: FOIA Response to Request 18-00538-F
Tamara Gibson-Alonso

RE: FOIA Request No. 18-00538-F

Dear Ms. Alonso-Gibson:

This letter is an interim response to your request for information pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), 5 U.S.C. § 552, dated November 27, 2017 and received in this office on December 1, 2017. Your request was forwarded to the appropriate office to search for documents that may be responsive to your request: Institute of Education Sciences (IES).

You requested:

- 2013 Researcher-Practitioner Partnerships in Education Research grant applications and final reports/manuscripts from year 2013 (6 total) as listed on the IES website.

Enclosed is a CD containing 375 pages of documents responsive to your request. The documents provided are:

- Grant Application PR/Award #R305H130012 – Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning, and the

However, certain information has been withheld according to FOIA exemptions (b)(4) and (b)(6), as specified below:

- Proprietary information has been withheld under exemption (b)(4) of the FOIA, 5 U.S.C. § 552 of the FOIA. These provisions require us to withhold proprietary information, which, if disclosed, is likely to cause substantial competitive harm.
- Records or portions of records relating to personal information is exempt pursuant to 5 U.S.C. §552 (b)(6) of the FOIA. Disclosure of this information would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy.
At this time, the Department is continuing to process your request and your FOIA request case file remains open. It will not close until the Department provides you with a response regarding outstanding responsive documents. Our final release letter will contain information related to your appeal rights of the agency’s decisions.

If you have any questions, please contact the FOIA Service Center at (202) 401-8365 or via e-mail at EDFOIAManager@ed.gov.

Sincerely,

Arthur Caliguiran
Arthur Caliguiran
FOIA Analyst
FOIA Service Center

Attachment
RE: FOIA Request No. 18-00538-F

Dear Ms. Alonso-Gibson:

This letter is a final response to your request for information pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), 5 U.S.C. § 552, dated November 27, 2017 and received in this office on December 1, 2017. Your request was forwarded to the appropriate office to search for documents that may be responsive to your request: Institute of Education Sciences (IES).

You requested:

- 2013 Researcher-Practitioner Partnerships in Education Research grant applications and final reports/manuscripts from year 2013 (6 total) as listed on the IES website.

An interim response dated May 4th, 2018 was provided to you containing 375 pages of documents responsive to your request. For this response, enclosed is a CD containing five documents totaling 747 pages that are responsive to your request. The documents provided are copies of grant applications and/or final performance reports pertaining to the following academic institutions:

- IES Final Performance Report, R305H130026 – The Rand Corporation,
- IES Grant Application, R305H130030 – University of Washington,
- IES Final Performance Report, R305H130048 – New York University,
- IES Grant Application, R305H130059 – The Regents of the University of California, University College of San Diego, and
- IES Final Performance Report, R305H130080 – Arizona State University.

However, certain information has been withheld according to FOIA exemptions (b)(4) and (b)(6), as specified below:

- Proprietary information has been withheld under exemption (b)(4) of the FOIA, 5 U.S.C. § 552 of the FOIA. These provisions require us to withhold proprietary information, which, if disclosed, is likely to cause substantial competitive harm.

- Records or portions of records relating to personal information is exempt pursuant to 5 U.S.C. §§52 (b)(6) of the FOIA. Disclosure of this information would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy.

400 MARYLAND AVE., S.W., WASHINGTON, DC 20202-4300
www.ed.gov

The Department of Education's mission is to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access.
Provisions of the FOIA allow us to recover the costs pertaining to your request. The Department has concluded that you fall within the category of a "news media requester." However, the Department has provided you with this information at no charge since you have been granted a fee waiver. This does not infer or imply that you will be granted a fee waiver for future requests made under FOIA to the Department.

You have the right to seek assistance and/or dispute resolution services from the Department’s FOIA Public Liaison or the Office of Government Information Services (OGIS). The FOIA Public Liaison is responsible, among other duties, for assisting in the resolution of FOIA disputes. OGIS, which is outside the Department of Education, offers mediation services to resolve disputes between FOIA requesters and Federal agencies as a non-exclusive alternative to appeals or litigation. They can be contacted by:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mail</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Fax</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>FOIA Public Liaison</td>
<td>202-205-0733</td>
<td>202-401-0920</td>
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<tr>
<td>Office of Chief Privacy Officer U.S. Department of Education 400 Maryland Ave., SW, LBJ 2W218-58 Washington, DC 20202-4536</td>
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<tr>
<td>Office of Government Information Services National Archives and Records Administration 8601 Adelphi Road Room 2510 College Park, MD 20740-6001</td>
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You have the right to appeal this decision by writing to the address below, 90 calendar days from the date of this letter. Using the services described above does not affect your right or the deadline to file an appeal. Your appeal must be in writing and must include detailed statement of all legal and factual bases for the appeal; it should be accompanied by this letter, a copy of your initial letter of request, and any documentation that serves as evidence or supports the argument you wish the Department to consider in making an administrative determination on your appeal.

E-mail: EDFOIAappeals@ed.gov
Fax: 202-401-0920
Mail: Appeals Office
      Office of the Chief Privacy Officer
      U.S. Department of Education
      400 Maryland Avenue, SW, LBJ 2E320
      Washington, DC 20202-4536

Sincerely,

Arthur Caliguiran
Arthur Caliguiran
FOIA Analyst
FOIA Service Center

Enclosure
Tamara J. Gibson-Alonso, Ed.D

FORMAL EDUCATION:
University of North Florida, College of Education and Human Services
Doctorate of Education in Educational Leadership (Spring 2019)
Dissertation Focus: Leadership and group dynamics in researcher-practitioner partnerships
Fellowship Recipient, 2013: Gladys Roddenberry Award for Teaching Excellence
Fellowship Recipient, 2019: Milligan Family Foundation Presidential Award

University of Illinois at Chicago, School of Public Health
Masters of Public Health in Public Health Informatics (Fall 2006)

Florida International University, School of Health Policy & Management
Bachelors in Health Services Administration (Fall 2003)
Minor: Biological Science

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY:
Present- Fall 2012  Duval County Public Schools (DCPS)
Secondary Science & HOPE (Health) Instructor, Duval Virtual
Curriculum Provider: Edgenuity Inc.; Summer School Site Coordinator
Former Position: Grants Developer

Summer 2012- Fall 2010  Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS)
N. Miami Middle School, Education Transformation Office (ETO)
Position: Science Teacher & Department Chair

Spring 2009- Fall 2006  Osceola County Public Schools
Bellalago Charter Academy, K-8
Position: Science Teacher
Elected Teacher of the Year, 2009
Communities in School/Take Stock in Children Liaison

Summer 2006- Fall 2003  Volusia County Health Department
Division of Health Education & Promotion
Position: Coordinator, Youth Tobacco Prevention Program

REFERENCES:
Mark Ertel  Principal  DCPS, Duval Virtual
Elinor A. Scheirer, Ph.D  Professor Emerita  University of North Florida
Dana Kriznar, Ph.D  Deputy Superintendent  Duval County Public Schools
Melanie E. Magias  Principal  M-DCPS, Middle School
Cecille Diaz, Ed.D  Principal, Retired  Osceola County Schools