Narratives of Alternative School Teachers: Perceptions of their Principals' Transformational Leadership Behaviors and How they Impact Self-Efficacy

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Narratives of Alternative School Teachers: Perceptions of their Principals’ Transformational Leadership Behaviors and How they Impact Self-Efficacy

by

LaKenya Tenae Branch

A dissertation submitted to the Department of Leadership, School Counseling & Sport Management

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

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UNIVERSITY OF NORTH FLORIDA

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DEDICATION

To God be the Glory.

To Grandma Rena, Granddaddy Harry, Grandma Cat, & Granddaddy—
the roots that has kept this Branch strong.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

“As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord” (Joshua 24:15 KJV).

For as long as I can remember, my family has taught me to love and respect my God, and throughout the years, it has been my God who has continued to give me strength, patience, and knowledge. I am so thankful for the many blessings that He has bestowed upon me. The greatest blessing continues to be the love and support of my mother, Renee. Her prayers have pushed me towards meeting deadlines, finishing tasks, and seeing my dreams come true. I have always told her that my success is her success, so “we” have finally finished my doctorate degree.

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It has always been difficult for me to study at a traditional library, so I appreciate the teams at Buffalo Wild Wings, Panera Bread, and Denny’s for providing me with plenty of food and drink as I have graded papers, studied tirelessly, and worked on my dissertation.
The Lord has also blessed me with many mentors. Too many to count—but I can name three that have left deep marks in my heart. Dr. Michael Rutledge, Dr. Milton Threadcraft, Jr., and the late Professor Franklin L. Smith have embedded a deep love for education within me. I will always “sign my work with excellence.”

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the impact that principals’ transformational leadership behaviors had on teachers’ self-efficacy in secondary urban alternative schools. The research question that guided this study was: How does perceived transformational leadership behaviors of principals’ impact teachers’ self-efficacy? This question had two sub-questions. The first was: How do teachers perceive their principals’ leadership behaviors? And, the second sub-question was: How does this perceived behavior affect teachers’ self-efficacy? Literature focused on urban schools and alternative schools, since they share a similar population of students. Additional literature discussed the four components of being a transformational leader which are idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration, in addition to the components of a teacher’s personal self-efficacy. A total of ten secondary school teachers from two different urban alternative schools were interviewed using the semi-structured interviewing process. The researcher analyzed interview data by using the Constant Comparative Method of Analysis as a guide. Results of the interviews indicated that teachers viewed their principals as having behaviors of a transformational leader. They described the behaviors that resulted in two major categories: Principals as Instructional Leaders and Principals as Team Players. As a result of the principals’ transformational leadership behaviors, teachers’ efficacy was deemed to be high, due to shared examples of going above and beyond the call of duty, creating a family environment, and being a loving teacher. Additional themes that gleaned from this study were the teachers’ perceptions about the student population, quality of education, understanding the purpose of urban alternative schools, educator preparation, and the challenges and rewards for working in an urban alternative school setting.

Search Terms: alternative education, urban schools, transformational leadership, self-efficacy
CHAPTER ONE – INTRODUCTION

This research study consists of five chapters. This chapter contains the background, or overall concern, that has prompted the researcher to study teachers, principals, transformational leadership behaviors, and self-efficacy. The research question, significance of this study, and a list of major terms used, along with their definitions are also included. At the end of this chapter, a brief overview is provided of the remaining four chapters. At the conclusion of this study, there should be a greater understanding about teachers to prompt the educational community and society to look at how they may continue to support this profession.

Background

Teachers mainly resign due to job dissatisfaction (Kokka, 2016), so it is essential for school principals to positively influence their employees in an effort to maintain higher ratings in job satisfaction, resulting in fewer teachers resigning. Teachers with high levels of integrity may continue to work diligently in their efforts to produce great work. However, teachers who either lack integrity, or lack the knowledge to be successful at their job may be less effective. A person could “lose their initial organizational loyalty and working qualifications by being unable to cope with stressful situations brought about by business life, and they become uninterested in their jobs” (Capri & Guler, 2018, p. 124). School-based principals are the individuals responsible for training, developing, and supporting teachers within the school building. As the school-based leader, it is important to establish a culture of expectations, and teacher buy-in is required to do so. In order for any employee or teacher to support their leader, they must perceive their leader as being worthy of that support. Perception is essential in ensuring that teachers want to remain teaching at their schools. Leadership behaviors of principals as they are perceived by teachers guide this study. This study focuses on urban alternative school teachers, and how they perceive
their principals’ leadership behaviors, and how these perceived behaviors impact the level of work that teachers have within their school building.

**Teachers’ Perceptions**

Perception is the ability to organize thoughts interpreted based on the senses, allowing people to use their experiences to help create meanings (Keenan, 2018). In educational settings, teachers cater to academic, behavioral, and social needs of their students. They also cater to the academic and professional expectations set for by their leaders and other stakeholders such as the parents, and the greater community. It is the perception of the teachers’ views on education and their school principals that interest the researcher. Through the perceptions of teachers the researcher is able to gain insight about their experiences and how their experiences aid them in creating meaning for what they are asked to do—educate.

**Teacher’s Self-Efficacy**

*Self-efficacy* is used throughout this study, as the foundation for which teachers believe they have the capability to impact change, or not (The Wallace Foundation, 2017). The researcher hopes that teachers are able to reach levels of high efficacy. When teachers are more efficacious, students are able to learn better because teachers are less burned out (Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk-Hoy, & Hoy, 1998, Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007). However, when teachers experience low levels of self-efficacy, they tend to quit or not work as hard at their jobs (Dahlkamp, Peters, & Schumacher, 2017). The researcher has investigated how principals’ behaviors impact their teachers, based on the perception of the teachers, and how teachers ultimately respond to the principals’ perceived behaviors.

According to Lowrey (2014), principals play a significant role in ensuring the work environment for teachers aid in their students’ academic success. Considering teachers do have
an impact on students’ academic performance (Nir & Kranot, 2006), it is the responsibility of their principals to promote a positive work environment. Different environments require different leadership styles to promote effective change. The researcher was interested in teachers who served the urban population, more specifically, at alternative schools. Urban school students deal with additional stressors that makes being successful in school more challenging to accomplish (Brown & Beckett, 2007). Looking at the leadership behaviors of principals, this study has identified one particular leadership style, transformational leadership, which can serve as the glue that keeps teachers teaching and students learning.

**Why Transformational Leadership?**

Research on leadership styles explains why transformational leadership is the preferred style of leadership for schools that are struggling to produce positive change. Transactional leadership and laissez-faire leadership styles are assessed along with transformational leadership on the Multi-Factor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ). Although this study does not focus on transactional and laissez-faire leadership behaviors, a brief description of each will explain why the researcher chose more focus on transformational leadership.

Transactional leadership is a style that consists of two elements, contingent rewards and reprimands (Hauserman & Stick, 2013). Teachers at urban schools work with students of varying educational, social, and behavioral needs. This requires faculty and staff to be more creative in their approach to intervening and working with students and their special needs. If educators are constantly reprimanded for failed ideas of creativity, it could hinder the creative process of the teacher. For these reasons, transactional leadership is not the researcher’s focus for principals of secondary urban schools. However, the transactional leadership style has been noted as the first step for leaders to attain transformational leadership (Hauserman & Stick, 2013).
Based on the description provided by Bass & Avolio (2003), the creator of the Multi-Factor Leadership Questionnaire, the laissez-faire leadership style has a negative connotation. For the purposes of this study, the negative connotation will not be used. Instead, a laissez-faire leader will not stand in the way of decisions that are made by teachers. Although it can appear that this leadership style is very hands-off, this style is important to have in certain situations. For this study, it is suggested that this style is not the preferred style to have overall. In New York state, 45 principals were asked to self-rate their leadership behaviors in order to determine the most widely used leadership style, and transformational leadership was determined to be used more than transactional and laissez-faire styles (Onorato, 2013, p. 43). This encouraged the researcher to continue to study the ideals of transformational leadership, and not focus as much on other leadership theories. Transformational leadership is the focus of this study because it promotes the engagement of the leader and followers to create long-lasting effects of positive changes (Northouse, 2013, p. 185).

**Problem Statement**

Students in urban schools without support from home can easily become disengaged if they do not have teachers who can empower and provide opportunities for them to succeed. Teachers of students in urban schools should have leaders that directly address emotional and educational struggles students and teachers face on a daily basis. Research literature is limited on what perceptions teachers in alternative schools hold about the leadership of their principals, and, specifically, how leadership influences their self-efficacy. It is known that “people who have high assurance in their capabilities approach difficult tasks as challenges to be mastered rather than as threats to be avoided” (Bandura, 1989, p. 731), which is why the efficaciousness of instructors serve as one of the most important foundations to the success of a school. Thus, this
study was designed to investigate how principals’ transformational leadership behaviors may enhance the self-efficacy of teachers that could subsequently have a positive and lasting effect on students.

**Purpose of the Study**

This study explores the perceptions of teachers and the impact of principals’ transformational leadership behaviors on teacher self-efficacy in secondary urban alternative schools.

**Research Question**

This study has addressed one research question and two sub-questions:

1. How does perceived transformational leadership behavior impact teacher self-efficacy?
   
   A. How do teachers perceive their principals’ leadership behavior?
   
   B. How does this perceived behavior impact teachers’ self-efficacy?

**Definition of Terms**

This study has terms that could have multiple meanings, or different understandings based on the reader’s background knowledge and experiences. So, the following definitions are used by the researcher in order to remain consistent with previous literature.

- **Secondary schools**: middle and high schools that serve students from grades 6 to 12.
- **Urban schools**: schools “where students who have been historically disenfranchised and traditionally marginalized by systems of inequality based primarily on race, ethnicity, culture, gender, social class, language, and/or disability are taught” (Santamaria, Santamaria, Webber, & Pearson, 2014, p. 2).
- **Alternative schools**: institutions that are “designed to educate students who have not been successful in traditional K-12 schools and are at risk of school failure, often because of behavior, disciplinary, and safety concerns” (Hodgman, 2016, p. 30).
• **Instructional leadership:** “an influence relationship that motivates, enables, and supports teachers’ efforts to learn about and change their instructional practices” (Spillane, Hallett, & Diamond, 2003, p. 1).

• **Self-efficacy:** the “belief in the teacher’s own ability to advance significantly the learning and achievements of his or her students” (Nir et al., 2006, p. 206).

• **Multi-grade teaching:** indicates that a teacher has “learners of different ages, grades, and abilities in the same classroom” (Joubert, 2010). For this study, each teacher participant is a multi-grade instructor, having at least two but a maximum of six subjects to teach during the course of one class period.

• **Stakeholders:** Groups of people who have an interest in a school. For this study, stakeholders are students, parents, teachers, community members, and district personnel.

• **Transformational leadership:** the ability to influence, motivate, stimulate, and consider the needs (Judge & Piccolo, 2004) of faculty and staff in secondary urban schools, by “displaying respect and encouraging participation” (Hauserman & Stick, 2013, p. 187).

**Significance of the Study**

This research could be used by superintendents to help determine the professional development needs (e.g., coaching and mentoring) that principals need to maximize the positive leadership behaviors that could help teachers and students in urban schools. Superintendents should find results from this study helpful because the data could be used to identify and select resources and personnel, as well as to train new principals to effectively lead urban schools.
Additionally, district superintendents may be able to reduce hiring expenses or replace ineffective principals.

Principals will find results from the study useful because they may be able to specifically identify academic disparities within urban schools. Knowledge of leadership styles and behavior could aid in practicing the effective styles that school administrators need to support their teachers and students. This will result in fewer teachers resigning (Bandura, 1994, Schunk, 1995) and improved academic achievement amongst the students (Gibson & Dembo, 1984). After reading the results of this study, urban school principals should become cognizant of the various supports available to them.

Attributes of quality teachers depend on several factors such as the quality of their college, how they are compensated, their school leaders, and federal mandates that require “teaching to the test” (Beck, 2014, p. 13). These various influences add to the stress and frustration teachers may feel while working with struggling students. To understand and support teachers more efficiently, school leaders could look at teachers’ levels of personal efficacy. An analysis of teachers’ efficacy “may be useful for schools if they are concerned about not being able to effectively include students with specific learning needs (e.g., students with behavioral difficulties)” (Sharma, Loreman, & Forlin, 2012, p. 16) in successful learning environments. Students who lack structure may desire more structured environments, but may protest any attempts to structure and organize their behavior and activities because of difficult home experiences. Between the faculty, staff, and students, principals are the individuals that teachers and students look to for direction and support. This study may help principals to adequately and properly address the sensitive, educational, social, and emotional needs of instructional and non-instructional staff and students in order to foster their success.
Students will be the beneficiaries from this study. Urban school students are not achieving at the same success rate as others, and there are many factors that contribute to their underperformance (Rollert, 2015). Problems that occur outside of the school building include homelessness, poverty (Parenteau & Justice, 2017), abuse, drug addiction, teenage pregnancy, parenting, and multiple incarcerations—all adversely affecting instruction and learning.

Problems that occur within the school building are related to inconsistent practices that have been put in place, in addition to the lack of meaningful and appropriate reprimands (Baker, Sigmon, & Nugent, 2001) that students encounter. With this in mind, teachers who have classrooms with a majority of underperforming students will need professional learning and development opportunities to help them enhance emotional and social intelligence as well as effective instructional knowledge and skills. Therefore, the results may help principals in implementing methods and strategies that will directly impact student learning.

The results from this study could impact policies that influence placement and movement of school leaders. The district in which the study was conducted has been observed as having a high turnover rate of urban secondary school principals, so it is possible that students are at the middle or high school longer than their principals. This change in leadership disturbs the culture and climate of schools. A study was conducted at a large urban school district in California where a teacher had been teaching at the same school for over 20 years. In that time, he has seen nine principals, “with the longest lasting five years” (Kokka, 2016, p. 172). More importantly, even though principals may leave due to promotions, or removed based on poor performance, it is unclear to determine if principal moves have been “voluntary or involuntary” (Tran, 2017, p. 624), which stresses the importance of identifying strategies to maintain leadership stability and consistency within struggling, urban schools. Thirteen states have developed principal contracts
that range from one to five years (Essex, 2016), and the results of this study may also influence the principal employment contracts and specific supports to be implemented within large urban school districts.

**Limitations and Delimitations of the Study**

**Limitations**

Limitations are “matters and occurrences that arise in a study which are out of the researcher’s control” (Simon & Goes, 2013, p. 1). There was one limitation for this study, the fact that it is a case study. This case study surrounds teachers that serve urban students at two alternative schools. The students range from grades 6-12. Information gained from this study is a reflection of a small number of teachers. In order to verify the researcher’s claim of a principal’s transformational leadership and its impact on a teacher’s self-efficacy, it is recommended that this study is replicated.

**Delimitations**

Delimitations are “characteristics that arise from limitations in the scope of the study” (Simon & Goes, 2013, p. 3). This study was delimited based on the site selection, time of study, and number of participants.

**Site selection.** The researcher had access to the two sites that were selected for this study. Past literature and many empirical studies (Nir & Kranot, 2006, Sharma, Loreman, & Forlin, 2012, Hauserman & Stick, 2013, Lowrey, 2014) show quantitative results because of their ability to survey hundreds of teachers or principals. Only a few studies read have focused intensely on a small number of participants. With this information, the researcher decided to focus on two schools, interviewing five teachers at each school.
**Time of study.** This study took place within the first semester of the school year, in order to capture the insights of teachers that were employed during that school term.

**Number of participants.** A total of ten teachers were interviewed.

**Organization of the Methodology**

This case study introduces the qualitative methods of research. Robert Yin’s (1994) research design and its five components of: *research questions, propositions, unit of analysis, logic linking data to the propositions, and criteria for interpreting the findings* are described. Next, the researcher’s positionality and experiences are shared. Then, the site and participant selections are explained, followed by data collection procedures, and the data analysis techniques used. The Constant Comparative Method of Analysis was used to aid the researcher in synthesizing the results of the research study. The researcher also explained the various techniques used to ensure credibility, dependability, confirmability, transferability, and authenticity within this study.

**Chapter Summary**

This chapter serves as an introduction to this case study. It provides the purpose of this research, which is to explore the impacts of principals’ transformational leadership behavior on teacher self-efficacy in secondary urban alternative schools. The research question and the two sub-questions were also provided, and they shall be answered through the use of semi-structured interviews. This case is evolved around urban secondary school teachers, and the theories of transformational leadership and self-efficacy helped the researcher seek further understandings to know how principals’ perceived transformational leadership behaviors impact teachers’ self-efficacy. “Critical problems are steeped in urgency and their resolution relies on a coordinated response to an impending disaster” (Edwards, Penlington, Kalidasan, & Kelly, 2014, p. 343).
This chapter served as an introduction for a study that provides a possible solution during our educational state of emergency.
CHAPTER TWO – REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Personal beliefs, background knowledge, and experiences of the researcher are important, in which the empirically-based research that provided the researcher with support needed to travel in directions that led to greater understandings of principals’ leadership, teachers’ efficacy, and the needs of urban alternative schools. The section paints a picture for the reader to understand the urban school setting, then leads into the similarities of urban schools and alternative schools, following the obstacles of urban alternative schools in addition to their opportunities for growth—as they relate to teachers and principals. Lastly, the focus on the importance of principals practicing the behaviors of transformational leadership, and how to monitor teacher’s level of self-efficacy as a strategy for effectiveness. The conceptual framework is a visual diagram that outlines the literature in this chapter.

Introduction to the Literature

The National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) proposes education is designed to create knowledgeable and socially conscience citizens (NCTE, 2015). Meaning, individuals should be able to critically think and make informed decisions. To accomplish this, educators must encourage and motivate learners to have confidence in themselves as the self-efficacy of an individual can boost motivation and allow them to achieve many rigorous tasks due to increased confidence (Schunk, 1995).

As stated by Burns (1978), students should be moved from “passive followers to active leaders” (p. 83). To accomplish this goal, the researcher looked at the transformational leadership style and behaviors of principals which potentially enhances the development of teachers and students. Students are very impressionable, and their values are shaped by leaders who influence them (Burns, 1978). The academic achievement of urban students is significantly correlated to
the leadership behaviors that are exhibited by their principals (Marcos, Witmer, Foland, Vouga, & Wise, 2011). For this reason, charismatic and servant leader principals are encouraged to work at low-achieving schools, providing the necessary level of motivation and confidence needed for maximizing academic performance (Northouse, 2013, p. 189). A study conducted by Minnesota and Toronto researchers found that effective leadership is also connected with higher performance in areas of math and reading (Mendels, 2012). Relationship between school leadership and student performances are recommended research to be explored for future studies.

This case study explains alternative school teachers and how they feel about their principals’ leadership behaviors, to include how they feel about themselves. Although very broad, it has been studied in many different countries, such as Israel, Canada, and China (Lowrey, 2014; Li & Wu, 2015; Nir & Kranot, 2006); to include many different forms ranging from the exclusive study of one person (Fadare, 2015) to surveying 770 teachers (Hauserman, et al., 2013) and 187 principals (Lowrey, 2014). The intended purpose is to explore the in-depth perspectives of teacher efficacy and principal leadership through the lens of two primary theories: transformational leadership theory and the theory of self-efficacy.

Theories of social control suggests that the more high-school drop-outs there are, the higher the crime rate is bound to be (Hart & Mueller, 2013). The goal is to ultimately provide another response to the educational disadvantages of urban students in secondary schools by understanding the voices of teachers and how principals play a role in the school’s overall success. Using this body of knowledge, it is detrimental to today’s youth if action is not taken based on the results. Bearing this in mind, the following quote by Covey is particularly relevant: “To know and not to do, is really not to know” (2004, p. 32).
The Urban School Setting

There are currently 12,117 urban schools in the United States and approximately 7.2 million students are served in these urban schools (Council of the Great City Schools, 2016). Students in urban schools are labeled as being an “at-risk” population.” This label indicates that there tends to be more violence, both physically and mentally, which is used as a coping mechanism because due to the number of educational problems existing within low performing schools (Smith, 2011).

Students located in urban areas need to feel safe due to the perceived aggressive nature of their environment, bringing into play the coping mechanisms used to hide learning challenges and deficiencies (Smith, 2011). Views of urban schools and their surrounding communities are often pejorative in nature (Jacobs, 2015; Thomas-Alexander & Harper, 2017), which increases the difficulty of any efforts to change the mentality of stakeholders within schools (Weiner, 1972). A study was conducted with teacher mentors in Ohio’s urban schools. When asked to describe an urban school, only 8% of the responses were coded as positive whereas 92% of the comments were either neutral or negative (Thomas-Alexander & Harper, 2017). This case was of interest to the researcher because of glaring data that negatively represent urban school students at the secondary level. It solicited feedback from teacher mentors of Ohio urban schools. The teacher mentors did not share many positive characteristics about their views on urban schools (Thomas-Alexander & Harper, 2017). Furthermore, mentor teachers also expressed having low confidence in their ability to truly affect students in the urban school arena.

Another study of Pittsburgh teachers gained an in-depth insight to their perceptions of urban schools. Highlights indicated that urban schools that maintained a “level of success or sustainability” should be referred to as “non-urban” (Jacobs, 2015, p. 30). This shows that the
term “urban school” is so undesirable, that when students of urban schools appear to be at an achieving school, then they should not be called “urban” anymore. Literature shares that “45% of new teachers walk away within their first five years…” (Beck, 2014, p. 37), and student achievement is negatively affected by constant teacher turnover (Burkhauser, 2017). This leads to further literature suggesting that schools that serve predominately minority students have a greater turnover of teachers compared to schools that serve predominately “wealthier, low-minority” students (Greenlee & Brown, 2009, p. 96). Additionally, turnover at urban schools is doubled in comparison to affluent schools (Kokka, 2016), due to the possibility that predominantly white schools obtain more qualified teachers of all races (Rollert, 2015).

Not only does literature show that adults tend to shy away from the urban school setting, but so do the students. When considering the educational opportunities that should be afforded to urban youth, poor Black students are not as engaged as middle-class White students (Brown et al., 2007, p.11). Urban school students are not as engaged in their educational opportunities as their peers in other economic sub-groups, and stakeholders should take heed to this in order to make attempts to impact change within this glaring dynamic. The idea of urban schools having a higher turnover rate of teachers affects the academic achievement of the urban school students. Further, although America has a lack of teachers who are capable of teaching in diverse settings (Thomas-Alexander & Harper, 2017), school-based leaders should be more equipped with the capability of supporting teachers.

John Dewey indicated that parents and teachers have the responsibility to educate children. They must direct them towards activities that are both engaging with effective use of their time and energy (Unger, 1994). This is why it is important for leaders of urban schools to identify changes that implement methods to enhance the development of students academically,
behaviorally, socially, economically, and psychologically. Based on Raey (2011), UK education secretary Michael Gove stated that children are very different individuals. They attend school with varying degrees of resources and experiences. Urban schools face many challenges, from having a multitude of students living in poverty, or having unstable living conditions, to a lack of qualified teachers, or teachers who are not teaching in their field of expertise that add to the struggle for academic achievement (Weiss, 2004). If changes do not occur quickly within the low-performing urban schools, then they will face the possibility of closing, and in 2017, this threat could have been a reality to more than 100 schools in the state of Florida (Parenteau & Justice, 2017).

Although urban schools are defined by the location, socio-economic status, and likelihood for struggle amongst its students, the term urban does not mean “bad.” However, the at-risk students that are educated within the borders of the United States had 10,300 district-administered alternative schools and programs designated just for them (Carver, Lewis, & Tice, 2010). Alternative schools for these purposes were designed as a holding place for the bad or disruptive students. It allows one to draw conclusions that the majority of alternative school populations consist of urban, at-risk youth. Bryon Joffe, a member of The School Superintendents Association stated, “what we don’t want our alternative schools to be is a place to put kids we’d rather not have in class” (Vogell, 2017, p. 1), but evidence suggests black students are sent to alternative schools twice as much as any student of other races between 2008 and 2011 (Vogell, 2017). This example is how alternative schools mainly serve the urban population, and will be referred to as “urban alternative schools.”

During 2007-2008 school year, 646,500 students were enrolled in an alternative school program created for at-risk youth (Carver et al., 2010), and more recent data show that 40,000
students attended an alternative school in the state of Florida during 2013-2014 school year (ProPublica, 2017). The large urban school district served 3,079 alternative school students within 2013-2014 school year (ProPublica, 2017). Over half a million urban students attended an alternative school, but there is little data to support the effectiveness of alternative education when it is used as punishments for students.

The following section focuses more on the purpose and setting of urban alternative education; the understanding of concepts in urban alternative education and how it will ultimately benefit the urban population. Since alternative schools have been created, it has described the urban youth as its primary target population. In the 1960’s, public school educators were urged to examine the benefits of incorporating alternative education programs (Hodgman, 2016), especially since federal data shows that minority students are punished more than Caucasian students for similar offenses (Vogell, 2017). And now, public school educators are forced to consider the factors of how to impart effective alternative education programs for the students that it intends to serve.

**The Purpose and Setting of Urban Alternative Education**

An urban alternative school is a place where traditional measures cannot be used to reach untraditional students. When compared to regular high school students, alternative high school students use more tobacco, drugs, and alcohol (Grunbaum, Lowry, & Kann, 2001). This is why at urban alternative schools, alternative measures must be taken in order to reach the varying needs of various students.

Alternative schools have a variety of purposes within the educational system of the United States. For this study, urban alternative education is defined as institutions that are “designed to educate students who have not been successful in traditional K-12 schools and are
at risk of school failure, often because of behavior, disciplinary, and safety concerns” (Hodgman, 2016, p. 30). Although the terms “failure”, “behavior”, “discipline”, and “safety” can bring forth negative connotations about students in these types of alternative schools, these students are capable of achieving great academic and behavioral successes due to the gained fortitude and positive relationships that they forge with others. The majority of urban alternative school students are considered to be at-risk, and often come from low-income families and communities (Free, 2017), which is why it is important that educators take special care needed for this population of America’s future.

The disadvantages of urban alternative school students affects the ability to navigate in the classroom, which can have lifelong effects (Free, 2017). For example, students of urban alternative high schools experience more stress than students at regular high schools (Arpawong et al., 2015). This is also a reason why alternative school students rely upon the care and knowledge of their instructors to direct them into an environment of learning and hope (Ashcroft, Price, & Sweeney, 1998). It is possible for students in an alternative setting to be successful, it requires the leadership of principals and skills of teachers to ensure these students receive the best quality education possible. Unfortunately, there is evidence that urban alternative school programs did not solve issues they were created to address (Raywid, 1994); however, it is recommended that “alternative schools that are based on individualization supports relationships and democratic structures in education, have a variety of educational approaches, goals and student profiles” (Memduhoglu, Mazlum, & Alav, 2015, p. 71). This may not be an easy task, but it is possible.

When students are transferred to an urban alternative school, it does not mean they have been expelled from the public education system. Urban alternative schools are still apart of the
public school system (Free, 2017). Students have been transferred within the public education system to a special school—the alternative school—to serve as a punishment for their behaviors in the traditional school setting (Vogell, 2017). But, because they have not been expelled, students can still transfer back into the traditional school setting once they have completed the requirements of the urban alternative school.

Urban alternative schools are often required to maintain the same level of rigor, progress, and academic standards as traditional schools. They are often seen as a “regular school” with the exception of the behaviors of the students. And, even though students who are transferred into the alternative school population are not forced to attend due to their grades, attending an alternative school can impact a students’ grades. For example, some believe that students’ work at alternative schools are often “watered-down” (Free, 2017, p. 504) and are not equivalent to the same expectations as those at traditional schools, even though the curriculum for both the traditional and alternative schools are the same.

Inside of an urban alternative school, one might observe violent behaviors, lack of anger management, and learning disabilities amongst the students. These characteristics can be seen on a daily basis in an urban alternative school (Ashcroft et al., 1998). These three concerns are just some of the glaring reasons why there is also a need for knowledgeable instructors that are trained to work in an environment with urban alternative schools (Ashcroft et al., 1998). When students are reprimanded at their traditional school, or home school, both the victim and perpetrator are often punished and sent to the same alternative school. For example, if a large fight occurs at a traditional school, and it started because one student was bullying the other, all of the students involved in the fight may be sent to the alternative school. This has been a cause for concern because allowing both the student “victims” and their “perpetrators” to be assigned
to the same alternative school setting, and possibly enrolled in the same classroom, continues to place the victim in danger (Free, 2017, p. 504). When attempting to create learning environments with a positive climate and culture, it becomes more challenging when students feel that they are not safe.

Considering the ideals of the school-to-prison pipeline, stakeholders are concerned that “educational reformers and many urban educational settings provide a pedagogical pathway to prison that is intentional and that works in tandem with the prison-industrial complex,” (Fasching-Varner, Mitchell, Martin, & Bennett-Haron, 2014, p. 422), due to vast similarities of traditional schools and prisons. In other words, it is suggested that students in traditional schools are being trained to prepare them for prison. If traditional schools are presumed to be designed with this goal, then consider the goal of alternative school settings. However, when considering the similarities of alternative schools to prisons, it is not the desire to prepare students for prison, but to teach students how to properly behave and how to become academically successful so they can become productive members of society. Now, combining all of the disorderly, combative, and violent behaviors of students can make alternative schools look and feel like a prison setting instead of a place of learning (Gregg, 1999), this is why the need for prepared principals and teachers are so essential.

Teachers have many responsibilities, and they must believe they can successfully complete their responsibilities with necessary training, support, guidance and creative freedom. If teachers do not think they are able to accomplish tasks, this lack of self-belief can negatively impact their self-efficacy, as those who lack efficacy also lack ambition and accountability in regard to their assigned tasks. However, those with high levels of self-efficacy enjoy the challenges of complex tasks, are more engaged in completing the task, and are more likely to
form goals to hold themselves accountable for obtaining (Nir et al., 2006). It is the expectation of parents that teachers are competent and comfortable in their respective fields. One parent stated, “We want the best, but when we look around at what’s available, we often have to settle for situations which we would not have chosen in the first place” (Macaulay, 1984, p. 3). Students and families that are served at urban schools want the negative reputation of low academic scores and poor educational practices to be reversed (Santamaria et al., 2014, p. 2) so that they can achieve greater success than in the past.

In order for urban students to be motivated, influenced, and taught, they must have teachers with high efficacy who believe they are able to teach this group of students. As well, a teacher’s efficacy is “strongly related to variations in reading achievement among minority students” (Tschannen-Moran, et al., 1998, p. 204) and are less likely to become burned out in comparison to teachers with less efficacy (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007), and have a positive effect on the outcome of their students (Nir & Kranot, 2006). If principals want to positively influence scores of their students, a focus must be on the improvement of teacher efficacy (Lowrey, 2014). For this reason, the importance of principals becoming transformational leaders was examined to see how their leadership style and behaviors have impacted the self-efficacy of teachers at their schools.

When teachers receive training that they need, students then have a greater chance of being successful (Ashcroft et al., 1998). Training is not only needed for teachers, but also for principals in the urban alternative school setting, since there are not many formal trainings that are designed specifically for educators of alternative schools. Working in a setting that has been understudied (Jordan, Jordan, & Hawley, 2017) and that lacks leadership and teacher preparation programs tends to have its own challenges, in addition to many opportunities for growth. The
following section of this literature review will share the challenges that school leaders and teachers face in the alternative school settings, in addition to the opportunities that school leaders and teachers have to grow and become better in their field of education.

**Obstacles and Opportunities for Growth in Urban Alternative Education**

Regardless of difficult settings and situations that serves alternative school students may bring, there are always opportunities for continued learning and growth. It is, however, this population of America’s youth that needs the best teachers and principals to lead and guide them. In urban alternative schools, new students are enrolled constantly throughout the school year, and they create classes mixed with struggling and successful readers (Price, Martin, & Robertson, 2010). Students in these classes require a lot of differentiation of instruction. For example, in Pennsylvania, students with disabilities made up “forty-four percent of the alternative population in the 2012 school year” (Vogell, 2017, p. 1). This also requires a keen set of skills from their teachers. This is why leaders are needed to create and promote a community where “good teaching matters” (Price et al., 2010, p. 307). And although not much “attention has been given to the teachers and other professionals that educate in these settings” (Jordan, et. al, 2017, p. 264), this study intended to listen to the voices of those who work with alternative school students first-hand. The teachers.

**Teachers**

Teachers are not trained specifically to educate alternative school students. Teachers at alternative schools are treated similarly to teachers at traditional schools. Expectations of teachers need to provide rigorous academic instruction, in addition to providing a safe and civil classroom environment. However, students in these classrooms often face more severe difficulties in the learning environment than those at traditional schools, which makes it more
difficult for teachers to educate them. “Some youth are at greater risk than others for engaging in substance use behaviours and experiencing higher levels of stress” (Arpawong et al., 2015, p. 476). This coupled with other issues is what contributes to the high retention and low credibility of its teachers.

**Retention.** The Washington Post’s Principal of the Year, Mr. Paul Pack, said that “a principal’s job is to serve teachers so they can better serve students” (Lumpkin, 2018). This statement expresses the need for leaders to support their followers, in order for followers to maintain a high sense of efficacy, esteem, and a pure willingness to continue to work. As well, teacher retention is most impacted by improved working conditions based from positive leadership behaviors (Greenlee & Brown, 2009). It is important for principals to maintain respectful and positive relationships with teachers, because when teachers quit is disturbs the learning environment and creates a negative impact on student achievement (Dahlkamp, et. al., 2017).

In order to improve teacher retention, principals can work on improving the school climate (Dahlkamp, et. al., 2017); however, in order to improve the school climate, principals must also understand the population of students they serve. Urban schools have a high percentage of low socio-economic Black students. These schools also do not have as many academic or socially related opportunities and they do not have as many qualified teachers as non-urban schools (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). If principals are aware of this issue, then they can make preparations to support new teachers in order to prevent them from leaving. One group of teachers which there seems to be few of are special education teachers. This shortage is nationwide and impacts at-risk youth with intellectual and behavioral disabilities. And, more
than 30% of the special education teachers in the United States do not meet the required special education certification of their state (Ashcroft et al., 1998).

Teachers are needed not only for academic reasons, but also to manage behaviors. If behaviors are not controlled or managed within the school, then students will eventually be suspended from school, and will then be free to roam throughout the neighborhoods and possibly cause trouble (Hart & Mueller, 2013). Building relationships with students is important because it aides in the positive culture of the school, which could keep students from getting into too much trouble and not terrorizing neighborhoods. Improving teacher retention can help to prevent this.

**Credibility.** Alternative schools may tend to have easier and less rigorous curriculum in comparison to traditional schools, and not truly prepare students for college or the workplace (Cable, Plucker, and Spradlin, 2009). This stigma of the lack of educational rigor can negatively affect credibility of its teachers. Students in these schools constantly receive instruction in non-traditional settings led by principals trained to lead in traditional schools (Price et al., 2010). A study conducted by Stearns, Margulus, & Shinsky (2012) would agree that “the many challenges faced by teachers in this [urban] setting make success a group effort” (p. 7).

It has been recognized that when teachers are not actively engaging students in the learning process, students will eventually venture out on their own, and mischief may be a result (Dewey, 1903, p. 203). One example of this mischief is when bullying occurs, which consequently has a negative impact on the learning environment. Students who are perceived to be bullied are less likely to engage in the learning process (Mehta, Cornell, Fan, & Gregory, 2013, p. 45), which is why instructional leaders must understand how to address the social and psychological needs of the students that they serve as well.
When teachers behave professionally, showing respect, following rules, and speaking appropriately, students are indirectly influenced by these behaviors (Durkheim, 1961). Urban alternative schools have a poor image in addition to lacking credibility as an educational institution (Foley & Pang, 2006). The teachers at alternative schools are only required to have certification that indicates that they are qualified to teach an academic subject. Other certifications require that they can teach students with disabilities or students that have English as a second language. These are the same certifications that are needed for traditional schools as well. Any additional training on how to handle poverty, violence, or severely low-level skills with a large population of students are not addressed (or required) for alternative school teachers.

**Principals**

There are many responsibilities principals have when being in charge of a school. Principals have an important role in a school’s success and is the main person responsible for maintaining such a high quality program (Hewitt, Denny, & Pijanowski, 2012, Gumus, 2015, Darling-Hammond, 2010). If the role of the principal is left unclear to stakeholders, such as teachers and parents, then “the duties and functions of the principal can also create stress” (Hewitt et al., 2012, p. 75), and additional, unnecessary stress will not aid in the positive completion of goals. Based on a study conducted by Barnett (2001), new principals in Colorado had three major challenges: absorbing a massive amount of information quickly, facing resistance to their changes, and trying to prove their competence to others (Hewitt et al., 2012). While being a new principal, or the principal of an urban or alternative school are not simple tasks, literature has shown (Yukl, 2012, Rigby, 2013, Burke, 2014, & Sisman, 2016) how professional development, leadership, and change can help them in leading their schools more efficiently.
Professional development. Principals do not have the opportunity to be trained specifically to lead schools with an alternative setting. Although Kaya (1999) suggested “the U.S. is one of the countries in which principalship training is the most advanced” (Gumus, 2015, p. 62), others contend “the training leaders receive is off target” (Price et al., 2010, p. 299). As a result, traditional strategies are being used for untraditional students. This causes a level of frustration for the principals, faculty and staff, in addition to the students, when the skills and expectations required and expected are more difficult to accomplish due to the various disadvantages that the alternative school students have. For this reason, it is recommended that leaders should seek mentors, observe others, and use their experiences to grow (Skipper et al., 2006), especially when reflecting on the goals that are yet to be accomplished. According to Lewin, “identification with a new model, mentor, leader, or even a consultant” (Burke, 2014, p. 176) can provide the support and further the development of principal leadership. There are expectations that school principals are required to adhere to, known as the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium’s Standards for School Leaders (ISLLC). These are national standards used to prepare principals during their preparation programs, then used to evaluate their success within the school districts (Glennwinkel, 2011).

Leadership. There have been multiple strategies identified as being effective when attempting to increase positive behaviors in a secondary school, while simultaneously promoting social and academic success. School principals should lead others to “create and share innovative ideas related to teaching, learning, and education” (Sisman, 2016, p. 1763), so that the strategies can become fully implemented. Whole school intervention is the application of positive behavior supports throughout the entire school (Sugai & Horner, 2002). While this is being facilitated, principals should also encourage teachers to model positive behaviors, acknowledge students
who are doing the right things, and provide a clear set of expectations and consequences
(Flannery, Fenning, Kato, & McIntosh, 2014; Scott, Hirn, & Barber, 2012). These are all just a
few examples of effective strategies that can be implemented at the secondary school level.

School leaders can also support teachers’ classroom climate when they show and
encourage a relationship of care and trust. This will make it easier for teachers to foster a
relationship of care and trust with their students as well, which will, in turn, help them maintain a
positive and safe culture in the classroom, without embarrassing children who are exhibiting
inappropriate behaviors (Noddings, 2013). ISLLC Standard 5 states, “an educational leader
promotes success of every student by acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner”
(Rigby, 2013, p. 621). Furthermore, Fink and Resnick (2001) also state that principals have the
responsibility to create a culture of teaching and learning within their schools (MacNeil, Prater,
& Busch, 2009). Promoting positive cultures while behaving with ethics will show greater
support for both teachers and students in which they serve.

If principals do not feel responsible for what takes place in the classroom, then they will
not be able to create changes needed to solve any educational problems (Hiatt, 1994). Principals
“have a pivotal role in planning, implementing, and coordinating” the instructional programs in
the school (Sisman, 2016, p. 1763). However, if they are not comfortable with conversing about
best instructional practices and avoid having specific conversations in regard to instruction with
their teachers, then the programs may not be implemented correctly.

It is unfortunate, but in some educational settings, teachers do not seek instructional
advice from principals, because they do not respect principals as instructional leaders (Spillane et
al., 2003). Instructional leadership should be a focus for principals because it serves as a
component of being a transformational leader (Lowrey, 2014), in hopes that teachers will see the
value in seeking advice in regard to instructional matters. A principal participant in a study by Gumus (2015) stated, “in my pre-service training, I realized that effective dialogue with people is a big part of being a principal” (p. 63). By supporting and developing teachers, the principal is also ensuring that teachers are able to adequately educate their students. A researcher group in Minnesota/Toronto noted that teachers rated principals highly for either establishing strong instructional climates within the schools, or for instituting a strong vision that all students can learn (Mendels, 2012, p. 55).

Greenlee & Brown (2009) surveyed urban school teachers in Florida. Results of their study indicated that 41% of the teachers want to work for a principal who influences a positive school culture, and 37% wants the principal to focus on conditions that allow teachers to focus on educational excellence. This is an indication that by “identifying and sharing school goals” (Sisman, 2016, p. 1762), it enhances the understanding of the school’s stakeholders (students, teachers, and parents) to understand the overall vision and mission.

The scope of a problem “precludes any one person truly understanding the complexity of issues that they confront” (Edwards, et. al., 2014, p. 343), thereby suggesting that school leaders need a team to support their desire for needed changes. As well, it takes more than one person to effectively lead a school (Townsend, Acker-Hocevar, Ballenger, & Place, 2013), which is why it is recommended that principals of struggling schools make leadership adjustments that incorporate the collaboration of various stakeholders such as community members, school faculty, staff, parents and the students.

When taking a closer look at low-performing urban alternative schools, it is important that school leaders make progressive changes. “Integrity, decisiveness, competence, and vision” (Hogan & Kaiser, 2005, p. 173) should be used to help determine if a person is a good leader. In
addition, leaders must also be analytical, conceptual, emotional, and spiritual thinkers (Quatro, Waldman, & Galvin, 2007), with the understanding that “schools can’t get better without better principals” (Marcos et al., 2011, p. 87). These characteristics are found to be associated with the behaviors of transformational leaders. Transformational leadership facilitates the engagement of leaders and followers for long-lasting effects and positive change (Northouse, 2013).

Based on the Tyler Rationale, a “theoretical formulation in the field of curriculum” created by educational pioneer Ralph Tyler (Kliebard, 1970, p. 259), Cornett refers to a stage known as “post-active reflection on teaching” (Cornett, 1987). This stage signifies that it is acceptable for the learner to experience mistakes, even when working in groups. In this case, the learner is the school principal, and the group would represent the faculty and staff of the school. As transformational and instructional leaders, reflection is necessary to continue growth while allowing others to “feel comfortable with the new behavior that is required” (Burke, 2014, p. 177).

Russell (2012) indicated that academic setting is improved by servant leadership. Principals should also remember that in order “for leaders to lead, others must agree to follow” (Spillane et al., 2003, p. 1). This is why serving teachers in a method of providing support when needed shows that effective principals are able to raise the achievements for each student in addition to improving the success of their teachers (Glatthorn, Boschee, Whitehead, & Boschee, 2016).

Creating change. Researchers from the University of Washington examined the leadership in urban schools, and they noticed that principals had a vision to either establish a school culture, eliminate the current toxic culture, or they tried to create a culture of change (Mendels, 2012). In early leadership studies, there was not an immediate concern in regard to the
behaviors associated with “encouraging and facilitating change” (Yukl, 2012, p. 67). However, if secondary urban schools are expected to positively change, then school leaders must develop a framework or model that focuses on the “selection, training and development, feedback and incentives, career development, and talent management” (Redmond, 2013, p. 771) of their teachers and staff. Teachers can develop emotional attachments to their jobs which highlights their need for “anticipated reciprocity” (Redmond, 2013, p. 776) or the need for a give-and-take relationship with their supervisors. Furthermore, leaders should be supportive “to show positive regard, build cooperative relationships, and help people cope with stressful situations” (Yukl, 2012, p. 71). It is known that the profession of teaching is challenging and not much appreciation is given (Beck, 2014), which raises the importance of feeling supported, so that teachers placed in challenging environments can better handle various situations and responsibilities. When providing leadership as a principal, it is extremely important that positive relationships are developed with teachers, students, and the staff to enhance the effectiveness of the leadership (Yukl, 2012). To this regard, administrators of traditional and alternative schools know that creating effective change is the method in which success is gained (Price et al., 2010).

Kurt Lewin’s “Three Steps of How to Change” (Burke, 2014, p. 175) provides steps of unfreezing, changing, and refreezing to ensure a smooth transition for necessary changes. The concept of unfreezing relates to “loosening up” the routine that needs to be changed, the idea of changing refers to the implementation of the actual change, and the term refreezing indicates that the new change is now set in place. Before school leaders can unfreeze some of the old habits that are recognized, they must first acknowledge that a change needs to be made (Burke, 2014). As well, identifying appropriate or qualified persons responsible for monitoring and achieving
specific goals will aid in “creating the expectations” (Orridge, 2009) and this will help with making necessary changes within the school.

According to Taylor and Williams (2001), “principals need to work on long-term cultural goals in order to strengthen the learning environment” (MacNeil et al., 2009, p. 74). One way to do this is by creating SMART goals. SMART goals are designed to insure realistic and timely expectations are created, thus being strategic, specific, measurable, attainable, results-based, and time specific (O’Neill, Conzemius, Commodore, Pulsfus, 2006). However, in order for goal formulation to be effective, principal leaders must make their goals public, and accept that change is soon to come (Bradberry & Greaves, 2009).

For leaders to successfully lead their teams, they should be able to articulate specific goals needing to be accomplished. This occurs by examining a deep, underlying issue by scanning “the environment for new, relevant information” (Burke, 2014, p. 177). Also, they should develop strategies than can help achieve their vision (Orridge, 2009), and if necessary, solicit support from appropriate personnel, (Orridge, 2009) in order to ensure that implementation can fully take place. Additionally, in order to reduce resistance to any changes that the principal wants to make at the alternative school, he or she would have to share the decision-making responsibilities, listen to others and get their feedback (Orridge, 2009). This is also a form of transformational leadership. Positive changes can be enforced with greater success when leaders allow others to mutually influence the process (Lowrey, 2014). This mutually influenced process is the relationship that principals have with other stakeholders of the school, in order to create an open flow of communication. Another principal in a study conducted by Gumus (2015) said that principals “need to know how to sell programs and their related aspects
as well as know how to be a good listener” (p. 63), supporting the idea that principals should encourage the participation and communication from others.

**Implementing Transformational Leadership as a Strategy for Change**

Working with urban alternative school students needing a lot of academic and behavioral support, and working with teachers who need professional development and support, creates a very stressful environment. Principals do not want their students to drop-out of school, and they do not want their teachers to resign. But these are the realities within the urban alternative school populations. And, if not handled with the leadership style that is designed to “emerge in times of distress” (Bass, Avolio, Jung, & Berson, 2003, p. 208), these realities will continue to happen. Transformational leadership is the leadership style when change is needed. The components of transformational leadership allow principals to handle change (Hauserman & Stick, 2013, Lowrey, 2014), and creates a safe environment for teachers to communicate with their principals.

Flexible leaders work better in fast-paced environments by quickly understanding challenges that principals and teachers face, and then making appropriate decisions to handle the challenges (Bass et al., 2003). Through transformational leadership, teachers can question ideas presented to them, share concerns that they may have, and most importantly, feel safe from any negative attention from their transformational leader (Li & Wu, 2015). In other words, when a school is trying to create a certain change, transformational leadership is needed to promote the improvement for lasting results (Onorato, 2013). Furthermore, a principal does not truly have the power of a leader unless the teacher views them as an impactful person in charge (Spillane et al, 2003). This ideal aligns with the importance of being a transformational leader, as one should be impactful yet “engage with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality” (Burns, 1978, p. 20).
In the educational system, leaders and followers certainly need to have high levels of motivation and morality when working with each other, in order to change the bottom-line results for their students. Unfortunately, “the transformational leadership that enhances a school’s collective ability is not addressed” (Greenlee & Brown, 2009, p. 108) in university teacher preparation programs. This shows the growing importance of practicing the ideals of transformational leadership within schools, in hopes that successful principals are able to provide the support that their teachers need in order to thrive (Mendels, 2012). Principals are important players “in the process of creating high-quality schools” (Gumus, 2015, p. 62) and are therefore essential in being a bridge that merges the positive correlation between transformational leadership behaviors and performance (Bass et al., 2003). The four components of transformational leadership are idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Judge & Piccolo, 2004) and each component will detail how this leadership style can impact alternative secondary schools.

Idealized Influence

Transformational leaders are expected to influence others and to be “a constant, dependable source of light, [and] not someone who twists and turns with every social wind” (Covey, 2004, p. 143). Greenleaf’s theory of servant leadership, which is a component of being a transformational leader, allows school leaders to serve the needs of those whom they support (Russell, 2012); in turn, this can build comradery and teacher efficacy. Educators in alternative school settings work with students who have lacked positive decision-making skills, so principals who serve as the guiding light, showing teachers and students how to conduct themselves with “ethics, principles, and values” (Bass et al., 2003, p. 208), are leading to influence the ideals of their followers. Principals are required to maintain professional behaviors,
even when dealing with unprofessional parents or misbehaving students. Although it may be tempting to discard others who do not behave correctly, principals who are “competent, caring, and capable” (Greenlee & Brown, 2009) of showing high levels of morality, are also critically influencing their teachers.

**Inspirational Motivation**

Leaders must be “skilled at understanding and managing human emotion” (Quatro et al, 2007, p. 428). It is important for principals to understand the ongoing school climate amongst the faculty and staff, meaning that it is necessary to know and being able to address any emotions that can distract others from their work. Educators are in the business of loving students at the school, which can be challenging at times. Furthermore, leaders must be able to love their faculty and staff—in the same way as the faculty and staff loves the students. Educator Darling-Hammond (2010) stated, “school should not be mass production. It needs to be loving and close. That is what kids need. You need love to learn” (p. 234). This can be accomplished when school leaders, with a special emphasis on transformational leadership, set personal goals to be inspiring and insightful towards the needs of others (Quatro et al., 2007; Howard & White, 2009). As well, the language that is used to motivate teachers is important. When principals stress the importance of having high expectations of student achievement, it should not be assumed that students who do not achieve are taught by teachers that did not have high expectations (Anderson, 2016). This assumption can have a negative impact on teacher motivation. Instead, when principals encourage teachers to have visions of excellence and success, the teachers will eventually be able to see the success for themselves (Bass et al., 2003).
Intellectual Stimulation

Noddings (2011) states that we need to “educate people well for the work they will do” (p. 4). School leaders, as instructional leaders, should be able to rigorously challenge their employees so that individuals are stimulated intellectually and not bored at work. Effective leaders are also able to hire the right candidates and have the ability to keep their high performers (Mendels, 2012). When selecting new teachers or other staff members, a good match will benefit the teacher and the school. Teachers will be placed in a position to learn and grow, and school leaders will have hard-working individuals ready to help them succeed (Bolman & Deal, 2013). When school leaders do not challenge their teachers intellectually, the work will not be meaningful or satisfying. “When the fit between individual and system is poor, one or both suffer. Individuals are exploited or exploit the organization—or both become victims” (Bolman & Deal, 2013, p. 117). Observations and interviews were conducted with elementary public school teachers located in Chicago, Illinois. One of the conclusions of this study indicated that some teachers do not value their supervisors due to their supervisors’ lack of instructional leadership ability (Spillane, et al., 2003). This lack of respect for school principals could delay teachers from receiving the support they need in order to help students. As well, principals hiring and accepting poor performance from teachers will allow them to continue negatively impacting student performance. These low-performing teachers upset teachers who work hard to strive for excellence, and it makes the educational profession appear to be sub-standard instead of superior (Beck, 2014, p. 37).

The ability to work successfully in a team can prove to either be detrimental or rewarding to an overall group or organization (Warrick, 2014) which is why leaders should invest time into intellectually stimulating their faculty and staff, ensuring that the teachers’ strengths are being
utilized on the team. Self-determination theory is based on “three basic psychological human needs—feelings of competence, autonomy, and relatedness” (Kokka, 2016, p. 170). Feeling competent is an indicator that a person feels capable of completing a task, whereas having autonomy is a person’s freedom to use their judgement while accomplishing a task. Relatedness is a person’s ability to have a connection with others. A transformational leader would be able to relate and connect to a teacher’s need for autonomy and would also be able to positively encourage and appreciate their competence. It is especially important for principals to encourage others to be creative, and to find new solutions to old problems. At the same time, they should not be quick to openly reprimand when teachers’ creative efforts and solutions have failed (Bass et al., 2003). This is the strength of being able to intellectually stimulate others.

**Individualized Consideration**

A part of being a transformational leader is to adequately show humility, be a servant, and to “pay close attention to followers’ needs” (Burke, 2014, p. 287). The central idea of being a servant leader is to possess the component of being transformational, or an agent of change. When understanding the needs of individual teachers at the school, and considering those needs when making decisions, knowing that they are provided opportunities to grow without being overly scrutinized can enhance the efficacy of the teacher. Servant leadership is the idea that leaders are effective when they place the needs of their employees before their own personal needs (Rivkin, Diestel, & Schmidt, 2013). Using the metaphor of employees being a forest, leaders must be able to know the trees and understand how they grow. They must also be able to “manage the individual ‘trees’ in the ‘forest’” (Quatro et al., 2007, p. 428). A transformational leader also practices philanthropy by providing benevolence to people who lack a voice in decisions (Fadare, 2015). For example, a transformational leader would listen to those who are
impacted by decisions, but usually are not in a place to make those decisions, such as teachers and students of a school. By listening, and attempting to serve them and meet their needs, that exemplifies the practice of philanthropy. It also places principals as serving as mentors and coaches to their teachers (Bass et al., 2003). Being a transformational leader is not a title only for school or district-based leaders. It takes the entire faculty and staff of educators to positively impact the success within schools; therefore, all individuals should strive to become more transformational when changes are needed (Denmark, 2012). This means that other employees in a school, not just the principal, should exhibit qualities of a transformational leader.

**Monitoring Self-Efficacy as a Strategy for Effectiveness**

When leaders are setting goals and implementing changes, they may not be pleased with the evaluations of the new changes. The important part is that leaders and teams stop to evaluate in order to see how goals are progressing. If leaders do not take the time to evaluate goals, then everyone works constantly without knowing if their hard work is making a positive or negative impact. As well, principals can keep district leaders informed of changes (Orridge, 2009) just in case additional support is needed to ensure that the change happens smoothly and efficiently. During a school’s transition of implementing positively motivated changes based on a principal’s transformational leadership behaviors, it is important to closely monitor the stress levels and behaviors of teachers, in order to determine if the school’s strategies and principal’s behaviors are indeed effective.

“Education is an atmosphere, a discipline, a life” (Macaulay, 1984, p. 90). Teachers are hired to create an atmosphere, teach a discipline, and promote a successful life to their students. This pressure can lead to high levels of stress. It is suggested if employees are stressed due to work related issues, then they will eventually begin to take more time off from work, resulting in
a higher rate of absenteeism and a loss of productivity with the company (Rivkin, Diestel, & Schmidt, 2013). Elementary and middle school teachers from a Norway study utilized the Norwegian Teacher Self-Efficacy scale (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007). The results showed a strong correlation between teacher self-efficacy and teacher burnout (p. 620). Likewise, Bandura (1993) suggests that individuals who believe that they are in an environment that cannot change are classified as experiencing low self-efficacy, even if their environment has a possibility of becoming more flexible (The Wallace Foundation, 2017). This is similar to a person maintaining a pessimistic point of view, even when they may be surrounded by optimistic opportunities.

Likewise, when a person maintains high self-efficacy, they tend to work harder and accomplish more goals (Schunk, 1995, p. 112). Stone and Patterson (2005) suggested that mature employees with high levels of job satisfaction require less supervision when compared to employees who are not as mature and has lower levels of job satisfaction. The latter employee would require, instead, hands-on attention. These examples of happy, satisfied, and mature employees, compared to unhappy, dissatisfied, and less mature employees all align with the ideals of having high or low levels of self-efficacy. This is also supported by Bandura (1986) when stated that “people who have a high sense of perceived self-efficacy in a given domain think, feel, and act differently from those who perceive themselves as inefficacious” (Bandura, 1989, p. 731). For businesses, organizations, and schools, the level of efficacy of the workers can play a huge role in the overall effectiveness and accomplishments of outlined visions, goals, and expectations.

These concepts, thought processes, and behaviors can be exhibited in the teaching profession as well. In a study conducted by Brophy and Evertson (1977), they found that teachers with higher efficacy made it a personal responsibility to ensure that students learned.
Any challenges the teachers faced were viewed as opportunities to become better teachers. They did not see the challenges as evidence that students cannot learn (Gibson & Dembo, 1984). In the alternative school setting, “it is easier for teachers to develop close, mentoring, relationships with their students in smaller schools with low student-teacher ratios” (Franklin, Steerter, Kim, & Tripodi, 2007, p. 134), allowing principals to use the smaller school setting as an advantage to better supporting the efficacy of teachers and the academic growth of students.

As well, teachers with high efficacy tend to help students understand when they get answers wrong. Whereas, teachers with lower efficacy do not exert the same level of energy. Instead, they move on to another student in order to receive the right answer quicker (Gibson & Dembo, 1984). This rushed academic move by the lower efficacious instructor is due to their inability to ask appropriate follow-up questions, or other scaffolding techniques, in order to help the struggling student to learn. Pre-service teachers from Canada, Australia, Hong Kong, and India participated in a study that rated their own level of self-efficacy using the Teacher Efficacy for Inclusive Practices scale (Sharma, Loreman, & Forlin, 2012). The scale was created to show the importance of being able to identify and measure a teacher’s level of efficacy, so that school leaders can provide the necessary training to support teachers and their individual needs. As a result of this study, it was concluded that teachers must have the skills necessary to design classrooms that can meet the needs of all students, as well as the ability to maintain an environment of safety and remain in communication with parents and other support staff. This is needed when working with students that have special needs. Urban alternative school students require teachers to understand and be able to meet their individual academic and behavioral needs.
When teachers maintain higher levels of efficacy, it would indicate their “evaluation of the abilities to bring about positive student change” (Gibson & Dembo, 1984, p. 570), which is the ultimate goal for every educator. Self-efficacy, a person’s belief “about their capabilities to produce designated levels of performance that exercise influence over events that affect their lives” (Bandura, 1994, par. 1), can be categorized for teachers in two ways: “general teacher efficacy (GTE)” and “personal teacher efficacy (PTE)” (Nir et al., 2006, p. 206).

**General Teacher Efficacy**

The most common and basic approach to a teacher’s efficacy is when the teacher believes that “teaching and the educational system are capable of fostering student academic achievement despite negative influences external to the teacher” (Nir et al., 2006, p. 206). In other words, teachers must believe they have the capability to help students become successful, regardless of other factors that are outside of the teachers’ control. For example, students who are homeless, are raised in single-parent households, have been previously incarcerated, or are economically disadvantaged are often found in the urban alternative classroom. The behaviors of these students that come as a result of these influences can be challenging for teachers. However, the teacher who believes that they can positively influence a student in these situations shows a teacher with high general teacher efficacy. This means that, in general, the teacher believes that they can reach and teach the students, regardless of the students’ backgrounds. For this study, the research does not focus on this aspect of teacher efficacy, primarily because this type of efficacy is not heavily influenced by principals’ behaviors. Instead, general teacher efficacy focuses more on the relationship between the teacher and the student.

“According to Bandura (1997), teachers’ perceived efficacy influences both the kind of environment that teachers create for their students, as well as their judgments about the different
teaching tasks they will perform to enhance student learning” (Sharma et al., 2012, p. 12). A teacher’s efficacy is also described as one of the most influential determinations of a student’s performance (Woolfolk, Rosoff, & Hoy, 1990). When thinking about the 68% of incarcerated males who do not have high school diplomas, the nation should be curious to know the efficacy of their teachers. Or, of the 7.2 million urban school students whose outcomes are determined by their teachers’ efficacy, leaders should want to know the state of mind of these educators. These ideals are not answered in this study; however, the results of this study should provide insight into greater national issues. There are more teachers entering the profession without degrees in the educational field, which means that they must receive alternative, or different, teaching certifications. And teachers who hold these non-traditional academic certifications are not prepared, placed in more difficult teaching scenarios, and are more likely to resign compared to other teachers (Greenlee & Brown, 2009). Although understanding the general efficacy of teachers is important, this research has focused on a teacher’s personal efficacy for this study.

In addition, elementary school teachers in the Israeli educational system participated in a study using Gibson and Dembo’s (1984) Teachers’ Self-Efficacy scale (Nir & Kranot, 2006). Results showed that general teacher efficacy was likely not affected by principals’ leadership styles; however, transformational leadership was positively correlated with personal teacher efficacy.

**Personal Teacher Efficacy**

This form of efficacy is more specific to “a belief in the teacher’s own ability to advance significantly the learning and achievements of his or her students” (Nir et al., 2006, p. 206). For teachers to perform, they must know or reflect on their own efficacy. As Burke states, “there is growing evidence that self-awareness is related to performance” (2014, p. 303). Within the range
of a teacher’s efficacy are seven dimensions that help to determine the level of personal efficacy: *influence decision making, influence school resources, instruction, discipline, enlist parental involvement, enlist community involvement, and create a positive school climate* (Skaalvik et al., 2007). These seven dimensions can be measured based on teachers’ input rather than determined by outside factors as aligned with general teacher efficacy. A teachers’ personal efficacy is also the kind of teacher efficacy that is impacted the most based on a principal’s leadership style (Nir et al., 2006).

**Influence decision making.** When influencing decision making, a teacher must feel as if they have input into school-wide decisions that are being made. Teachers must also remember that the course of change is often ambiguous (Burke, 2014, p. 303); however, a teacher with high efficacy will continue to share their voice with the leadership of the school. Alternative school educators need to experience new learning opportunities. As well, they should be provided with supportive climates in which they are able to grow (Bass et al., 2003). These foundations will enhance the teachers’ abilities to contribute appropriate and sound decisions.

**Influence school resources.** To influence school resources, teachers must believe that they are capable of making suggestions about how resources are being used throughout the school. ISLLC Standard 3 states, “an educational leader promotes the success of every student by ensuring management of the organization, operation, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment” (Rigby, 2013, p. 621). Principals who practice this standard would allow teachers to have some input on how these resources are used.

**Instruction.** For instruction, teachers should recognize if they are knowledgeable about the “content and pedagogy” (Sharma et al., 2012, p. 14) that they are teaching. If they lack the knowledge in some areas, then they should know how to obtain support in seeking that
understanding. One method of obtaining support to shape the “positive pedagogical beliefs and practices” (Thomas-Alexander & Harper, 2017, p. 51) is with the assistance of a mentor teacher that can be assigned by the school’s principal. Furthermore, teachers should also focus on the aspirations of the students. This information allows teachers to provide appropriate academic support, as opposed to “intellectually short-change” students due to state-mandated restrictions in the academic programs (Noddings, 2011, p. 4). Rooney (2015) discovered that teachers are frustrated because they are not allowed to understand the learners. Rather, they are simply required to go “through the motions” of teaching, because they are faced with so many other responsibilities related to teacher accountability (p. 475). However, Dewey (1903) proposes that good teachers act behind the laws of “spiritual gravitation” (p. 198), and are subsequently drawn to their passions of teaching to the whole child.

Most alternative schools consist of teachers having multiple grades to teach in their class. A high sense of efficacy would allow teachers placed in this teaching scenario to help their students flourish in this type of learning environment; however, instruction can diminish if teachers maintain a sense of low efficacy, resulting in students of multiple grades being unable to learn. Teachers are expected to differentiate their instruction through special grouping of their students, provide rigorous activities for independent study once students have completed their assigned tasks, and have “approaches to record keeping which are more flexible than those prevalent in the mono-grade classroom” (Sampson & Condy, 2016, p. 86).

**Discipline.** For discipline, teachers must be comfortable with managing behaviors in the classroom environment (Sharma et al., 2012), and if they cannot, then they should feel positive support from the school’s leadership or disciplinary team. “When classroom management or disciplinary issues interfere with classroom instruction, it impedes teachers’ ability to feel that
they are doing their job well” (Kokka, 2016, p. 172). Individual support plans are options for teachers to use in managing behaviors. These are individual plans that supply strategies to support positive student behavior (Horner, Sugai, Todd, & Lewis-Palmer, 2005). At times, however, there may be teachers who constantly focus on the negative aspects of teaching, especially at urban schools. When teacher efficacy is low, “it would be pedagogically beneficial to re-emphasize principles of pedagogical efficacy and agency” (Thomas-Alexander & Harper, 2017, p. 60). This principle encourages teachers to focus on instruction while they await additional support and assistance with classroom management and discipline.

Principals need to emphasize transformational leadership behaviors when teachers struggle with discipline and classroom management, because “people’s beliefs in their capabilities affect how much stress and depression they experience in threatening or taxing situations, as well as their levels of motivation” (Bandura, 1989, p. 730). In situations where teachers lack management or discipline, it can cause their level of efficacy to spiral downward quickly, resulting in a loss of motivation to teach the students, and later in transferring to another school, or resigning.

**Enlist parental involvement.** To enlist parental involvement, teachers need to believe that contacting parents is an effective method of increasing student success and teachers should have the “ability to work collaboratively with parents” (Sharma et al., 2012, p. 14). ISLLC Standard 4 states, “an educational leader promotes the success of every student by collaborating with faculty and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources” (Rigby, 2013, p. 621). At an urban school, these tasks may be more challenging for teachers to accomplish, as indicated by an Ohio mentor teacher in Thomas-Alexander & Harper’s 2017 study of urban schools. A mentor stated “usually the kids are from
moderate to extreme poverty. Academic motivation is extremely low at the beginning of the year. Attendance is the biggest problem to overcome [and] effective parent involvement is rare” (p. 59). Knowing this, it is crucial that neither teachers nor principals give up their efforts to continue to involve parents. This dilemma may be overcome by enlisting greater community involvement.

**Enlist community involvement.** Enlisting community involvement means teachers believe members of the community will be a positive impact on students in their classroom and in the school building if they are asked to volunteer at the school. ISLLC Standard 1 states, “An education leader promotes the success of every student by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by all stakeholders” (Rigby, 2013, p. 621). Members of the community are considered to be stakeholders, because they also have an investment in the schools. Poorly performing schools could lead to an increase in violence in neighborhoods, and a possible decrease in property value. Inviting community members to support students within the school will provide teachers and students with support from other leaders besides school principals.

**Create a positive school climate.** Finally, teachers must believe they have influence and impact to create a positive school climate. If teachers do not believe they can influence the seven dimensions, then it could negatively impact their efficacy. ISLLC Standard 2 states, “an educational leader promotes the success of every student by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth” (Rigby, 2013, p. 621). Principals who achieve this standard allow teachers the ability to make decisions in regard to the culture and climate of the school.
Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 provides a diagram for the conceptual framework. Triangles are used in common diagrams that show how concepts can begin very broadly, starting at the base of the triangle, and then transition into specific details at the top of the shape. For example, another hierarchy is a Response to Intervention visual (Center on Response to Intervention, 2015) that shows the greater population served at the base of the triangle, and specific details are drawn as readers reach the top of the triangle. The conceptual framework for this study shows urban school students and alternative school students serve similar populations (Free, 2017) at the base. Based on the needs of these students, there are obstacles and opportunities for growth (Ashcroft et al., 1998, Arpawong et al., 2015) at these institutions. Schools principals are required to improve the climate of the school (Dahlkamp et al., 2017) and make changes needed for growth (Price et al., 2010, Yukl, 2012, Burke, 2014), and one of the changes is to behave as a transformational leader (Hauserman & Stick, 2013, Lowrey, 2014), because this leadership style encourages and supports teachers (Burns, 1978, Li & Wu, 2015), which supports teachers’ high level of self-efficacy, resulting in greater job satisfaction and higher productivity (Bandura, 1997, Schunk, 1995) from the teachers of the students at the alternative schools.
Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

- Increase in Teachers' Self-Efficacy
  - (Bandura, 1994, Schunk, 1995)

- Encourage & Support Teachers
  - (Burns, 1978, Li & Wu, 2015)

- Transformational Leadership
  - (Hauserman & Stick, 2013, Lowrey, 2014)

- Change Needed for Growth
  - (Price et al., 2010, Yukl, 2012, Burke, 2014)

- Principals
  - (Dahlkamp et al., 2017)

- Obstacles & Opportunities for Growth
  - (Ashcroft et al., 1998, Arpawong et al., 2015)

- Urban Schools & Alternative Schools
  - (Free, 2017)
Chapter Summary

The review of the literature provided in this chapter has explained similarities between urban school and alternative school populations. Since their students face similar needs, other literature has been provided to indicate the purpose of alternative schools, in addition to their obstacles and opportunities for growth. This study focuses on teachers’ self-efficacy, and how their perceptions of principals’ transformational leadership behaviors impacts their efficacy; therefore, this chapter concluded with the details of transformational leadership and its four main components, in addition to the six traits that help to determine a teacher’s level of efficacy. The conceptual framework provided at the end of this chapter served as a visual aid that outlines this chapter’s most salient points.
CHAPTER THREE – METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study is to explore the impact of principals’ transformational leadership behaviors on teachers’ self-efficacy in secondary alternative urban schools. This chapter provides a detailed description of the researcher’s study and how it has taken place, so that it can illustrate the impact of principals’ leadership behaviors on teachers’ self-efficacy. First, this chapter described the qualitative design used, which is a case study. Then, the researcher’s positionality will be explained, so readers can further understand the connection that the researcher has to education, leadership, and a passion for supporting teachers. Finally, this chapter concludes with the details of how this study was conducted, starting with identifying the population, and then collecting and coding the data. It ends with the final analysis that shows how teachers respond to principals with perceived transformational leadership behaviors. The research question and sub-questions that guide this study are:

1. How does perceived transformational leadership behavior impact teacher self-efficacy?
   A. How do teachers perceive their principals’ leadership behavior?
   B. How does this perceived behavior impact teachers’ self-efficacy?

This chapter focuses on how the research question and its two sub-questions were addressed based on the methodological procedures conducted by the researcher.

The Qualitative Design

The methodology used for this research was a case study. Case studies are important because they allow the researcher and participant to engage in thoughtful discussion while the participants share their narratives (Crabtree & Miller, 1999). This type of methodology, according to Yin (2003), should be used when answering research questions that ask “how” and “why” (Baxter et al., 2008, p. 545). The research questions either asks “how” teachers perceive
behaviors or “how” behaviors impact efficacy. Using a case study to further examine these questions allowed the researcher to listen to stories of teachers as their ploys in education were further understood. Additionally, the research question and sub-questions were framed so that they could serve as a foundation to build additional questions that emerge (Agee, 2009). The research question also addresses topics and issues that are important (Agee, 2009) in education.

Baxter and Jack (2003) stressed the importance of researchers identifying the specific needs to be analyzed. For example, should an individual, program, process, or organization be analyzed? Once this is determined, identifying the boundaries for the case study will prevent researchers from exploring too much (Baxter et al., 2008). Examples of placing boundaries can be Creswell’s (2003) “time and place,” time and activity (Stake, 2000); and by Miles and Huberman’s (1994) definition and context. Finally, Baxter and Jack (2003) juxtaposed various types of case studies, one being that of an instrumental case study. The research conducted by these authors identified with the researcher’s purpose for conducting a case study in that “it provides insight into an issue or helps to refine a theory…it plays a supportive role” (Baxter et al., 2003, p. 549).

The researcher used a single case study so that a vivid description could be used to describe and analyze the research (Reed & Swaminathan, 2016). This design was selected because it was intended to connect “the empirical data to a study’s initial research questions and, ultimately, to its conclusions” (Yin, 1994, p. 19). Robert Yin’s single case study design was selected because it supports literature that suggests quantitative and qualitative data can be used to collect and analyze data to help inform future studies. This single case study research design has five components as described by Yin (1994): research questions, propositions, unit of
This Study’s Questions

1. How does perceived transformational leadership behavior impact teacher self-efficacy?
   A. How do teachers perceive their principals’ leadership behavior?
   B. How does this perceived behavior impact teachers’ self-efficacy?

Propositions

Literature, experiences, theories, and synthesis of empirical data may be used to generate propositions (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Professional experiences of the researcher and empirical data were used to create two propositions. The first is that principals who are transformational leaders will improve the self-efficacy of their teachers (Stone & Patterson, 2005). The second proposition is that teachers with high levels of self-efficacy will perform better at their jobs (Schunk, 1995).

Unit of Analysis

In this case, the unit of analysis is the single group of teachers that are located at two different alternative schools.

Logic Linking Data to the Propositions

Campbell’s (1975) “pattern-matching” (Yin, 1994, p. 25) was used because the interview questions created were aligned to the components of the theory of transformational leadership, which links to the first proposition. Therefore, as the results of the interviews were analyzed, the researcher was able to identify codes and themes that showed the principals as having transformational leadership behaviors. Data, as a result of the interviews, showed a connection to the second proposition, because as the teachers shared their personal ratings of efficacy, in
addition to their stories, they simultaneously shared how they are also performing better at their jobs.

**Criteria for Interpreting the Findings**

A constant comparative method of analysis was used to analyze the findings of this study. This method consists of a four-step process: *comparing incidents applicable to each category*, *integrating categories and their properties*, *delimiting the theory*, and *writing the theory* (Glaser & Strauss, 2006). These steps ensured that the researcher excavated data from each interview in order to develop themes, and then synthesize overall data in order to draw conclusions. Figure 4, provided later in this chapter, serves as a visual to support this method of analysis.

**Researcher Positionality**

“The positions from where we make meaning of – as well as engage with – the world are informed by our identities and lived experiences” (Acevedo, Aho, Cela, Chao, Garcia-Gonzales, MacLeod, Moutray, & Olague, 2015, p. 32). While it is essential for researchers to include their positions in studies, this study was initially brainstormed and created based on the researcher’s lived experiences and writing in third-person would not connect the reader to truly understanding the position of the researcher. “Metadiscourse is when a writer refers to herself or summarizes her work and thinking process. It includes the writer’s reference to her intentions, confidence, directions to the reader or the progression of the writing while using the first person” (Garcia, n.d.). The following section shows that researchers play a significant role in their own study, serving not only as an author, but also as a person who can relate to the participants (Acevedo et al., 2015).
Positionality

There have been two primary lessons that I have learned from my courses, and these lessons have been the solid foundation for this study. The first lesson that I learned was that critical constructivism is all about making pedagogy meaningful for students. The second lesson I learned was about Personal and Practical Theories (PPTs), and how they drive my internal motivations and decisions. These two lessons have also become some of the underlying factors that have determined my research of study: Narratives of Alternative School Teachers: Perceptions of their Principals’ Transformational Leadership Behaviors and How they Impact Self-Efficacy because it has always been my goal to ensure that Black students are provided with the opportunities to learn, reflect, and grow appropriately. Students in urban schools are labeled as being “at-risk.” This label also indicates that there tends to be more violence, both physical and mental, that is used as a coping mechanism because of the number of educational problems that exist within these schools (Smith, 2011). These students, who need the most support, sometimes receive the least. For these reasons, I have constantly thought about how these lessons can positively impact the Black student.

For my study, I was interested in knowing how the impact of a principal’s transformational leadership behaviors would ultimately support teachers of urban and alternative school students. Critical constructivism allows teachers to help students learn, and not simply memorize ideas. When I learned this concept, it motivated me to continue to push for freedom of teachers. Giving knowledgeable teachers, who are familiar with critical constructivism and have the skills, knowledge, and pedagogical strategies to implement lessons, an opportunity to not be so aligned with the district expectations; consequently, this would better impact student learning.
In sum, it can be noted that students at urban schools most likely need these kinds of teachers more than others.

The second lesson I learned is the importance of understanding and identifying my Personal and Practical Theories (PPTs). This concept, originated by Professor Jeffery Cornett, forced me to think of my inner core beliefs to help determine why I make some of the decisions that I do. My PPTs are all aligned with my social and educational beliefs as they relate to students and learning, and they are listed as follows:

T: To learn, students must feel safe.

E: Educate towards the dreams of the students is what the instructor must do.

N: Needs of the students are met with the flexibility of the teacher’s behavior.

A: All living, learning creatures are required to self-reflect.

E: Exemplify grace and mercy towards children as it is shown towards adults.

It is with these core values, that I am able to listen to, understand, empathize, and celebrate with teachers that I’ve had the pleasure to interview.

Knowing Myself

The doctoral program at The University of North Florida has challenged me to get to know myself, the role that I play in an organization, and the role that I play in the community. I decided to join this program because I have enjoyed hours and hours of educational discussions with my peers. This program taught me how to ask questions about the way that we work and not simply abide by the rules, because that is what I was told to do. I began to explore the rationales behind decisions that were being made, and when I realized that some leaders did not really think about the consequences of their decisions, I felt motivated to become more involved in the leadership of the school. My passion is directly related to the education of students, and of any
person who is responsible for the students. This is why I feel the need to support those who teach students daily.

My courses have supported my original assertions about education in Black America, and how I can serve as a voice for underprivileged minority families, serve as a wall that blocks ignorance when educating minority students, and serve as a catapult when supporting minority students. I believe I am built to withstand the challenges found in urban schools, in order to reach the root of educating these at-risk students. Also, students located in urban areas need to feel safe, because it is already assumed that they are aggressive in nature. This aggressiveness can be perceived negatively, even though it may be one of the coping mechanisms used to hide their struggles in learning (Smith, 2011, p. 124). This is why my PPTs are aligned with tough love, gentle care, and an overall desire to show every student that they are capable of showing their brilliance.

**Knowing my Role in an Organization**

I have been a member of the organization referred to as “secondary schools” for over 16 years. Within the organization, I have witnessed hard working adults and children, all trying to find the best way to become successful. I have also witnessed adults and students simply attending school without being present although existing within the building, they are not actually living. As a teacher, it was my role to empower my students, constantly motivating them to identify their personal goals, and then work towards them. I didn’t want them to see school as a waste of time, or something that they were forced to do; rather, I wanted them to see school as an opportunity to escape their problems, and enter a place that taught them how to appropriately solve their problems. Now, as an instructional leader, my role in the organization is not to create duplicates of “me,” but to empower teachers the same way that I have empowered my students. I
want to provide teachers with multiple options of how to accomplish goals within their classrooms. These options given to the teacher will ultimately serve the students’ needs for diverse tasks as well.

During my first semester at the University of North Florida, I had a proposal approved for research on the topic, “How can the professional development of secondary schools’ faculty affect the pedagogy in the classroom?” at the Florida State University conference on International Relationships during the Fall semester of 2013. The research I proposed was based on one of my complaints about professional development. I did not appreciate instructors (at various schools) providing lectures during the Early Release training days, and their lectures would mention the importance of providing differentiated instruction for the students in our classrooms. As teachers accepted this treatment, I realized there is a big difference between being compliance and being engaged (Senge, 1990). I complained and then eventually became a Reading Coach. I then became in charge of the Professional Development at my school. As the coach, I ensured that I utilized Malcolm Knowles’ Theory of Andragogy. His theory suggests that adults learn differently from children, and that we must allow the learning for adults to be reflective, it must show an immediate influence on their work, and they must have input in the learning, or else they will not learn it fully (Knowles, 1995).

I am currently serving as a reading coach and teacher, and I continue to allow my foundations courses to support and justify the professional decisions that I make while at work. One of my current responsibilities is to conduct Leadership Walk-Throughs. These walk-throughs are opportunities for professionals to visit various classrooms, and have rigorous discussions regarding instruction, delivery, management, and curriculum (Brooks & Dietz, 2013). Observations during the walk-throughs have given me the voice to share with the
principal and assistant principal the specific supports to provide for teachers. I have served as the voice of the teachers, and I try my best to represent their concerns, while making leadership decisions.

**Knowing my Role in the Community**

Before entering this doctoral program, I was highly engaged in the community. Being a member of the praise and dance team at my church, a volunteer teacher on Saturdays, a motorcycle enthusiast, and the secretary and Scholarship Chair for a local Chevrolet Corvette club, I was always merging education within my community activities. I have had an impact in the community, not because I have held titles of leadership, but because I constantly talk about the importance of education, and the issues that we find in some educational practices. I also encourage participation and solicit the opinions from those in the community (church members, motorcycle riders, Chevrolet Corvette owners, etc…) and together, we have actively provided solutions to some of the problems. For example, as the secretary of the Chevrolet Corvette club, I constantly pushed for us to host a scholarship for African-American high school seniors in the Jacksonville community. In our first year hosting this event, only two scholarships were awarded, though within 5 years of our continued growth and commitment towards education, we supported 12 students, and the scholarship funds that were raised had tripled since our first event. This not only made me feel great, but I was also delighted to see the joy on the members’ faces. Many of them were retired, and did not know how they could still impact today’s youth. This scholarship event provided them with an outlet of continuing to contribute to our community.

As I continue to work with members of the community, my courses have given me the voice to share what happens in a school and classroom with their sons, daughters, and grandchildren, so that their main source of information is not provided by any news media.
Deficit ideology supports the idea that individuals are negatively impacted solely on their own actions, and their disenfranchised community is not taken into consideration (Gorski, 2010). This ideology was new to me, and so I can appreciate my eyes being opened to ideas that suggest we should not focus on individuals as the source of their own problems, but rather that we should consider the role that society plays in keeping our problems an issue. Our students can benefit from teachers and community leaders unlearning the deficit ideology if we refrain from showing a lack of expectations of urban students (Gorski, 2010).

As I continue with my study of principal leadership and teacher efficacy, I am driven by the knowledge that students will ultimately reap the benefits of a changed heart and mind, as it relates to how we teach and support others. I know myself as a teacher. The role that I play in my organization is a leader, and my position in the community is a voice to those who are not in an urban secondary school every day. Accordingly, as I have conducted my study, I have constantly listened to my voice as a teacher, as a leader, and as a liaison.

Site and Participant Selection

Location of Research

There are two alternative schools located in a large urban district in the state of Florida. These two schools were selected as the location of the study due to the convenience of the researcher to gain access to both facilities. Both schools are located in urban communities within their district.

Population

The two schools serve similar populations. Both alternative schools have fewer than 25 teachers at each school. The demographics of the schools both serve students who have been forced out of their primary schools because of repetitive behaviors that are not allowed in the
district’s Student Code of Conduct. Once they arrive at the alternative school, they are enrolled for a minimum of 45, 90, or 180 days. Thus, the students are very transient, as some are enrolled in an alternative school setting for one term. Other students, referred to as repeat offenders, may be sent back to the alternative school multiple times within the same school year. Based on observations as a teacher, the researcher has witnessed several students successfully exit alternative school programs, only to return at some point in their educational career due to additional poor behavioral decisions that they have made in the academic setting.

Figure 2 shows the demographic data of the sites for this study. Both schools serve an urban population, with having African-American students as more than 75% of their student body, and more than 75% of their students live in low-income households. One school has over half of their student body listed as being truant, or having excessive unexcused absences from school (Baker, et. al., 2001), and the other school has almost half of their student body listed as being truant. Truancy is a “risk factor for serious juvenile delinquency” (Baker, et. al., 2001, p. 1), therefore, understanding the population of the students should help aid in understanding the additional planning, organizing, training, development, leadership, and stress that teachers undertake in order to serve at an alternative school.
Figure 2: Site Selection Demographics

Race / Ethnicity
- African American (88%)
- Asian (1%)
- Hispanic (5%)
- Native American (0%)
- Multi-Racial (3%)
- Pacific Islander (0%)
- White (3%)

Gender
- Male (85%)
- Female (81%)

Statistics
- 65% Stability
- 62% Truant
- 78% Low Income
- 4% Limited English
- 10% Diverse Learners

Race / Ethnicity
- African American (77%)
- Asian (0%)
- Hispanic (3%)
- Native American (1%)
- Multi-Racial (3%)
- Pacific Islander (1%)
- White (15%)

Gender
- Male (106%)
- Female (38%)

Statistics
- 15% Stability
- 42% Truant
- 76% Low Income
- 1% Limited English
- 22% Diverse Learners
Participants

Literature regarding the efficacy of teachers integrated the use of semi-structured interviews, so that large quantifiable data are not required. As an example, 16 California teachers were interviewed (Kokka, 2016), 13 teachers in Michigan (Rollert, 2015), in addition to 12 Pittsburg teachers for another study conducted by Jacobs (2015). This supported the researcher’s decision to interview ten teachers. A total of 10 secondary urban alternative school teachers formed the number of participants of this study. Each instructor participated in an interview that aligns with the Multi-factor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ). Completion of the interviews allowed the researcher to identify the behaviors of transformational leadership that teachers perceive their principals to be, while also understanding the self-efficacy of the teachers participating in this study. The interview consisted of seven open-ended questions that focused on the research question’s first sub-question: How do teachers perceive their principals’ transformational leadership behaviors? These questions, and their alignment to the MLQ, is located in Table 1 and also in Appendix G. Each interview was recorded with the permission of the teacher and lasted an average of 30-45 minutes.

Participant Selection

On each schools’ website, the names and titles of each faculty and staff member were provided. The schools’ websites were used to recruit prospective participants based on their titles that require them to teach at the school in any capacity. The teachers at both schools are classified as multi-grade instructors because they have at least two different grade levels in their classroom and they are expected to teach multiple grade levels due to the small enrollment of students at each school. The participants were approached during a pre-determined allotted time provided by the principal, which was during a scheduled professional development meeting.
Data Collection

Semi-structured Interviews

Teacher interviews originally consisted of seven open-ended questions asked by the researcher. Additional questions were asked in order to obtain a more in-depth perspective of the participants’ perspectives of leadership and urban alternative school experiences, because the “development of rapport and dialogue” (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006, par. 3) were essential to the researcher’s ability to understand the teachers’ stories. The original seven questions were based on the theory of transformational leadership and were aligned with survey statements from the Multi-factor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ). An intrinsic case study conducted by Mills & Boardley (2016) interviewed three expert soccer managers. This exploratory study reflected four components of transformational leadership, and it was mentioned that one of the four, “inspirational motivation”, emerged past the other three components (p. 392). The three managers rated *inspirational motivation* higher than the other three components of transformational leadership: *intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration,* and *individualized influence*. The researcher took this into consideration when generating questions centered around transformational leadership behaviors.

The MLQ is a survey instrument, created by Bernard Bass and Bruce Avolio, designed to measure three different leadership styles: *transformational leadership, transactional leadership,* and *laissez-faire leadership* (Bass et al., 2003). Survey items identified for this study each correlates with one of the four components of transformational leadership: *idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation,* and *individualized consideration*. The survey items were translated into open-ended responses for the teacher participants. For example, MLQ survey item 21 focuses on leaders having the *idealized influence* of their followers. The item
says, “acts in ways that builds my respect.” The researcher turned this statement into an open-ended response and asked the participants to “explain how (if any) the principal acts in ways that build your respect.” The follow-up question, designed to understand the teachers’ efficacy, asked “do you think that his actions in your example have helped you to be a better teacher for your students? Please explain.” Table 1 shows the item number on the MLQ, the item statement, the aligned component to transformational leadership, the question that was asked during the interview, and the follow-up question. The pre-created follow-up questions were identical and related to the teachers’ efficacy, “a belief in the teacher’s own ability to advance significantly the learning and achievements of his or her students” (Nir et al., 2006, p. 206).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item Number</th>
<th>Item Statement</th>
<th>Interview Question</th>
<th>Follow-Up Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td><strong>Idealized Influence:</strong>&lt;br&gt;“Acts in ways that builds my respect”</td>
<td>#1. Explain how (if any) the principal acts in ways that build your respect.</td>
<td>Do you think that his actions in your example have helped you to be a better teacher for your students? Please explain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td><strong>Inspirational Motivation:</strong>&lt;br&gt;“Expresses confidence that goals will be achieved”</td>
<td>#2. Explain some of the times (if any) the principal has stated goals and expressed confidence that they will be achieved.</td>
<td>Do you think that his actions in your example have helped you to be a better teacher for your students? Please explain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td><strong>Intellectual Stimulation:</strong>&lt;br&gt;“Seeks differing perspectives when solving problems”</td>
<td>#3. Explain a time (if any) when the principal wanted different perspectives (maybe yours) to help solve a problem.</td>
<td>Do you think that his actions in your example have helped you to be a better teacher for your students? Please explain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td><strong>Individual Consideration:</strong>&lt;br&gt;“Helps me to develop my strengths”</td>
<td>#4. Explain a time when (if any) the principal has helped you to develop your strengths.</td>
<td>Do you think that his actions in your example have helped you to be a better teacher for your students? Please explain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td><strong>Intellectual Stimulation:</strong>&lt;br&gt;“Gets me to look at problems from many different angles”</td>
<td>#5. Explain a time (if any) the principal has encouraged you to look at a problem from various points of view.</td>
<td>Do you think that his actions in your example have helped you to be a better teacher for your students? Please explain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td><strong>Individual Consideration:</strong>&lt;br&gt;“Considers me as having different needs, abilities, and aspirations from others”</td>
<td>#6. Explain when (if any) the principal has taken into consideration your individual needs, abilities, and aspirations that may be different from the needs of others.</td>
<td>Do you think that his actions in your example have helped you to be a better teacher for your students? Please explain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td><strong>Idealized Influence:</strong>&lt;br&gt;“Considers the moral and ethical consequences of decisions”</td>
<td>#7. In your opinion, when (if any), has the principal considered the moral and ethical consequences of his decisions?</td>
<td>Do you think that his actions in your example have helped you to be a better teacher for your students? Please explain.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Consent and Interview Scheduling

Teachers were provided with a copy of the consent form and given the opportunity to ask questions about the interviewing process. For those who were willing to participate, the researcher allowed them to decide the location of the interview. It could have either taken place during their duty-free planning periods, or after work hours. The researcher believed that most teachers would prefer to participate in the interview after work hours, so the location was at the participants’ discretion. For example, the interview could have taken place after-hours in the privacy of their classroom, or off-campus at a local library or restaurant. Each interview took place in the teacher’s classroom at the time of their discretion.

Transcription

The researcher did not share any data with persons that were not serving on the dissertation committee or employed by TranscribeMe. TranscribeMe is an organization that charges to transcribe for individuals who are conducting research. Their transcribers sign an agreement indicating that they will not disclose any information that they become privy to throughout the course of the transcriptions. As well, TranscribeMe will only assign each transcriber a small section of the interview that needs to be transcribed, so that one person will not have access to the interviews as a whole. As well, the owner of the transcriptions (the researcher) were kept confidential from the transcribers of TranscribeMe. Documentation of TranscribeMe’s services, agreements, and pricing are included in Appendix H.

Recording

Interviews were recorded with the permission of each participant. The participants were informed before the recording began, and the researcher waited until each participant was ready before recording. Off-topic conversations that took place, such as intercom interruptions, or
visitors stopping by were reasons for the researcher to stop recordings. After interruptions were complete, the recorded interview resumed with the permission of the participant.

**Interview Protocol**

Before the researcher conducted the interviews, each interview participant was given a document that provided more information about the interview process (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006), including the interview questions. This document is located in Appendix F. Each participant was provided a minimum of 24 hours to review the document before their scheduled interview. The researcher had a similar document that allowed for space to write responses, instructions to ensure that each interview is conducted the same (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006), and space for follow-up questions if needed (Creswell, 2014).

**Collecting the Data**

The series of interview questions were estimated to provoke a 30-45 minute conversation and interview with the participants. As planned, the participants received a copy of the questions a minimum of 24 hours before their scheduled interview. When the researcher met with the first participant, the participant had taken the initiative to type their responses to each of the questions. The researcher did not anticipate this, and therefore proceeded with the recorded interview. What was once hoping to be a 30-45 minute interview lasted only 5 minutes. With such straight-forward responses, it was difficult for the researcher to respond with adequate follow-up questions. After showing appreciation for their participation, the researcher had to adjust quickly before the next scheduled interview.

The researcher began creating additional questions that would allow teachers to express their views on transformational leadership and efficacy while being more at ease throughout the interview. For the second interview, the participant answered the initial seven questions, plus a
few more questions created to understand a better perspective of being an alternative school
teacher that perceives transformational leadership behaviors, and how it specifically impacts
their self-efficacy. This interview provided more of a richness of data and was subsequently used
as the first of the remaining ten semi-structured interviews. “Being good at the art of
conversation means knowing when to be still and what to emphasize when speaking, knowing
how to hear what one listens to, and seeing expression in body, voice, and gestures” (Eisner,
1991, p. 18). The researcher made it a priority to ensure that the future interviews were also
conducted with energy that was one of professionalism, interest, and a listening ear—making
notes on all that the participants provided through their voice projection, word choice, and body
language.

Each of the participants had the opportunity to create and share their pseudonym, so that
their real names would not be mentioned during this study. Asking participants to select their
own pseudonyms allowed them to engage more with the research and have a better
understanding of their anonymity (Allen & Wiles, 2016), which is another reason why the
researcher asked for the aliases. Some of the teachers gave a verbal consent for their real names
to be used, so in order to protect the identity of their co-workers, which are the other participants,
the researcher created a pseudonym for the teacher if the participant was not creatively able to do
so. It is very easy to identify the participants due to the number of teachers at each school, so the
researcher avoided asking participants about their years of experience, subject area taught,
gender, or race.

**Sorting the Data**

After hand-writing codes within margins of the interviews, a list was compiled of each
code. Codes mentioned more than once throughout the ten interviews were also listed more than
once in the table. After the codes were all listed, it was counted as a total of 185. Counting 185
codes helped the researcher visually see responses of the interview participants. According to
Marshall & Rossman (2011), “the researcher sees how the data function or nest in their context
and what varieties appear and how frequently the different varieties appear” (p. 213). A sample
of the list of codes appear in Figure 3. These codes were used to answer the first sub-question of
the research question, “how do teachers perceive their principals’ leadership behavior?”
Constantly reviewing the list allowed the researcher to begin next steps of noticing similarities
and differences that appeared in the data. The details of this synthesis are described later in the
chapter when the researcher began to analyze the data.

**Figure 3: Coding the Data**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Codes</th>
<th>Codes</th>
<th>Codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25. “history”</td>
<td>26. Low efficacy</td>
<td>27. Personal time-off (Billy)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. Visible</td>
<td>29. Open to suggestions</td>
<td>30. Teaching preferences</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Ethical Issues**

**Informed Consent**

Each participant for the interview received a document that detailed the purpose of the
study and the extent of their participation. The researcher verbally explained the process to the
potential participants and then allowed them to sign the consent form if they chose to participate
in this study. The researcher was also available to answer any questions before they signed. And,
if further questions arose, the information for the researcher and the chair-person for this study
was also available on the participants’ copy of the consent form. A copy of this form is located in Appendix E.

**UNF Institutional Review Board (IRB) Approval**

Prior to soliciting participants for this study, approval was given by the university’s IRB. Initial requirements from the IRB, including the completion of the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI program) were completed. The memorandum documentation that provided permission to conduct this study is located in Appendix B.

**Data Analysis Techniques**

“Qualitative data analysis is a search for general statements about relationships and underlying themes; it explores and describes and builds grounded theory” (Strauss & Corbin, 1997). The researcher analyzed the interview data with the use of the constant comparative method of analysis. This method allowed the researcher to identify general statements, and to determine “how frequently themes and categories or patterns appear in the data” (Marshall & Rossman, 2011, p. 221) as the researcher’s continued thought process was centered around the final synthesis of the data.

**Constant Comparative Method of Analysis**

“The purpose of the constant comparative method of joint coding and analysis is to generate theory more systematically…by using explicit coding and analytic procedures” (Glaser & Strauss, 2006, p. 102). This method has “the explicit coding procedure” (Glaser & Strauss, 2006, p. 102) which means that the researcher will allow codes to emerge from the analysis of data collected (Creswell, 2014). For this analysis, the researcher compared incidents applicable to each category, and integrated categories and their properties (Glaser & Strauss, 2006). This was accomplished through the coding process as described by Tesch’s Eight Steps: *get a sense of*
the whole, pick one document, make a list of all topics, review data, turn words into categories, make final decisions, assemble the data, and recode existing data.

Coding

Coding is the process of summarizing information and writing a word or brief description of the summary in the margins (Rallis & Rossman, 2012). For this study, the researcher created one to two-word codes that served as a summary for statements made by the participants. The researcher also followed Tesch’s Eight Steps in the Coding Process (Creswell, 2014). Each of the steps are described below.

Get a sense of the whole. There was a total of ten interview transcripts that were reviewed. Before coding began, the researcher read each transcript and listened to recorded interviews simultaneously. This was to verify that the transcriptions were 100% accurate, and to listen to the overall message that each participant shared.

Pick one document. After reading each of the ten transcripts, the researcher decided to create a document that listed all of the interview and follow-up questions. There was an average of 16 questions for each interview. Then, the researcher picked one document, and began copying and pasting the participant’s responses underneath each question. Once that was completed, then the researcher copied and pasted the other participants’ answers underneath each question. This helped the researcher to see how all of the participants responded to the same question.

Make a list of all topics. After reading each question, and all of the answers from the interviews for that question, the researcher then began to write codes, or themes, in the margins of the responses. After coding, the researcher located common themes and central ideas for the
ten transcripts, and created a list of all the topics. The topics were next clustered based on what they have in common.

**Review data.** More codes were written in the margins of the questions and responses as the researcher reviewed them again. Thorough reading of the grouped responses allowed the researcher to continue open coding, by creating possible labels for pieces of information that summarize what is happening (Gallicano, 2013).

**Turn words into categories.** The most descriptive wording for the topics were turned into categories and those categories were then grouped. For example, sample codes included *feedback, visible,* and *family*. Each code was placed into a column labeled as “instructional leader, team player, or self-efficacy,” which is similar to Creswell’s (2014) “major, unique, and leftover” (p. 198) columns. This method is also described as axial coding as the researcher has identified relationships and connections among the open codes (Gallicano, 2013).

**Make final decisions.** After placing codes into one of the three categories, *instructional leader, team player,* or *self-efficacy,* the remaining codes were used to create a final category that related more to the make-up of alternative schools. This category was later titled, *Stakeholders’ Perceptions of Alternative Schools.* The goal of the researcher was to include all relevant data pieces provided, whether it appeared to be a popular response amongst several participants, or only mentioned by one participant.

**Assemble the data.** After the themes were outlined, and the codes were listed under the themes, the researcher began to align the participants’ responses with the codes that were used. For example, if a participant discussed their ability to have autonomy in their classroom, then their example was shared in the section of the discussion titled, *Providing Autonomy.*
**R**ecode existing data. There were codes assigned to some responses, that were later recoded to support and develop evidence within other themes. For example, a story was provided about students being truant, so *truancy* was the original code. However, the participant’s story could not support any of the themes the researcher created. So, their story was used as an example for the theme of *Going Above and Beyond*, since their story was appropriate in that section.

The following figure, Figure 4, shows the frame for the Constant Comparative Method of Analysis. It outlines the open coding, axial coding, and selective coding process. Then, the figure shows the researcher’s interpretation and analysis of the Constant Comparative Method, and how it was translated in order to complete the synthesis, analysis, and development of themes to support answers to the research questions.
Figure 4: Constant Comparative Method of Analysis

1. Interview 1
   - Create list of topics/themes (open coding)
   - Identify words with coded categories (axial coding)
   - Compare/synthesize with other interview transcripts

2. Interview 2
   - Create list of topics/themes (open coding)
   - Identify words with coded categories (axial coding)
   - Compare/synthesize with other interview transcripts

3. Make Final Decisions (selective coding) & Assemble the Data

Researcher’s Interpretation and Method of Analysis

- Participant #1's Response
- Code 1
- Code 2

- Participant #2's Response
- Code 1
- Code 2

- Participant #1's Response
- Code 1
- Code 2

- Participant #2's Response
- Code 1
- Code 2

Create Themes:
- Stakeholders’ Perceptions of Alternative Schools
- Principals as Instructional Leaders
- Principals as Team Players
- How Teachers’ Perceptions impacts Teachers’ Self-Efficacy
Analyzing the Data

After coding and sorting the data, the task of analyzing was at hand. In order to fully analyze the interviews, the researcher reread the research question, in order to listen for the answers that the interview participants had provided. The research question and its sub-questions are:

1. How does perceived transformational leadership behavior impact teacher self-efficacy?
   A. How do teachers perceive their principals’ leadership behavior?
   B. How does this perceived behavior impact teachers’ self-efficacy?

The first part of the research question asks about how teachers perceive their principals’ leadership behaviors. This led the researcher to look at the overall tone, mood, sound, impression, and listen to the overall voices of the teachers, and two distinct messages were garnered. Teachers either talked about their principals showing characteristics of being a good team player, or they described their principals as being good teachers. Once the researcher understood these overall themes, another table was created. The two columns in the following table had the two themes, “Principals as Instructional Leaders” and “Principals as Team Players.” Then, each of the 185 codes were reviewed and decisions were made. Either the code met the characteristic of an “instructional leader” where the principal did things as a teacher would, or the code met the characteristics of a “team player” where the principal did things as a coach or team member would, as described by the interview participants.

There were 27 codes out of the 185 that aligned with “Principals as Instructional Leaders.” There were also 36 codes out of the 185 that aligned with “Principals as Team Players.” There were then 122 codes remaining to be categorized. At that time, the researcher then reread the second part of the research question. It asks how the teachers’ perceived
behaviors of their principals impacts the teachers’ self-efficacy. Taking that into consideration, any codes that impacted a teacher’s beliefs about work, their ability to be successful or unsuccessful, or any codes that related to their feelings about their jobs were then placed in a third column created titled, “How Perception impacts Teachers’ Self-Efficacy.” There was a total of 31 codes that fell into this category. Of the 185 total codes created, 27 aligned with principals being instructional leaders, 36 aligned with principals being team players, and 31 aligned with teachers’ self-efficacy. An example of this table is found in Figure 5.

Figure 5: Sorting Codes into Themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme 1: Principals as Instructional Leaders</th>
<th>Theme 2: Principals as Team Players</th>
<th>Theme 3: How Perception affects Teachers’ Self-Efficacy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Feedback</td>
<td>2. Open-door policy</td>
<td>2. Caring teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Modeling</td>
<td>4. Listens to opinions</td>
<td>4. Teachers want to work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Feedback: pos &amp; neg</td>
<td>5. Open to suggestions</td>
<td>5. Tight group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Autonomy</td>
<td>7. Listens to ideas</td>
<td>7. Ldrshp (neg imp efficacy)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. One-on-one: grad release</td>
<td>11. Leader knows +/- of staff</td>
<td>11. Laziness b/c of students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Models expectations</td>
<td>15. Motivational</td>
<td>15. Care</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The remaining 91 codes were used to continue to paint a picture of the voices of the participants. Those codes may not directly align with the research question, but they do inform the researcher of the details that are needed in order to be successful at an alternative school. Suggestions, concerns, and additional comments provided by the interview participants were shared in hopes of teaching others how to better serve students at an alternative school.
Further analysis of the 27 codes for the first theme required the researcher to synthesize their similarities, combining codes that were the same. Continuing to condense the codes drew a richer picture for each theme once the researcher prepared to document the final analysis. As well, the 36 codes of the second theme were also condensed, and duplicated codes were reduced to understand how that theme would be described. The third theme had 31 codes, and those were condensed as well.

**Credibility, Dependability, Confirmability, Transferability, and Authenticity**

Credibility refers to the researcher’s ability to interpret and represent the views of the participants (Polit & Beck, 2012). This means that a study is considered to be credible if the researcher is able to interpret and represent data presented by the participations so that others may understand. The credibility of this study was aligned by connecting literature to the statements also shared by the participants. This alignment of literature and participants’ views is detailed in Chapter Five, when statements of the teachers are shown to coincide with statements from others in the literature.

When another researcher agrees with decisions made throughout the research process (Cope, 2014), the research is considered to be dependable. The use of peer debriefing and external auditors (Creswell, 2014) were utilized simultaneously. Members of the researcher’s dissertation committee were qualified to be considered for peer debriefings because they were familiar with the researcher and the study. As well, they also served as external auditors due to their ability to remain unbiased, questioning and clarifying each step of the researcher’s study. Also, certain research studies were used to describe decisions that the researcher has made, based on empirical decisions of other researchers. For example, Hauserman and Stick (2013) recommended to use “similar procedures with purposefully selected samples of teachers in other
geographic locations” (p. 196) based on the conclusion of one of their studies. The procedures in this study would be similar to that in Hauserman and Stick (2013) because they also had 10 teachers to access their principals’ leadership behaviors.

Although it is important to understand the position of the researcher, confirmability occurs when the researcher is able to establish that the data is representative of the responses of the participants, and not that of the researcher’s (Cope, 2014). In Chapter Four, the researcher has carefully cited each participant, in addition to providing the context of which the participant was speaking. Whether comments were hurtful or humorous, the researcher ensured that the voices of the participants were loud and clear.

Transferability means that the conclusions of the research can be applied in other settings as well (Cope, 2014). In Chapter Five, summaries and conclusions were provided, in addition to further implications of the study. Based on methods used, or not used for this study, the researcher has listed several examples of how similar studies may be conducted in order to verify the conclusions of this study.

Authenticity is the researcher’s ability to accurately and emotionally express the feelings of the participants in a faithful manner (Cope, 2014). Each of the participants of this study have patiently provided details, laughs, and frowns while participating in this research. The transcriptions of the interviews were translated as the researcher has taken into consideration the people behind the tape recorder. “Interviews allow the researcher to understand the meanings that everyday activities hold for people” (Marshall & Rossman, 2011, p. 145), and as an educator, the researcher can relate to the experiences shared by the participants. Chapter 4 shares a multitude of examples that the participants have provided, as an example of how each of them hope that others will learn from the lessons that they have to share.
Chapter Summary

This chapter served as an introduction to the researcher’s methods that were used to conduct this study. As a qualitative report, this case study was analyzed using the Constant Comparative Method of Analysis, a systematic method of reviewing transcribed data, coding, sorting, and then synthesizing for final data results. In this chapter, the researcher also shared personal details that has connected lived experiences to the purpose and driving force of this research study.
CHAPTER FOUR – ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

The intentions of this study were to identify teachers’ perceptions of their principals’ perceived transformational leadership. The literature review noted studies that were conducted in reference to transformational leadership, and self-efficacy, which guided the researcher to ask questions about how perceived transformational leadership behaviors of principals impact a teacher’s self-efficacy. The seven approved interview and follow-up questions were all focused on transformational leadership and self-efficacy.

This chapter details the various accounts provided by teachers at two alternative schools. At Grey-Sloan High School, it employs participants Vivviana, Amber, Carlton, David, and Johnny, led by Principal Webber. At Reddington Middle School, it employs participants Jack, Billy, Joyce, Herman, and Madelyn, led by Principal Keen. This chapter has been divided into six sections. After this section, the perception of alternative schools will be shared as viewed from the perspectives of the teachers, and what they have recounted according to their students and parents. Then, a look at principals behaving as instructional leaders and team players will follow, ending with how the teachers’ perceptions of their principals’ leadership behaviors has impacted their self-efficacy. The final section, the chapter summary, will summarize the salient points from this chapter in order to support the last chapter in this study, and lead into the researcher’s analysis and suggested next steps for research.

Stakeholders’ Perceptions of Urban Alternative Schools

There are key stakeholders that determine the success of alternative schools. Some of them include, but are not limited to, the parents, the students, and the teachers. The perception of stakeholders are held in high regard, because any negative perceptions could deter from achieving the ultimate goals of success. As well, positive perceptions allow all parties an
opportunity to continue to work towards greater achievements. With that being said, it is important to understand the perception of the alternative school program. Although teacher participant #3 David believes that “working at an alternative school is not much different from working in a comprehensive high school,” other teacher participants such as #6 Billy and #7 Joyce believe the exact opposite. Billy said, “Well, teaching at an alternative school is very different than teaching at a comprehensive school. I’ve taught at both, and the structure is just more—there’s more structure at an alternative school than there is at a comprehensive school.” Joyce said, “To work at an alternative school is certainly different from a traditional school.” Whether the opinion is that alternative schools and public schools are the same, or are extremely different, they both have one thing in common: principals, teachers, and students…stakeholders that all need to be aware of its values, missions, and goals.

**Student Population**

At the two alternative schools, students are mandated to attend based on the number of infractions that occurred at their home school. Their home school is the regular public school, or traditional school, that they attend for the entire school year. It is their home school that initiates the process of the student being transferred to the alternative school. Because the alternative school student has been legally removed from their home school based on their behaviors, there appears to be many similarities amongst them. According to Amber, teacher participant #1, the students are “in and out, in and out, in and out of court, in and out of hospitals, in and out of jail. We don’t have a consistent type of student in our classroom.” Amber’s concern about the population was heightened when she was informed that all teachers (of home school and alternative schools) will be held responsible for students’ academic progress. Amber then stated, “and to be held accountable for those students’ growth, I don’t think is fair.” This was viewed as
a reasonable concern, since the students’ growth is determined by a state-mandated exam given
towards the end of the school year, and these students would have only been taught by teachers
like Amber and the other participants for an average of 45 to 90 days.

Teacher participant #8 also had similar thoughts about the kind of student that attends an
alternative school. When discussing the nature of the students, Herman said:

it’s very different because of the type of students that you’re teaching. They come from
various backgrounds. They come from various socio-economic standpoints in life. Their
problems are a little bit more different than the normal general education child. You have
to wear more hats as a teacher, as an educator dealing with these types of kids.

As discussed previously in Chapter 2’s Review of the Literature, Herman is describing examples
of a teacher’s general efficacy, because he is connecting the student to their home life, and issues
that Herman knows that he cannot directly affect; but his recognition of their home life showed
the researcher that he is not despaired, and he does not think that the students are unteachable,
because he understands that he will just have to “wear more hats as a teacher.”

Teacher participant #4, Vivviana, sat comfortably behind her desk as she began to
reminisce on her childhood and decided to describe a favorite game called “O-U-T OUT.” She
stressed the fact that after three strikes of a person being hit by the ball that they were trying to
dodge, that they were automatically out of the game. She used that visual to paint the picture that
too many students are returning to the alternative school too many times. Vivviana said:

I believe that maybe 40% of the students benefit from alternative school. They actually
change. But a lot of them they’re just coming here, coming here, coming here because
they feel like they can get away with smoking out behind certain buildings, smoking
marijuana, skipping class.

Vivviana’s concern aligns with the purpose and goals of the alternative school setting. If the
purpose and goals were to be made clearer, then her concern for the 60% of repeat-students
might be assuaged with the fact that the school would be structured more to fit the needs of the other 60%.

To compare against the thought of the previous teachers, David shared what he has experienced students to think about the alternative school. Speaking on behalf of a student, David said, “I’m in an alternative school setting, now is the perfect time for me to get my grades up, I can focus, small classes, the teacher is giving me attention, the teachers are teaching, I can get my grades up.” From David’s point of view, he sees that the students believe the alternative school setting is an opportunity for them to improve academically and possibly behaviorally. However, he also recognized that the students “want to give up” because they had “bad attendance at their home schools” due to skipping classes. So, being in a different setting for the students, he sees, is an opportunity for them to make positive changes.

This perception of the kind of student that attends alternative schools suggests that they are in high need of behavioral and academic care. In order to provide the latter, the perception of the quality of education needs to be adjusted.

**Quality of Education**

The researcher has had a conversation with an alternative school principal who mentioned that some teachers are assigned to alternative schools based on their low-level performance as a teacher. This principal’s name will remain anonymous, because the conversation took place more than ten years before this research began. It was suggested that some teachers, like some students, do not work well in a regular academic school setting, and should therefore be placed at an alternative school. This negative connotation, of course, could be detrimental towards a teachers’ efficacy. The belief of not being “good enough” so that you are sent away because of your progress is not very motivational. This knowledge was shared
with the researcher in confidence, with the assumption that alternative school teachers would not be told that some of their colleagues were not very good teachers at other schools and therefore sent to the alternative school to teach. And, in confidence, the researcher contained this information and simply observed the behaviors, relationships, and overall teaching practices of the teachers while serving as a teacher and an instructional coach. To the researcher’s surprise, other participants have experienced similar conversations.

Carlton, teacher participant #2 stated, “I didn’t know alternative schools were looked at or perceived as a lesser or less than, meaning that the instructors weren’t up to par, that the administration wasn’t up to par, that the students were not up to par.” Carlton made this comment based on previous conversations that he’s had with others, and not based on his own conclusions. Joyce recalled a student quoting her parent stating, “All the work you do here at the alternative school doesn’t count.” Vivviana remembered students saying, “Oh, I don’t have to do anything. It’s just an alternative school. All my grades here don’t count.” Similarly, David said, “And when they come here to Grey-Sloan High School, the first thing that they anticipate is that this is going to be nothing like their academics that they received at their homeschool.” Free (2017) referred to the curriculum as being watered down, but the alternative school teachers are trying to prove to others that it is not true. “A lot of them are surprised to find that the teachers in an alternative setting are more serious academically than a lot of their homeschool teachers” David continued. Understanding the importance of stakeholder support, Joyce said:

I think you have to have buy-in and support of the parent. I think you have to let the parent know that this is an alternative school, but we’re serious and this counts. The teachers are real. The lessons are real. And it’s going to follow the kid wherever they go afterwards.

Having support from the parents is one key way of assuring that teachers and students are both held to the highest expectations—ensuring the best quality of education.
From a different perspective, Vivviana questioned the quality of education presented by teachers at the home school of the students. She said, “I might be a great teacher and the students may be learning from me, but when they go back to their home schools, are those teachers just as effective?” This statement was not taken to suggest that there is a lack of educational rigor at regular public schools. It however, does remind every stakeholder that concern of the quality of work and instructional opportunities must be considered at every educational institution, and not just questioned at alternative schools. Each institution should be responsible for insuring that they are fulfilling their purposes as a recognized establishment for learning. So, what is the purpose for an alternative school?

**Understanding the Purpose**

FTE stands for Full-Time Equivalent and each public school receives FTE funds based on the number of students that they have enrolled and present (Leon County Schools, 2018). Schools receive these funds based on the students that they have had on their rosters for the two FTE accountability points during the school year. This means, if a school has students on their roster for the two FTE counts, which are in October and then in February, then they will receive funds for that student, regardless of where the student is placed during state-wide testing season (after the FTE counts). With this being said, some alternative school educators believe that more students are sent to alternative schools after the second FTE count, but before the state-wide testing season, so that the home schools can receive funds for that student and then focus on having smoother testing experiences. This belief causes some teachers to question the purpose of alternative schools. Amber believes:

if the purpose is to help alleviate problems [at other schools], to help improve testing scores of the children’s home school, then yes, we are doing our purpose. But if the purpose of an alternative school is to help the child improve both academically and behaviorally, then I feel we’ve fallen short.
And while Amber’s face was a sight of honesty and disbelief, it was evident that she was sincere in her concern for being clear about the goals of the teachers and students. More optimistically, David said:

Hopefully, our goal in an alternative school setting would be for that student to learn from their mistakes, go back to their homescool and become a better overall student academically, behaviorally, and so they can be successful in their high school career.

However, other participants feel that what is taking place at the alternative school is not as good as it could be, when it comes to helping students with their behavioral progress. The current state of the alternative school, in Carlton’s opinion, is not “very effective.” He believes that:

if you came here because of some type of infraction with your behavior, that needs to be modified through this [alternative school] process. This experience should develop them in that area. That’s number one. And I don’t feel like we’re doing that.

Carlton maintained an optimistic disposition, but it was also clear that he was waiting for someone to make the school do more. In agreeance, Jack, who is teacher participant #5, also believes that:

if your goal is to warehouse kids away from the comprehensive schools until they get through their testing period, then you’re being very effective. But if you’re trying to change the behavior to make the kid do right, we ain’t doing that.

Jack appeared to be the participant who enjoyed being candid, sarcastic, and informative, all as a part of his personality to show his dedication towards his craft. In his example of the school being effective because the school serves as a “warehouse” for the kids, it also sounded like his cry for help for something else to be done about the current state of the alternative school. Billy’s response confirmed the researcher’s interpretation of Jack’s analogy of warehousing students
near testing time. Billy said that around testing time it gets “a little rowdy” because “that’s when we get full.” So, it appears as though traditional schools have formed a habit of transferring students to the alternative school when it is time for the students to test, so that the students’ potentially low scores or disruptive behaviors will not impact their school climate or setting.

Several of the participants recall students returning to the alternative school on more than one occasion, which allows them to question the overall effectiveness of its purpose. Joyce mentioned that she has “seen some students come a second time” during her first year at the school. Jack stated that the school is a “revolving door” and that he has seen one student “four years in a row” but the school only served 3 grade levels, suggesting that this student has been retained for more than 2 years. Vivviana thinks that “40% of the students benefit from alternative schools” whereas for other students, “it just doesn’t work for them.” In regard to the purpose of alternative schools, Amber said:

it’s not effective (behavior wise) because they end up coming back. It’s a cycle. I don’t think that they learn what they’re supposed to learn here in regard to reforming their behavior or making lifestyle changes. We kind of, in my opinion, we babysit them for 45 to 180 days. And then we send them back with the same behaviors. There’s nothing here that helps them change their mind frame or change their behavior.

Amber almost mimicked what Jack had said during his interview. And the fact that they work at two separate schools informed the researcher that both of the alternative schools in this study could benefit from more intentional behaviors and expectations. Johnny, teacher participant #10, similarly stated that:

if you’re a student that has a couple problems or you’re struggling in certain areas and then you have 30 or 40 more students that’s struggling in that same area, there’s no way of you actually changing because you’re surrounded by the same people.
These perceptions as viewed by these teachers are valid. But it just so happens that other participants see the purpose of alternative schools in a completely different light. According to David, he claims that “alternative schools are very effective.” He focused on its purpose as being a place for students to go instead of them being home while parents are at work and “nine times out of ten, they’re going to look for something negative to do…” if there were no alternative schools to attend. Hart and Mueller (2013) supports David’s belief because they also mentioned that students are likely to cause trouble in the neighborhood if they are not in school. David further explained that “in an alternative setting, they’re going to be in a positive environment…[with] positive role models.” His serious demeanor informed the researcher that he has defended his school before, probably against others who have focused solely on the negative aspects of the building.

Madelyn, teacher participant #9, also believes that alternative schools are effective. She thinks that “the purpose of an alternative school is to work with kids to help them understand how to behave in the regular classroom. And I think the alternative school is very good in that regard.” Supporting the positive ideals of an alternative school, Herman said:

a lot of these kids can’t operate in a big setting. The alternative education setting gives these children a chance to come into a smaller classroom with attention given to just them and their problems one-on-one with a teacher, and then being able to adjust and work on their behavior problems as well as their academic concerns is one of the pluses of coming to alternative education.

Madelyn and Herman both touched on the ideas of helping students, and understanding the situations that might cause them to be disengaged. These participants did not express that the students should be excused from their behaviors, but it should be understood in order to further support them. Herman continued to suggest that:

we have behavior problems that may be because of where they [the students] come from, their home life. Or they may have medical issues that contribute to some of the things
that they’re doing in the classroom that causes problems for them, behavior-wise. So, in a perfect setting, an alternative school would have those components that will be able to address the needs of each of these children.

Unfortunately, as Herman further stated, alternative schools are not always financially supported to accomplish these tasks. It appears that when one dilemma serves as a flaw within the educational system, other areas are relied on more to alleviate those stressors. For example, a lack of funding (financial support) would mean a need for more enhanced human resources (educator preparation). So, when students do not receive the proper counseling they need for their behavior, teachers are then required to be their counselor as well.

**Educator Preparation**

Other common comments that the participants shared was the lack of professional development or training received before they taught at the alternative school. There is value in feeling prepared to complete a job well, and when people feel unprepared, it further adds on to other dilemmas, such as lack of financial support, to create a more difficult work environment. Even though each participant admitted to not having received formal training for an alternative school setting, each teacher expressed optimism, enthusiasm, and appreciation for any trainings received before or after their alternative school teaching experiences. It was still evident, however, that some of the participants wanted to be better prepared. Carlton said, “I think the onboarding process with the school board or the district is poor…you’re throwing people in the fire who aren’t ready.” Amber added, “In my early years of teaching we didn’t even have the necessary books that we needed to teach our curriculum and our students.” She went on to say, “If this is an alternative school, and we’re living in our purpose of rehabilitating the student, I feel we should get extra supplies and not less.” Carlton continued by adding:

We talk about differentiated instruction. I look at those things and say, ‘Well, let’s model that for the teachers.’ The students need DI, I need DI. You can’t develop me
professionally like you would develop another professional [so training should be] very specific to the needs of the professional.

Although these two participants stress that training is needed, Amber concluded by saying, “there is no training that the district currently offers that can prepare you for that [alternative school experience].”

Johnny shared that meetings were held that allow teachers to discuss “increasing Lexile scores” and to ensure that “data is sufficient” to meet the needs of the district. Although this training is important, it is worthy to note that this training Johnny discussed is offered to all teachers within the district. It is not specifically geared to the alternative school student. Johnny did conclude by saying that it has helped him to “feel a little bit more better in the classroom and push me to be more consistent and make sure I reach my kids in a different way.” This shows how teachers must take learning opportunities that are available to them, and utilize the strategies as it best supports their students.

When reflecting on his preparation as an educator at an alternative school, Herman described the administrative team as providing him with a “wonderful opportunity” to help solve some of his “problems in transitioning here.” He continued by saying:

They’ve helped me to identify some of the things that I was lacking and put the steps in place to help me improve, like providing me with a reading coach who would come in and help with some of my teaching strategies and things of that nature.

Herman’s example shows his appreciation for the administrative team helping him after he arrived at the alternative school. This means that more support should be available for teachers before they begin teaching at alternative schools, so that their students can receive the most optimal learning experiences.
Jack shared that he was prepared through the College of Education program at his university, whereas “most teachers here did not.” So, his suggestion was that alternative school teachers just need to learn how to teach. He said, “If your job is to teach then you’re going to deal with ‘come what may’ in the class whether you’re at an alternative school or a [traditional] school.” He doesn’t think that formal training is needed specifically for alternative school teachers, but he does believe that “behavioral strategies and learning strategies” is all a teacher needs. Billy’s response was the opposite, because he thinks that he should have “taken a class about teaching in alternative schools” because it took him “about a year and a half to get on track” after he began teaching in the alternative school setting.

Joyce believes that it would be beneficial for new teachers to alternative schools should “view a senior teacher who’s already working at an alternative school just to actually get to see the actual classroom” before teaching in the setting. She recommends three to four days to observe multiple teachers before the teacher begins teaching at the school. Herman, on the other hand, chuckled at the idea of formal training, stating that “you really can’t prepare yourself for what alternative education is going to show you.” He believes that on-the-job training would be most effective. He finished by saying that general formal training would be useful, but “it will never prepare you for the day-to-day activities of these types of kids.”

Madelyn thinks that Exceptional Student Education (ESE) training is best needed for teachers at alternative schools because they have a lot of ESE students. She explained that the training her college gave her in the area of ESE was “just bare bones” and if one of her students had “ADHD” or anger management, her college course did not “go into detail as to how to deal with that behavior.” Johnny believes that teachers need to have formal training before teaching at an alternative school, but his concern was of the possibility that the training may be unpaid if
teachers weren’t currently teaching during the time of the training. He refers to being trained before working “a blessing,” but the potential sacrifice of not being paid for the training, “a curse.” Overall, these educators have expressed their desires to be better prepared before working with the students, while others stressed that academic and behavioral strategies are the only pre-requisites needed, and that on-the-job training would suffice.

**Challenges and Rewards**

Very optimistically, the participants mentioned that working in an alternative school had both challenges and rewards, and each teacher said it with a smile on their face. This allowed the researcher to perceive that when faced with difficult situations, their ability to show fortitude allowed them to smile and focus on the rewards in addition to the challenges. Vivviana said, “you will change as a teacher to be whatever the students need to facilitate their learning,” indicating that teachers cannot allow students to change just because they are told to change, but that teachers have to be flexible in order to meet the individual needs of the students.

Johnny made an interesting statement by saying, “the blessing is that you do not have a lot of students in the classroom, so it gives you time to work individually with those students.” He later stated:

> the curse is that you have a lot of behavioral issues, which holds you back from teaching to your best potential. [As well.] you could get very lazy because you are only used to one type of demographic of students.

As the literature has already suggested, alternative school students are usually from urban schools. So, when Johnny attests to working with “one type of demographic of students,” he is also stressing the academic deficiencies that urban and alternative school students face.

Madelyn said that her challenge with the alternative school setting is that “some days it’s extremely stressful because the kids sort of bounce off the walls and they have very little
motivation to succeed.” As she continued to talk, she then shared that other days, she would be so surprised by a student’s good behavior, she would wonder, “why are they here?” And, even though she goes home tired, she said that “most days I enjoy it very much” and if there’s a student that is difficult to handle, she won’t have to worry about them for more than 45 days.

Herman said, “When you work at an alternative school, if the administrative team is not on point, the inmates [laughter] would take over the asylum, as they say.” This comment, if shared in a public arena, could be taken very offensively, as people can be very sensitive about the needs of the mentally ill. Herman’s choice of metaphor was received as being humorous, because understanding the stressful environments that alternative school teachers face, one has to smile from time to time. And this metaphor, similar to metaphors of the alternative schools being prisons, all paint the picture of a population that has been discarded because of their behavior, and they have been sent to another facility that should be capable of handling and working with the associated behaviors. David believes that “alternative schools are very effective” because the students “are going to be in a positive environment…with positive role models…” It is through the lenses of these participants that stakeholders should ensure that the “positive role models” that David has referred to are all supported.

**Teacher Participant Responses to Research Question**

The following figure, Figure 6, provides a layout of the teacher participants’ responses to the interview questions and the researcher’s synthesis of the detailed conversations. When the teachers perceived their principals as having behaviors aligned with transformational leadership, they were then able to identify behaviors aligned with being an instructional leader and a team player. When the teachers discussed the instructional leadership of their past and/or current principals, they provided examples of the gradual release process, principals modeling
expectations, providing feedback, and providing autonomy. When describing principals serving as team leaders, the teachers used terms such as being visible, having an open-door policy, and being supportive. Figure 6 will capture those ideas to serve as a visual aid of the teachers’ responses. Within this analysis, being an instructional leader and a team player are all due to the principals behaving as transformational leaders.
Figure 6: Teacher Participant Responses to Research Question

**Principals perceived as Transformational Leaders**

**Principals as Instructional Leaders**
- Modeling Expectations
- Providing Autonomy
- Providing Feedback

**Principals as Team Players**
- Having an Open-Door Policy
- Being Visible
- Being Supportive & Motivational

**How Teachers’ Perceptions impact Self-Efficacy**
- Going Above & Beyond
- Creating a Family Environment
- Being a Loving Teacher
Principals as Instructional Leaders

The Gradual Release Process is a common term used in the educational field, as a strategy to help teachers ensure that they have fully taught to meet the needs of their students. This process has three major components, the “I Do,” the “We Do,” and the “You Do.” Pearson and Gallagher (1983) were cited suggesting that the thinking and learning process should gradually shift from the modeling of the instructor, to the “independent practice and application by the learner” (Frey and Fisher, 2007, p. 120). The concept of this process is that the teacher models the expectations to the students, practices the expectations with the students, and then watches the students perform the expectations independently to show individual understanding and growth. The interview participants have described their principals in some fashion of behaving like a true teacher or instructional leader. Whether the principal has modeled the expectations, provided feedback for growth, or provided autonomy to watch the expectations performed independently, the principals were described as being a teacher to the teachers.

A few of the teacher participants expressed difficulty in implementing the Gradual Release strategy for their students; however, they each also appreciated the one-on-one support from the principal, instructional coach, and other resources to ensure that they could reach their students. Herman shared his experience of learning, as a teacher, how to teach his students more effectively:

I had a concern about…what we do in the classroom, it’s a new strategy. To me, it was new. It’s called the gradual release strategy, and I was having some problems with it because, in the past, I’ve always been a type of teacher that lectured to the kids but in a way that they [could understand]. It was open communication about whatever lesson I was trying to teach them.

Herman then continued by saying:

Now, when I started back in the classroom here at Reddington Middle School, they had just implemented a new thing called a gradual release strategy where I had to learn to
give back to the kids…and give them an opportunity to show me what they know. I was having some problems with that, and he brought in a phenomenal reading coach who came in, and she talked to me about some of the concerns that I had with the program and the strategy and then went about to demonstrate the best way to implement the gradual release strategy, but [by] using some of my better qualities in what I used to do and mesh them together and then come up with a plan that would address the gradual release and then satisfy the administrative team as well as satisfy me and make me feel more comfortable in the classroom with teaching. I appreciate him for that, and I appreciate the coach who took the time out with a struggling teacher and saw enough in me to continue to work with me to help me improve myself.

His candor about his own growth as a teacher was appreciated, because he was able to see that the principal provided other means to help him, and not just provide one solution to his issue. When Herman thought of himself as a student, and considered the multiple resources provided to him as support, it was easier for him to translate this into his own classroom, and in turn, provide multiple resources for his students. Similarly, Madelyn provided an example that was almost identical to Herman’s. She said:

Gradual release. Thank you [laughter]. I couldn’t think of the name of it. I wasn’t understanding it. I was taught in the days of Mary Shunter, so this was not anything that I have been taught in my training. And when this became the way to teach, it was difficult for me to really understand how to implement it, and I know that it is part of our PLCs. He had us watching videos that demonstrated it. He talked to us about it. He talked to us about how to implement it. And that was part of the growth for me, because under [a former principal], I didn’t understand it. But with Principal Keen, he worked one-on-one with me to help me understand. [The reading coach] worked with me on it. We discussed it in the PLC, and it helped me put it all together. It suddenly was like, “Oh, okay,” but it took me a while for it to click.

Madeline admitted to struggling with the teaching practice, but, she was appreciative of the resources that the principal used to ensure that she was more comfortable with the expectations. And just how she was taught with the use of individualized conversations, small group discussions, modeling, feeding, visual aids, and support, she understood how to apply those same practices to her students in the classroom.
The Gradual Release Model, although identified as a great teaching strategy for instructors to use in the classroom, has also served as a method that principals can use to better support their teachers. The following three sections of *Modeling Expectation*, *Providing Feedback*, and *Providing Autonomy* are examples of instructional leadership, in that principals can show the teachers what to do (model), help them practice it (with feedback), and then watch them do it independently (with autonomy).

**Modeling Expectations**

The first component of the Gradual Release process is referred to as the “I Do.” This means that the teacher or facilitator will model the expectation that is expected of the students. This teaching strategy is found to be successful with the participants of this study, as the principals who are seen modeling expectations are revered in high regard. David expressed, “I think it’s important for a principal to lead by example, and our principal does exactly that.”

Billy reminisced about his second or third year teaching and remembered how his principal aided him with working with a group of students different from his racial background. He stated:

> the assistant principal really taught me how to manage a class. Because I had 30 students in my class and I had no idea what I was doing. It was my second or third year teaching, overall. And she came in and showed me how to do it and I do it the same way, to this day, as she showed me.

In Billy’s previous statement, he was describing a traditional urban school classroom, and not an alternative school. But he also mentioned that he caters his classroom management “the same way” as before. This could be because the populations are similar. This could also be because Billy, like the other participants, had not been formally instructed on behavioral and instructional methods for alternative school students. Either way, his comment was shared with joy and enthusiasm, because it was evident that he was happy with his growth as a teacher. Billy also discussed one of the goals that the principal had set forth for the school. He said:
Well, at the beginning of last year we had a goal to write less referrals and we exceeded our goals by the month of April…I always like to meet goals that the principal sets because if it makes them happy then he’s happy for us.

Billy’s comment about meeting and exceeding goals serve as another example of why all goals, expectations, visions, and missions should be made clear to both students and adults. It is apparent that when goals are modeled, and made to be achievable, and they are accomplished, it supports the positive efficaciousness of those involved. When thinking about her principal, Vivviana added:

He also models respectful behavior himself, so he’s always respectful to parents, and teachers, and students. And I will say that’s very—that’s what I like most about Principal Webber. He’s always transparent, and he’s flexible, and he works with people, and he models the behavior he wants his teachers to have towards the parents and students.

Vivviana’s views about Principal Webber’s modeling of expectations was also expressed by Amber when she noted how professionally he behaves with parents, teachers, and students during conferences.

Now, although setting goals and modeling expectations are positive characteristics of a transformational leader, Johnny said, “When there’s no inspection, there’s no expectation. So always inspect. Inspect so that your expectations are met.” This serves as a reminder to ensure that the positive goals that have been set are also being accomplished.

Providing Feedback

Providing feedback not only shows teachers the level of instructional knowledge that one has, but it also shows the level of time, effort, and care that was taken to provide growth and support for a fellow professional. The participants have expressed that they appreciate receiving feedback. David said that:

The administration—the principal, and the vice principal, they have helped me develop my strength of becoming a better educator by giving me positive feedback, not only
positive feedback but negative feedback. The good thing about my principal is if he notices that I’m deficient in a certain area, he’ll let you know.

Feedback is important to David, just as it is to the other participants. Vivviana followed by saying that the principal would “give me some suggestions of what I can do.” Jack reminisced and enjoyed talking about one of his favorite principals, who also taught him a lot, especially during his years as a new teacher. Jack said:

…one of the first things he told me as a new teacher, ‘You cannot teach from a textbook five days a week. You need to close that book, bring in supplemental materials, expose these kids to the outside world.’ And I think that was the best advice that I’ve ever gotten as a teacher and I continue to do it.

While Jack was vividly reminiscing about his role model, he chuckled and admitted to continuing his teaching practices because he found them to be extremely effective, especially with the types of students that he was catering to.

Joyce remembered when her principal “came in during an informal observation, and one of the things he suggested to me afterwards was, in addition to verbally giving students a directive on a lesson, to give it to them in many, many, many different ways…” Joyce’s experiences about feedback sounded closely tied to Jack’s. They were both told to think outside of the box when it comes to teaching—and to not just teach from a textbook. Johnny appreciated the principal for “pointing out those key things” that he’s good at. Not all of the feedback examples were related to the teachers’ instructional practices. With Johnny, the principal had pointed out his ability to make connections and build relationships with the students as well.

When discussing transparency, Herman reflected and said, “He’s always given accolades to successes that are here at the school and he’s also told us about concerns that he’s had at the school.” When goals and expectations are created, feedback ensures that necessary adjustments are made in order to have the expectations met and the goals accomplished.
Providing Autonomy

Although not directly mentioned, the researcher noticed that teachers were drawn towards principals who provided a certain level of autonomy instead of being a micromanager. Joyce believes that:

If I’m wrong, correct me, but otherwise, let me come in and be a professional, do what I’ve been trained to do, do what I’ve done for all these number of years, and I think when our principal sees that we’re doing what is required, then he just kind of steps back and lets us do it.

Now, Joyce previously stated that she appreciated the feedback that her principal provided. With her also sharing her need for autonomy shows that there is a delicate balance needed to provide teachers with what they are in need of individually. This includes feedback and a certain level of autonomy. Herman stated that:

He allows you to implement your program into your individual classroom and provides you guidance if needed, and structure, but for the most part he allows you to create the environment in your classroom that’s best suited for you in how to address your students’ needs and concerns. So, that’s positive. He’s not a micromanager, which is very good because you can drive a lot of teachers away by micromanaging, especially at a school like this.

“Especially at a school like this” is the key phrase for alternative school leaders to understand that while teaching and instructional leadership is necessary, trust and faith are also required to allow the professionals the creative freedom to do their jobs well.

And, Carlton believes that “the autonomy that I have as a teacher” is viewed as respect given by the administrative team. When questioned about his level of autonomy, his response of it being provided based on respect showed that he was also required to uphold the respect he was given by continuing to serve his students to the best of his ability. Carlton’s responses were very sincere in his constant desire to do his best, coupled with the hopes of others doing their best, to ensure the very best for the students that he served.
Impact on Transformational Leadership

When principals show teachers that they are academically competent to share pedagogical strategies through andragogical methods, it assuages any fears of educators that they are being led by an incompetent person. As a component of transformational leadership, principals are practicing “intellectual stimulation” when they serve as instructional leaders.

Principals as Team Players

Team players bring a sense of motivation and confidence to other members, indicating that together, everyone achieves more. When reflecting on principals as team players, Herman said, “it’s encouraging that he takes the time out to identify things that will help you become more successful in education, period.” Herman also said, “[The principal’s encouragement] helped me out a lot and also boosted my self-esteem and my confidence in teaching in the classroom.” This section will describe principals being team players as they are visible amongst the staff, they have an open-door policy to make it convenient to listen to the teachers, and supportive, providing the motivation that teachers need to keep pushing forward.

Being Visible

The bald eagle, the American flag, and a picture of soldiers in their military uniforms all serve as symbols. Like many additional symbols that represent signs of strength and power, a principal who is visible amongst the staff serves as a symbol to those who are in the school. The teachers found that a visible principal not only physically showed support, but was also mentally supportive when working at an alternative school.

Billy said:

The principal here at this current school, I have lots of respect for because he’ll get down and dirty with the kids just like anybody else will, where at my comprehensive school previously, the principal was rarely in attendance for anything.
He also said that “he doesn’t take a lot of days off… That builds respect because it shows me that he wants to be here, and he wants to be involved.” Billy began to use hand motions to describe the principal’s demeanor when working with teachers in order to support the students. It was clear that Billy’s excitement about the principal’s visibility was one of the reasons why he holds so much respect for him.

Herman likes the fact that his principal is “very visible around the campus.” He also said that:

A lot of principals that you’ll see, you’ll probably never see because they’re in their office a lot and they don’t walk around the campus to see some of the problems. But our principal here is visible. He’s very hands-on with the students. And he is accessible to the teachers.

While reflecting on a former principal at that alternative school, Madelyn said:

Mr. Kingsman, his way of working with the kids just—I loved watching him because he loved the kids. They knew he loved them and he was very open about it. But on the same token, he was very disciplined with the kids, and if a child got into a fight, for example, he was there. He was separating. They were up against the wall and he was in their face.

Amber said, “I feel that just his presence alone displays a sense of power and confidence.” Amber later said that “Power can be unspoken. And if I develop that type of relationship and rapport with my students, I can achieve that in my classroom.” Her ideal of unspoken power insinuates that a person does not have to speak and say that they are powerful. They don’t have to remind you of their position or their title. Their presence alone, their visibility, shows that they are not afraid to approach situations and handle them as needed.

Likewise, Billy had similar thoughts about his principal. He said:

He’s not a big chauvinistic kind of guy. He doesn’t show his power unless he really, really has to…to a student. And as far as confidence goes, you can see him walk around the school and he’s confident. And that’s good. But he doesn’t flaunt it.
Amber and Billy, although under the leadership of two different principals, have both shown a fondness to leaders who lead by example—modeling for teachers how to remain professional, and not just telling them.

**Having Open-Door Policies**

“Most people do not listen with the intent to understand; they listen with the intent to reply” (Covey, 2004). The teachers admired their principals’ ability to have an open-door policy. The teachers felt comfortable in approaching their principals if they had anything that they wanted to share, because they feel as though the principals will listen to understand, and not just to wait and reply. Vivviana believes that her principal is:

open to listening to my suggestions. He always has an open-door policy. Whenever you need to talk to him about something, he’s very transparent. He allows me to text him on his cell phone if I need to. He’s very much open to being there for his faculty and staff—so, I appreciate that.

Vivviana also stated that “when you’re a good listener, that shows you respect the other person.”

Herman said that his principal “has a very good open-door policy where you can go in and talk with him about any concerns that you may have, or any problems that you have, or even any successes that you may have. He doesn’t shun.” After a conversation about teaching preferences, Joyce said:

He listened to me. He tries to meet the needs of the staff. Because in any work situation, not just education, if you are doing what you like to do chances are you’re going to be better at it, the students are going to benefit more as a result of it.

Vivviana said:

Some places where you work, some teachers keep their mouths shut because they feel like if they say the wrong thing or say something that offends the powers-that-be, they feel like ‘Oh, they’re going to try to fire me.’ In some cases, I hate to say it, but it could happen.
When providing advice for other school leaders, Madelyn said, “Be open. Be available. Be supportive. So that a teacher feels like they can come to you for help.”

Reflecting on his current principal, Herman said, “He’s always asking for your opinion on different policies and procedures here in the school.” Herman then said:

He allows input. He allows us the opportunity to discuss any major changes as a faculty and staff, and how it would affect our classroom, how it would affect individual classrooms, how it would affect the entire school as a whole.

He continued by saying, “That allowed us to feel a part of the decision-making process as just regular teachers. So, when the leader asked me for my opinion, that meant a whole lot to me.”

Joyce said:

Our principal has always had an open door. If you have a question, if you have a concern, if you have a suggestion, you could go in. And the principal is willing to listen. Same thing with our assistant principal. All of our administrative staff. Such an open-door policy for any questions at all. If something was urgent, I knew that I could just walk right in. If something was not urgent, I’d shoot somebody an email and say “Hey, when you have time, I’d like to talk about this.” But never, never, never has anybody ever said, “I’m busy, I can’t do it.”

She finished by saying, “And even when I go, I never felt like ‘that’s a crazy question’, ‘why are you bothering me?’ ‘why are you wasting my time?’ People were always receptive and helping.”

Having an open-door policy not only makes teachers feel important, as though their voices can be heard, but it gives them an opportunity to contribute to the overall success of the school.

**Being Supportive and Motivational**

Principals were also recognized for being transformational in their efforts of also being supportive and motivational. When referring to Principal Webber, Vivviana said:

he says that we are the best faculty and staff. Sometimes he says that over the intercom during the morning announcements. And that motivates us. It gives us a positive mindset. And also, it lets us know that he knows that we’re doing the best that we can do. And he always pumps us up to even do better and better every day.
Her loyalty to the school and to the principal was admired, because she felt appreciated and
recognized for her efforts as a teacher. She continued by stating:

there’s so much going on and so much a teacher has to do. Our job goes beyond seven
hours… And as long as we know that the principals and intervention team is going to
back us up and support us and give us feedback on it, carry it out, then it’s worth my time
and effort to do it.

After she used the phrase, “worth my time and effort to do it,” she later explained that if others at
the school are able to follow-up with the intense paperwork and other documentation that
teachers are required to do, then she does not mind doing it. However, if the work that she is
asked to do does not have any follow-up and goes ignored, then she won’t waste her time and
effort doing it.

A similar message was provided by David, when he wanted to stress the importance of
showing support and being motivational towards teachers. When providing advice for other
school leaders, David said:

Make sure you let the teachers, the faculty, and staff know that you actually care about
them. With our principal, he cares about the students, not only the students, but the
faculty and staff. So that’s a positive. Because your environment can be toxic if you feel
that the administration [team] doesn’t care about you.

Madelyn felt supported when she experienced issues with her classroom management.
While reflecting on a former principal, she said that she felt supported “because I knew that he
was behind me. And I knew that he cared about the kids, and it wasn’t just a pretend sort of
thing.” Her principal’s love for the kids and support for her allowed him to discipline when
needed, and she appreciated that.

Along the lines of discipline, Vivianna provided an example when she needed support
with her classroom management. She said:
“Principal Webber, I need a walkie.” I told him I needed the walkie because you have some problematic students that’s out of your control as far as classroom management. And so, with no questions asked, he just said, “Here. Here’s your walkie.” So, I had got my walkie, and then when I needed security, I would put it on blast, “Security.” But my whole point is, he didn’t offer that to me. I asked him, and then he gave it to me without any problems.

Herman said, “You’ve got to have a leader that’s willing to help you buy into what [they want] you to do and feel good about doing things like that.” This defines the ideals of being a transformational leader…having the ability to aspire people to move in the direction that is best for the team and the organization.

**Impact on Transformational Leadership**

Being a team player has a strong impact on also being a transformational leader. Transformational leaders must be able to not only show their followers that they are capable and knowledgeable about leading, but they must also be able to relate and show humility as a servant leader. Bass and Avolio (1994), indicated that transformational leaders are able to push their followers in such a special way that the followers never knew that they were able to reach such new heights (Stump, et al., 2016). Herman said:

Be very patient with your staff and changes that you make and be open and reclusive about anything that you do that may change the climate of the school. Involve everyone. Make everyone a stakeholder in the school by investing in them. And make sure that they have what they need and identify any problems or concerns they may have. Also, recognize the strengths that they have, encourage them, make them feel part of the building itself and [the teachers] will buy into the program that you want to implement as the leader. You’ll be more successful.

This level of motivation, support, and encouragement shows that teachers appreciate being a part of a team…a team being led by a person who can transform it to achieve new goals.
How Teachers’ Perceptions impact Teachers’ Self-Efficacy

When considering how people understand the concept of perceptions, Eisner (1991) says that “it is through the perception of qualities—not only those we can see, but those we experience through any of our senses—that our consciousness comes into being” (p. 1). Translated, this means that a person’s experiences play a factor in determining the quality of something that has not been experienced. For example, a teacher who lacks trust in a principal, and has experienced negative situations, might be distrustful of the next principal, until the new principal has proven otherwise. Likewise, a person who has encountered positive principals may give the next principal an opportunity to show that they are also positive, instead of automatically assuming that the principal is negative. Perceptions are important because as we assign value to them (Eisner, 1991), we subsequently determine what our next steps are going to be. The teachers that participated in the interviews were not given the definition of “transformational leadership,” but, when they thought that their principals were exhibiting the behaviors as described of a transformational leader, their efficacy remained the same. Their conversational voice was even, and stress was not detected. However, when they reminisced on situations that appeared to be unfair and unsupportive, their demeanor changed for the worse. Even if the principals in their negative examples had positive intentions, the teachers still perceived them as being negative, and that caused the level of efficacy for the teachers to drop significantly.

In this section, a discussion is provided of how the teachers rated their level of self-efficacy, how they had a desire to go above and beyond because of how they perceived their principals’ leadership behaviors, and how they were able to create a family environment, being more loving as teachers, all motivated based on their perceptions.
Self-Rated Evaluations

When asked, the participants had an opportunity to share their own thoughts about their personal self-efficacy. To be clear and consistent, the researcher read the definition of self-efficacy to the participants, so that each person could hear the same terminology and receive the same explanation of its meaning. The definition used was, “your belief in your ability to make positive changes with the student in your classroom” which were the words of the researcher as described by Nir et al, (2006). Towards the end of each interview, the researcher asked the participants to rate their own level of efficacy, based on a Likert-type scale of 1-10. A rating of one would indicate that the teacher has low levels of self-efficacy, and the rating of ten would indicate that the teacher has high levels of self-efficacy. This type of rating asks participants to respond “in terms of the extent to which they agree with [the item]” (McLeod, 2008, par 2). And, although the verbal and numerical responses that the participants provided could have been used to calculate statistically, it was the goal of the researcher to allow the question to prompt their thinking. With the exception of one teacher, who only gave a numerical response, the other teachers thought about the number they selected, and continued to share examples about why they selected the number. It was the stories of why that intrigued the researcher, and not the number provided alone. The participants’ responses varied, but were similar in that they all ranged from an 8 to a 10, on a scale of 1-10. And, if the participants had a negative relationship with the principal at the time, then the self-ratings were lowered. Some of the participants provided two ratings, one to suggest their abilities under the leadership of prior principals and then one to suggest their abilities under the leadership of their current principal.

Carlton rated himself by stating, “I don’t want to seem overly confident, but I believe it’s a 10.” He later explained that he chooses to serve as a teacher in the alternative environment
because he believes that he can have “a positive impact on these students…on this community.”

While reflecting on his ability to make positive changes he also addressed the importance of having leadership support. He stated:

the leadership has an effect on how well I do that or the fluidity of how I do it because if you’re met with a whole bunch of resistance from leadership—the things that I want to do and if I had that type of relationship with leadership, it would make it harder to do this. And who’s to say if you’re met with so much resistance to educate these kids that you have the fortitude to continue to fight not only the kids, but the administration. I don’t have the issue. All I’m doing is fighting with students. That’s the everyday daily challenge. Okay, motivating, educating, getting through, helping, teaching, that becomes a challenge within itself and I’m fortunate enough to be in a position where I’m not fighting administration, too. I’m never having a level of anxiety about leadership.

Vivviana rated her level of self-efficacy as an 8. She provided this rating because she always received “positive feedback” about how she is “impacting the students’ academic performance” and their test scores. Due to the academic gains that her students have accomplished, she said, “I know the work I’m doing with the students is paying off, and I get a lot of feedback from the principals about that.” She also humbly stated:

Not [to] toot my own horn. I give God the glory for it. At least they do give me positive feedback, and they see what I’m doing, and so they support me. And whenever I have a tough situation in the classroom, a student wants to distract other students from learning in my learning environment, they’ll handle the situation themselves. So, I have their support 100%.

Feeling the support of her administrators allowed Vivviana to believe that she has their support. It is this belief that serves as one example about why Vivviana believes that her self-efficacy is an 8.

Jack, on the other hand, had a different story to tell. He recalled “a very abrasive relationship” that he had with a prior principal. He mentioned that, “there was some words. To be quite honest with you, I’m surprised I wasn’t fired, and I was right on the edge of quitting.” At this point in his career, he labeled his level of efficacy as a two. Jack believes that a teacher’s
efficacy depends on the principals, because the principals are “going to bring their pet peeves, which is going to affect how they feel about how you do what you do.” The shift for Jack came when he mentioned his current principal. He said:

Principal to principal to principal, every principal is coming with them, bringing with them, their pet peeves. And while some pet peeves pretty much amount to micromanagement, this is not the case here, what we have now. I feel as though I’m given the instructions, I’m given the guidelines, and I’m cut loose to follow them.

Jack’s description of his principal shows how he is provided with clear expectations, and the autonomy to fulfill the expectations, which led his new evaluation of his self-efficacy to rate as a 10. But, when Jack was asked to describe his definition of being at a rating of a 10, he said it is because he is “quite capable.” In this response, he focused more on his ability to reach the students. He said that “it always comes down to how [the] kid will receive what it is I’m trying to do.” He continued by stating that he is “always willing to help a kid” and he even stressed that his goal is to “help you to succeed” and “not here to hurt you.” This response informs the research by indicating that teachers with low efficacy can tie the roots of the efficacy to ineffective leadership; however, when efficacy is high, teachers are able to focus more on student learning.

Joyce rated her level of efficacy as an 8, because she believes that a rating of a 10 “leaves no room for improvement.” This aligns with her belief about education in that it is “constantly evolving.” She believes that educators need to “evolve with it” describing it to be like “a wave in the ocean.” She continues with her simile to suggest that educators should never stop learning and growing. And, if educators do stop, then “that’s when your children or your students aren’t successful because you’re not always making changes.” Her belief in her own ability to support students is tied to the assistance that she has “received from the principal and the administrative
team.” She contributes her efficacy to them by saying, “those are the things that helped me get to why I call myself an 8 based on that. It’s not something that I could have done by myself.”

Herman shared his level of efficacy as being a four when he first started teaching. He did not explain why, but he did share that his current level of efficacy has since increased to an 8. He attributes his growth to:

Based on things I’ve learned since I’ve been here. Based on my “on the job” training and assistance that I’ve gotten from other teachers and from the administrative team—I can now feel confident when I walk into the classroom that everything I say can help a child make positive decisions and become confident in what they’re doing in the classroom.

Madelyn rated her level of efficacy as being an 8 as well. When she reminisced about a former principal, she said, “I would have rated myself a six or a seven where I was. I did learn things from her, [but] there were a lot more negatives than positives.” Madelyn did not directly state why she rated herself an 8, but she followed by saying, “I think I have room for growth. But I think I’m a pretty good teacher.” She ran into a former student years later, and the student was so glad to see Madelyn, and thank her for not “taking it easy on her” in order to prepare her for high school.

Johnny also rated himself as an 8. He admitted, “it definitely takes more effort on my part because that’s what you have to be—consistent.” He continued by saying, “if you’re putting effort in, in January, you have to put that same effort in February, March, and so on…”

David rated himself an 8, mainly because of his love for his teaching subject. He gleaned when he thought about making his lessons connect “to real-world situations” with his students. He admitted that his efficacy would drop if he were asked to teach a different subject, but he continued stating that his current principal used to teach the same subject, so when “he comes in to observe, and I’m teaching a lesson with the class, it quickly, quickly turns into an open conversation.”
Going Above and Beyond

One of the results of principals’ behaviors being more transformational is that teachers felt compelled to work above and beyond their regular call of duty. One teacher admitted that it is a requirement to go above and beyond just by working at an alternative school in general, but most agree that the “above and beyond” attitude is one of care and compassion, because they feel appreciated by their leaders. Herman said, “when you have a good, strong leader you’re willing as a teacher to go above and beyond what your call of duty is…I will go above and beyond.” He then said, “I’ve had the opportunity to grow from a teacher whose confidence level in the classroom was a level four to being the Teacher of the Year.” Finally, Herman believed that, “It has expanded my knowledge as an educator to be able to teach out of the box and to try new things in a way to try to reach them and try to give them the best educational opportunity that I can in the classroom.”

Amber, with the support of her principal, was motivated to go above and beyond her duties as a classroom teacher. Because of her desire to grow and “matriculate throughout the school system and possibly [become] more than a teacher later on,” she decided to focus on additional activities that she could do throughout the school. As she reflected, she said:

I can honestly say that he’s definitely helped me in that arena, whether it be letting me sit in on various new teacher interviews or just allowing me to sit in on different conferences that would allow me that extra foresight into seeing what it actually takes. [He has helped me become a better teacher because] seeing how they interview prospective teachers kind of was a reflection moment for myself. “Do I do this in the classroom?” “Am I making sure that I’m doing all the things that they are looking for in new prospective teachers?”

Amber’s reflection and candidness showed her aspirations to go above and beyond the call of duty. And her actions were not seen as only wanting to be promoted, but her actions of going above and beyond were shown as she reflected on how she treats her students.
David shared a similar encounter, describing how the entire faculty and staff decided to go above and beyond their duties as educators. He shared the frustrations of the administrators and teachers, because so many students were missing many days of school. Due to this high level of truancy, they decided to look “at different ways to encourage and come up with ideas to encourage students to attend school.” He said:

I remember one specific time that the entire faculty and staff came together, and we were trying to figure out ways to encourage students to get to class [and] on time. And one of the things that they came up with was the Grey-Sloan Bucks, alternative school bucks. That’s where they received little coupons—if they come to school on time for, let’s say, two weeks in a row. They received these little coupons where they can receive little snacks, little chips, and so forth.

The initiative that was shown by the faculty and staff of this alternative school attests to the initiative taken by a group of people when they decide to work together. In this case, working together is an indicator of them going above and beyond their regular teaching duties.

Joyce’s method of going above and beyond her teaching duties was described when she provided the details of how she plans her lessons. The district provides lesson plans for teachers of core academic areas, such as Language Arts, Science, Social Studies, and Math. However, Joyce recognized that she would have to do more in order to best benefit the needs of her students. She said:

You can make your lesson plans accordingly because you expect [student] disruptions to take place in your classroom. You will do things like read their history in terms of where they are with their academic placement. So, you can better make the lesson plans to suit their needs. You even do things as simple as creating seating charts based on what their [behavioral and academic needs are]. Like I said, based on their behavior violations. The seating chart might simply make learning easier if you know where to place the students according to those criteria.

Some may think that creating seating charts and lesson plans are a part of a teacher’s regular duties, so it may seem as though Joyce’s example is not an example of going above and beyond. But it is. Because Joyce has expressed that her lesson plans are different from what the district
has provided to her. She understands that her students’ “academic placement” requires her to provide more rigor or more scaffolding, depending on the needs of the student. She also has to take into consideration the behaviors of the students, and not simply provide a seating chart where students may be arranged by alphabetical order. Her ability to take these things into consideration is how she has exhibited going above and beyond her daily teaching requirements.

Creating a Family Environment

Another result of principals’ behaviors being aligned with transformational leadership styles, is that teachers feel as though they are a part of a family. David said:

I have been in situations in the past where it seems like the administration has put teachers against one another. [But] the environment that we have here is positive. We work here as a team. We’re like a family. And the advice that I would give to another alternative schools is, if you want that glue, that bond, that family-type environment where your administration has your back, the teachers have your back, the custodians, the para-professionals, everyone at the school to function as one and be on the same page, the administration definitely has to bring about a positive, positive environment, which my principal always does.

Vivviana believes that she works in a “warm and friendly environment” and “we’re more like a family.”

When you’re genuine and you have an open ear and you have an open heart to your faculty and staff, and you treat them like family, and you’re letting them make suggestions, and you help them out and assist them in every way, that’s going to build rapport, number one, and it’s going to help the teachers to perform better, and it’s going to motivate the teachers to keep doing their job.

Vivviana believes that she works in a “warm and friendly environment.” She also said that “we’re more like a family.”

Herman said:

We have a very small staff of teachers but all of us are—we interact with each other on a daily basis, we support each other. And we try to do what was needed in order to help address some of the problems of the school…some of the kids. And we work so well together.
Herman later said:

The type of team that has been put together here has driven those numbers [referrals, incidents, and major fights] down because of the cohesiveness of the staff and of the teachers. It makes you feel good coming to work every day, that you know that when you come to work you’re going to have the support there, you’re going to have the camaraderie from the teachers, you’re going to have the dialogue from the administrative team that’s going to be there willing to help you on a daily basis to positively affect these kids’ lives.

Madelyn said, “…the climate’s excellent. It’s very much a family, and we take care of one another, and we work with one another.” Jack said, “I think we’re a pretty tight group.”

Joyce said:

I think in terms of culture and climate overall the whole school is just like a big family and I think everybody works together just fine. I have been in schools before where it was like administration versus teachers. I don’t see that here.

Herman finished by saying, “we support each other…we work so well together. You can’t be successful at a school like this if your staff is not working together.”

**Being a Loving Teacher**

Going above and beyond and behaving like a family both are indicators that love is shown as a deeper connection to the job, to the students, and to the overall school. These are all factors as a result of principals’ behaviors being aligned with transformational leadership. David said, “they really need teachers that are concerned about the welfare of children.” He also said, “we need teachers here in the alternative setting that’s going to be considerate of socioeconomic conditions [and] academic factors.” He later said, “we need teachers that are going to have a big, big heart to be able to deal with these type of kids that come to alternative school.” Vivviana said that a teacher should be “very passionate…loves students…have a big heart…have a lot of love, [and] a lot of compassion.” She later said, “In spite of what it looks like, I still believe these
students can be successful.” Jack said that an alternative school teacher should be “somebody that cares.” He later explained that:

These kids are full of hate, hard times. I don’t want to say this. They don’t get to let their guard down. When they’re in the classroom, you can get them to put that guard down long enough to learn something.

But this will only happen as a result of a teacher caring about their overall well-being. In agreeance, Herman stated that “you have to get through that wall that they are putting up as children because of what they’re going through. And then, once you get through that wall, you try to educate them as best you can.” Readers who wonder how to “get through that wall” as Herman suggested, could take Joyce’s recommendation. Joyce said, “let the little things be little. Handle them privately, quietly, and individually.” She also tells her students “you are here because you made bad choices. You’re not a bad person.” This method of managing behaviors through love will allow teachers to build relationships with their students in order to best serve them.

Madelyn suggested that teachers at alternative schools need to be able to relate to the students, who make up about “85 to 90 percent of our kids being African-American.” Understanding the make-up of the school supports previous literature that shared how urban schools and alternative schools have very similar populations. Understanding the population, Herman said that teachers should not only have “patience and understanding” but also:

know what they’re dealing with, and know the problems that they’re going to face, and willing to face those problems, and not judge anyone in the classroom, give every one of these kids an opportunity—an opportunity to learn and not fault them for what they’ve done in the past. They’ve done something wrong. And, you can’t hold it against them as a teacher. You [have to] look above all that, look beyond all of that.

He finished by promising others that “once you do that, you will see a changed success rate with these kids.” He, in addition to the other alternative school teachers, have shared their deep
concern for loving the students. Noddings (2013), suggested that caring is something that people do naturally (p. 81), but the “ethical effort” is when a person feels the additional obligation to care, because “the primary aim of every educational institution and of every educational effort must be the maintenance and enhancement of caring” (p. 172). Meaning, it is the job of educators to care, and teachers with higher levels of efficacy are known to perform better at their jobs. Carlton added to this point by saying, “I’m already geared mentally, spiritually, and emotionally to take on that task.”

One of the final moments of the interviewing experience led one of the participants to really open up and share his passion about teaching and the educational system in general. Providing a suggestion to other teachers, Jack began with, “if your heart is truly not into it, don’t do it. You’re wasting your time.” He then described a scenario where he’s had to “deal with kids that come in my class angry at the previous teacher every day.” He became upset when he later said, “I got to let this rascal calm down, quit talking about whatever [the teacher] did, and then come to find out, you really don’t want to be a teacher anyway.” That led Jack to his point of saying, “this was your fallback. You should have fell further.” His straight-forward message was felt. And, although he chuckled afterwards, he sat as if he wanted the researcher to process his every word.

On a lighter note, Jack continued by saying, “I don’t look at teaching as a fallback position. This is frontline. This is frontline for society because everybody in society got to come through it. Everybody. From pole dancers to the President. They got to come through school.” The visual that Jack provided, although humorous, is also true. Teaching is the profession that creates all other professions, regardless of what jobs adults currently possess, each adult was required to attend school and to sit in a teacher’s classroom. As teachers, it is necessary that the
characteristics of being assiduous, benevolent, and showing fortitude aid in the delivery of lessons, because the students may one day become pole dancers—or presidents.

**Impact on Self-Efficacy**

Bandura (1989) said that people are satisfied when they fulfill their goals. The participants in this study rated themselves having high levels of efficacy, based on the ideals of completing their goals successfully. Their ability to go above and beyond, create a family-styled atmosphere, and show more love for what they do are a few indicators that high self-efficacy of teachers help to create a better environment for students. Schunk (1995) indicated that individuals worked harder and accomplished more goals when they had higher levels of self-efficacy, and the teacher participants in this study glowed when they had the opportunity to discuss how they felt as a teacher. Although some of them were able to recall terrible moments they’ve experienced in their careers as educators, and most of them had serious concerns about things that still need to be addressed or changed about the educational system, every participant expressed appreciation and willingness to contribute to the school team, even if it meant going above and beyond the call of duty. This is because once their level of self-efficacy increased, the likelihood of them enjoying their job more and their desire to see positive growth also increased.

**Chapter Summary**

The researcher shared the thoughts and opinions of the ten interview participants as they reflected on their experiences, self-efficacy, and necessary characteristics in order to teach at an alternative school. The purpose of the interviews was to ask the teachers questions about their current or past principals and if their principals’ behaviors were aligned with the ideals of being a transformational leader. The results of the interviews concluded four quadrants. The first quadrant is that when a principal has high levels of transformational leadership behaviors, and
teachers have high levels of efficacy, then the teachers' efficacy is not disturbed. It will remain high for one of two reasons: due to the teacher’s own ability, or the principal’s leadership. The second quadrant is that when a principal has low levels of transformational leadership behaviors, and teachers have high levels of efficacy, then the teachers’ efficacy will drop. The third quadrant is that when principals have high levels of transformational leadership behaviors, and teachers have low levels of efficacy, then the teachers’ efficacy levels will raise. The last quadrant is that when principals have low levels of transformational leadership behaviors, and teachers have low levels of self-efficacy, then the teachers’ efficacy levels will not be affected. It will remain low, but only due to the principals’ lack of transformational leadership. Finally, when teachers have high levels of efficacy, they tend to work above and beyond their job descriptions, they work closer together as a family, and they show a lot of love for what they do.
CHAPTER FIVE – DISCUSSION and IMPLICATIONS

This chapter serves as the overall summary for this research study. After restating this study’s purpose, other studies that have been an influence, the methods used, and the results, the rest of the chapter is dedicated to sharing the implications of this study. Having a deeper understanding of perceptions, and how a teacher’s perception of their principals’ transformational leadership behaviors has provided an opportunity for new or improved ideas in school leadership. A more specific focus on professional development and suggestions for policy changes are later outlined. Although this chapter is focusing on recommended next steps based on the voices of the participants of this study, it is the hope of the researcher that these recommendations are considered to inform both policy and practice, in order to improve the overall atmosphere of those who attend urban alternative schools.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to explore the impact that principals’ transformational leadership behaviors have on teachers’ self-efficacy in secondary urban alternative schools. The research question that guided this study was: How does perceived transformational leadership behaviors of principals’ impact teachers’ self-efficacy? This question had two sub-questions being: How do teachers perceive their principals’ leadership behaviors? And, how does this perceived behavior affect teachers’ self-efficacy?

Methods

A qualitative methodology was used to answer the research question and its two sub-questions. A total of ten secondary school teachers from two different alternative schools were interviewed using the semi-structure interviewing process. What was originally seven questions for the interviews eventually led to 15 or 16 questions per participant. The questions asked
participants about their views of being at an alternative school, about their principals’ leadership behaviors, and about how they feel about their own self-efficacy. Each interview lasted 30 to 45 minutes. The Constant Comparative Method of Analysis served as a guide for the researcher to analyze the interview data. Ultimately, the researcher read the transcriptions of each interview, coded points throughout the interviews, synthesized the points to create themes, and finally organized the themes to align with the researcher’s questions for this study.

**The Need for Transformational Leadership**

After listening to the teachers’ desires for wanting to learn how to work with challenging students and to understand how they play a role in changing the lives of alternative school children, it was evident that they recognized the needed for principals who exhibit qualities of a transformational leader. A principal with transformational leadership qualities has the ability to provide autonomy while facilitating necessary changes (Stump, Zlatkin-Troitschanskaia, & Mater, 2016) as well as allow teachers to focus on their most important goal—educating their students. In a challenging environment, such as an urban alternative school, transformational leadership serves as the foundation for ensuring that other practices are in place. Practices such as school safety, school vision, teacher buy-in, and community support are factors in creating a school that is ready for learning. Once the environment is ready for learning, then instruction can begin.

An old saying is that “no one cares about how much you know, until they know how much you care.” This means that a principal who is very intelligent academically and is fully aware of the curriculum standards and expectations will not be as effective when working with the teachers, if the teachers feel as though the building is not safe, that their voices cannot be heard, or that the principal only cares about numerical results and not qualitative efforts.

Although transformational leadership encourages teachers to make additional efforts and changes (Stump et al., 2016), it is important to recognize that once the behaviors of transformational leadership have been established, and positive changes can take place, then teachers can focus on their other needs of support and instructional leadership.

In other areas of academia, transformational leadership and instructional leadership are seen as two different leadership styles, and one is often compared to the other. Robinson and colleagues stated that instructional leadership strategies created greater student outcomes in comparison to that of transformational leadership (Robinson, 2010). Robinson (2010) focused on student achievement and noted that instructional leadership was the preferred style. For this study, the focus is not immediately on student achievement, but on the self-efficaciousness of their teachers. Within this study, transformational leadership and instructional leadership are still respected as two different leadership styles; however, it is with the notion that transformational leadership is needed in order to establish the foundation of change for a better environment and once that has occurred, then a greater appreciation can be held for the need of an instructional leader. This shows a delicate balance of needs, based on the needs of each teacher. Carlton stressed the need for wanting to be taught by his leaders, similar to how he is required to teach his students. In this case, he was in need of an instructional leader, but that only became his next goal after he noticed that his leaders provided him with the autonomy to make decisions and listened to his suggestions and concerns.

**Results**

The research question asked, “How does perceived transformational leadership behavior impact teacher self-efficacy?” And the results of the semi-structured interviews suggest four quadrants that the researcher has captured from participants. The following, Figure 7, provides a
visual to aid in showing teachers’ perceptions of their principals’ transformational leadership behaviors, and how it impacts their self-efficacy.

**Figure 7: Impact of Leadership Behaviors on Self-Efficacy**

(Adapted from Marshall & Rossman, 2011, p. 217)
Quadrant 1—High/High

The first quadrant suggests when a principal has high levels of transformational leadership behaviors, and teachers have high levels of efficacy, then the teachers’ efficacy is not disturbed. It will remain high for one of two reasons: due to the teacher’s own ability, or the principal’s leadership. The participants gave credit of their own high levels of efficacy, either due to team effort and support from the principal, or because of their personal hard work and efforts. For example, Carlton believes that a person’s high level of efficacy is based on their own level of optimism. He said, “if they don’t believe that they can do well in this kind of environment, then they won’t.” He continued by adding, “‘hey man, I believe I can do this,’ therefore my behavior demonstrates my belief.” He finally stressed his level of personal commitment by stating, “my level of commitment to the students, my level of professionalism, my level of wanting to learn more to help the students comes from my belief that I can do this.” Carlton’s comments support the first quadrant that teachers’ high level of efficacy can be contributed to the teachers’ own abilities and confidence. There were others, however, who believe that their high level of efficacy is due to efforts put forth by the principal and school team.

Herman shared that his efficacy became high because he was “afforded the opportunity to meet with some good teachers and meet with some coaches who supported me throughout the whole year.” He believed that through teamwork and support, he was able to improve as an instructor. Joyce said something similar. She indicated:

Just going back to all the assistance that I have received from the principal and the administrative team, those are the things that helped me get to why I call myself an 8 based on that. It’s not something that I could have done by myself.
Although Joyce and Herman attributed their high level of efficacy to the teamwork and efforts of the staff, others still believe that a teacher’s high level of efficacy is based on the individual teacher. When asked about his level of efficacy, Johnny referred to the importance of being a consistent person in order to maintain success as an educator. He stated, “it definitely takes more effort on my part because that’s what you have to be [consistent].” He continued by adding that the same level of effort a teacher puts forth at the beginning of the school year, must be the same level of effort towards the middle and then at the end of the school year.

**Quadrant 2—Low/High**

The second quadrant is an indicator that when a principal has low levels of transformational leadership behaviors, and teachers have high levels of efficacy, then the teachers’ efficacy will drop. Each teacher that mentioned principals who did not exhibit high levels of transformational leadership, said that their efficacy was low. Examples that were provided also suggest that the level of low efficacy was directly related to the behaviors of the principals. For example, Jack mentioned there were “at least two” principals “who didn’t give a damn.” He talked about the time he was “written up and placed on a discipline progression plan” and a week afterwards, the appropriate paperwork was received indicating that he had been correct the entire time. In this case, when Jack was punished prematurely, he felt that his principal was lacking the leadership to handle the situation better. Jack’s relationship with his principal was to the point where he thought he would either quit or be terminated. He described this moment as one of the “dark ages” of his career.

Madeline shared a time when she would have rated her level of self-efficacy as a 6 or 7 because her former principal was very negative and mean. She said that “there were a lot more negatives than positives” as she remembered the principal’s disrespectful tone of voice,
mannerisms, and methods of working with other teachers. When the principal left the school, and another principal arrived, then Madeline’s level of self-efficacy raised, because she “felt like we can go to administration and know that they’re going to back us up.” She also was relieved to know “if we don’t understand something, there are people here, the reading coach, math coach” to provide assistance. In this second quadrant, when principals lack the appropriate transformational leadership behaviors, it appears that the levels of teachers’ self-efficacy decrease.

**Quadrant 3—High/Low**

The third quadrant is that when principals have high levels of transformational leadership behaviors, and teachers have low levels of efficacy, then the teachers’ efficacy levels will raise. The participants shared how behaviors of their principals were motivating, encouraging, and supportive, which made them feel better as educators and subsequently, the teachers felt capable of being able to achieve their tasks better as instructors. Herman was new to the school, and his level of efficacy was not as high, because he needed guidance. Once he received the support he needed, he became more confident in his work. He said:

> The principal identified with me that one of my strengths was being able to deal with the kids’ behavior-wise, and being able to be a strong teacher in that regard. So, he encouraged me to apply for a dean’s position. And I did just that, and I was placed on the list to become a dean. So, he identified that. He identified that and helped me to make that decision to transfer over to leadership in the school.

Herman is an example of teachers appreciating the additional push from a transformational leader, allowing them to realize and understand their full potential as educators.

**Quadrant 4—Low/Low**

The last assumption is that when principals have low levels of transformational leadership behaviors, and teachers have low levels of self-efficacy, then the teachers’ efficacy
levels will not be affected. It will remain low, but only due to the principals’ lack of transformational leadership. Jack explicitly expressed that he was on the verge of quitting, and not because of his incapability to perform his job well, but because of the unnecessary and additional stress that the poor leader added.

Sub-Question 1 Results

The first sub-question for the initial research question asks, “how do teachers perceive their principals’ leadership behavior?” Based on the stories, examples, and personal situations that the participants shared, the ten teachers perceived their current principal to have positive behaviors of a transformational leader. This was noted by the examples that were shared concluding that principals served as instructional leaders and team players. As an instructional leader, participants gave examples of how principals modeled expectations, provided feedback, and provided autonomy. As a team player, participants gave examples of how principals were visible, had an open-door policy, and were very supportive. Some participants shared stories of past principals who did not behave as transformational leaders, and the teachers admitted to having lower self-efficacy. One teacher even stated that he doesn’t know how he survived and that it was one of the lowest points of his career.

Sub-Question 2 Results

The second sub-question for the initial research question asks, “how does this perceived behavior affect teachers’ self-efficacy?” As a result of the principals behaving as transformational leaders, the teachers felt an automatic desire to go above and beyond their regularly scheduled duties. They worked harder and appreciated the family atmosphere that was created, and they were able to truly love their job. Most of the participants stressed that any person who wants to work at a secondary alternative school should have the characteristics of a
loving and caring person. These claims all led the researcher to conclude that the teachers’
efficacy was high, based on their willingness to gladly volunteer for building a stronger school
community and atmosphere. The teachers, when asked, also shared that they have high efficacy.
On a scale of 1-10, with one representing low self-efficacy and 10 representing high self-
efficacy, the teachers who responded either rated themselves during the time of the interview as
an 8 or a 10.

Implications

Warren Bennis stated that “leadership is the capacity to translate vision into reality”
(Covey, 2004, p. 74). The findings from this study should inform educational leaders through
theory, practice, and policy, so that dreams and visions can be attained from a broader
perspective. This study informs theory because it adds to consistent data that transformational
leadership works when drastic changes are needed, and it shows the impact that principals’
transformational leadership has on teachers’ efficacy. This research also informs practice,
because it encourages principals of urban schools, and alternative schools, to practice the ideals
of transformational leadership. Moreover, this research could potentially impact policies that are
created throughout urban school districts nationwide, by encouraging district leaders to
strategically develop the principals of urban schools into transformational leaders. Policy makers
will be made aware that principals are now required to work collaboratively in order for them to
unleash the potential (Mendels, 2012) found in their teachers and students.

Based on the results of this study, the researcher has recommendations for possible next
steps in order to continue with the positive development of principals, teachers, and ultimately
their students. The researcher is recommending adjustments to be made with the professional
development and growth of alternative school instructors. As well, policies should be considered
for changes so that principals are supported in becoming more transformational leaders. Finally, for others who are interested in conducting similar research to this study, a few suggestions are provided for other methodologies, participants, and population sizes.

**Professional Development**

Each teacher participant stated they had not received any training or development to help adjust to teaching at an urban alternative school. The trainings received were related to curriculum and classroom management, which Amber referred to as being, “not comparable to what is actually needed for this environment.” Trainings received were conducted after participants begun working at their alternative school. Herman suggested that the “on-the-job” training he received was effective, because he was able to collaborate with other teachers, the principal, and the instructional coach in order to understand how to work with students scaffold the curriculum to meet their needs. Jack stressed that curriculum trainings, in addition to “good teacher workshops” are all that teachers at urban alternative schools need in order to be successful in such environments. And Joyce indicated that she did not have the opportunity to search for training, because she was informed at the end of a school year that she would no longer have her current position, and that she was transferred to teach at the alternative school. Billy stated he did not know why he was sent to teach at the school, but it is his belief that he was recruited in order to be an asset to the school’s community.

Carlton made the suggestion that district leaders should focus on “attracting the right talent, acquiring the right talent, developing our talent, and retaining our talent.” This suggestion implies that a greater focus on intentional hiring and training will prevent more teachers from being placed in situations that would allow them to resign quicker. Amber adds by
recommending that greater support of professional development should come from the district level. She said:

I feel as though the support that the district offers teachers isn’t necessarily applicable to a teacher at an alternative school, whether it be CHAMPs training or something as simple as lesson planning. Those things aren’t necessarily a blanketed type training here. Speaking on specifically CHAMPs, at a normal school, you know, something as simple as “conversation, help, activity, movement, and participation” would fly. But we deal with students who don’t follow the rules.

Amber’s concern supports her recommendation that leaders of urban alternative schools should take into consideration the types of professional development that is provided, and to recognize if the development provided can be used specifically with urban alternative school students. Amber continued by providing another example of specific professional development that is needed. She said:

When it comes to curriculum and lesson planning, most teachers, you know, they fill out their lesson plan and that’s enough to kind of direct their classroom. But when you’re dealing with children who come in our classrooms at different points of the nine weeks weekly, every child is at a different point in their lesson from their respected school. So, the district doesn’t prepare us for that, and I don’t necessarily think that they provide us with the tangible tools that we need either.

In addition to Amber’s concern, Joyce added a recommendation for the district to better train teachers. She suggests that teachers are allowed to visit “two or three teachers to look at different styles [of teaching].” She also added, “in terms of practicality and how it could be done, I don’t really know.” This uncertainty is a result of her being transferred to the urban alternative school without sufficient time to prepare and be better professionally developed.

The voices of the participants shared that they were sent to their schools sporadically, some without cause, and all without formal preparation. Because many of the participants cannot articulate a clear purpose of the alternative school, and what the urban alternative school is supposed to do, they have formed their own conclusions—some positive, and some negative.
The goal is to improve secondary education in urban alternative schools, therefore, the recommendation is that teachers receive professional development to ensure they can perform their role with fidelity based on the unique learning environment and challenges facing the students. Encouraging principals to be aligned with transformational leadership behaviors will allow teachers’ uncertainties and assumptions to be assuaged until training and purpose are clarified.

**Change in Policy**

In order for principals to behave more like transformational leaders, greater support is needed to aid them in any necessary adjustments. Coaching, training, feedback, monitoring, and resources are what principals will need in order to become the leaders that the teachers need for them to be. Although the principals that were primarily discussed in this research study have been recognized as having levels of transformational leadership that allow their teachers to maintain their high levels of self-efficacy; the participants also recalled principals who were the opposite, not being an instructional leader or a team player, but instead, a hinderance to the well-being and growth of the teachers, students, and overall educational community. Joyce recalled when her former school created a climate of “us versus them,” indicating that the teachers felt as though they were against the principal, and not a part of a team. Jack remembered a principal who used Jack’s work to show off as his own, and when the principal could not explain the work himself, he blamed Jack for creating a poor product. Jack felt betrayed that the principal was disappointed, especially since Jack tried to help him before the presentation. If this principal were more transformational, then he would have invited Jack to participate more with the presentation, or he would have learned from Jack how to properly present the information. This
principal’s behavior was one of the reasons why Jack became a disgruntled employee under this principal’s leadership.

Any policy that does not clearly encourage constant communication with urban school or alternative school principals should be changed, so that these school leaders can receive more support for their faculty, staff, and student body. Principals, especially novice principals, should have coaches available (or supervisors), that can monitor, evaluate, discuss, reflect, transform, and then help the principals to modify their approaches and leadership decisions if the decisions will be detrimental to the overall growth and performance of the academic community.

**Policy formulation.** When policies are formulated, it should be with the intention that special care and attention are given to the students who struggle the most in school, specifically those in urban schools. This means that policies in regard to the hiring and termination of principals should be aligned with how they have been prepared and supported in order to lead their schools. An example of one policy may be that principals of urban schools are required to remain the leader of that school for a minimum of 4 years. It has been noticed that a lot of principals of urban schools are moved to other schools within 3 years. As well, it has been recognized that one of the most effective forms of professional development is to be coached or mentored, and this has been provided to roughly half of the principals in the United States (Manna, 2015). A lack of leadership consistency, in addition to a lack of leadership development, can affect the culture of schools due to new teams constantly being created to help the students. This leadership rollercoaster can unintentionally create emotional stress and “when we consciously or unconsciously detect someone else’s emotions through their actions, our mirror neurons reproduce those emotions” (Goleman & Boyatzis, 2008, p. 76). The stress that new principals have at urban schools cannot be easily hidden, but it is nonetheless reproduced by the
teachers who are trying to understand the newest rules that are to be implemented. Also, the time spent in building new teams could be used to help foster the learning growth and push that students need to succeed.

**Policy development.** Instead of being “brilliant one moment and unsatisfactory the next” (Hallowell, 2010, p. 83), policy developers should ensure that their tactics, decisions, and emotional gauges are intentional so that the policies can be viewed as consistent and reliable. Placing an emphasis on transformational leadership, it is the goal of this study to encourage principals to be inspiring and insightful towards the needs of others (Quatro et al., 2007; Howard & White, 2009), and the principals can be supported if policies are developed to support their decisions. Currently, states usually spend between one and two billion dollars annually due to teacher turnover (Burkhauser, 2017). A change in policy for employing transformational leaders could potentially decrease the amount spent for each state in America.

**Policy implementation.** Great schools have come and gone over the years, and this is mainly due to a lack of funds, skilled teachers, or a traditionally-based school system (Darling-Hammond, 2010). If developed policies are not implemented then measurements will not be able to identify a successful principal, teacher, or school. Policies currently support compliant teachers—those who focus on the numbers and teaching the tested materials, and, it can be said that this kind of teacher typically follows commands without question (Senge, 1990). However, educational policies should focus on creating more compassionate teachers—even if they do as they are told they also do more for their students. This type of teacher usually goes out of their way to ensure that their students are learning more than what is on a measured standardized test. Some may believe that a higher rate of pay could possibly influence teachers to perform better or remain faithful to their jobs, but “evidence indicates that increased compensation is not likely to
improve teacher retention” (Greenlee & Brown, 2009, p. 99). Instead, policies should be in place that support teachers and principals during their daily work with students. As effective instructional leaders, it is the goal of the researcher to educate policy creators on how to nudge the compliant teacher to being more compassionate about overall students’ success.

Other Implications

Although teacher retention and teacher preparation programs were not the focus of this study, these two ideals were found in the literature pertaining to urban schools. Policies should be developed that would maintain or reduce teacher retention rates as well as providing policies to enhance university and district-wide teacher preparation programs. In Bhatnagar et al.’s 2016 study of 589 college students who were also urban teachers-in-training, one student indicated, “unless I learn ways to implement these strategies into a real-life classroom, I will be frustrated when trying to use them and probably quit trying after a while” (Bhatnagar, Kim, Many, Barker, Ball, & Tanguay, 2016, p. 33). The results of this study concluded that the college students believed the teaching preparation programs provided good theories and classroom assignments, but it was lacking opportunities for them to place theories into practice in real-life urban teaching scenarios (Bhatnagar et al., 2016). Another study was conducted with 38 Georgia teachers from the Teach for America urban-teacher preparation program in order to capture their experiences of teaching in urban schools. These teachers also felt as though they had “little voice or power to change the practices, even within the context of their own classrooms, at least during the majority of the academic year” (Fisher-Ari, Kavanagh, & Martin, 2016, p. 10).

Policy creators should consider enhancing urban teacher preparation programs when student participants already anticipate quitting the profession before they truly have an opportunity to begin. Public schools located in the urban setting with large numbers of economic
deficient students have constant teacher turnover (Kokka, 2016). This can be prevented with
greater measures to support and enhance the quality of urban teachers.

**Suggestions for Future Research**

One suggestion for future research is for a study to interview principals in order to gain
their perspective on their transformational leadership behaviors. It is simply a guess, that if the
teacher participants of this study have not been provided with training or adequate preparation
before working at an urban school, or alternative school, then the principals may be lacking
similar training. This study was conducted in order to hear what the teachers want to express
about their self-efficacy and how their principals’ leadership behaviors have played a role in their
efficacy. Just as these teachers were adamant and passionate about their responses, it is the belief
that principals are waiting for the opportunity to also share their stories. Allowing principals an
opportunity to self-rate their own level of being transformational might be a luminiferous look
into the educational world of secondary urban and alternative schools.

Another suggestion for future research is for a study to survey urban and alternative
school teachers about their own levels of self-efficacy. Based on the surveys, teachers can then
be randomly selected for interviews, if they so choose to participate. This mixed-methods
approach of collecting quantitative and qualitative data would further enhance the results of this
current research. This research focused on the stories of ten teachers, conducted and facilitated
by one researcher. Other studies, if using the mixed-methods approach as suggested, would
unlock greater knowledge from more teachers that would ultimately enhance the overall
educational community.

One final suggestion for future research projects, is for one to be conducted similar to this
study, but with the participation of secondary urban school teachers that are not at an alternative
school. Although some participants of this study have stated that working at an alternative school is completely different than working at a regular public school, other participants believe that there are many similarities of regular schools and alternative schools, suggesting that the students will only behave according to the level of support that teachers receive from their principals, regardless of the kind of school it is. The researcher believes that if this study were duplicated as a qualitative study, interviewing ten teachers, five from two different urban secondary schools, and asked the same questions, that many of the responses would be similar. And, instead of using terms such as “alternative” with this new study, the term “urban” could be used as its replacement. Then, educational leaders will be able to juxtapose the similarities and differences between the purpose of alternative schools and how they relate to urban schools.

**Chapter Summary**

The final chapter of this research provided an overall review of this study, reminding readers of its purpose, the various influences, the research questions, methodology, results, and final conclusions. Within these pages, suggestions have been provided in hopes of creating a better educational environment for principals, teachers, and ultimately the students that they both serve. Eisner (1991) once said, “there is, it seems, a solution for every problem, and yet the problems remain” (p. 10). This is an understandable feeling, because when people are passionate about their profession, it is always the goal to continue to pursue excellence. It is the hope of the researcher that this study can serve as a solution, so that there is one less problem that remains for our students.
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APPENDIXES

Appendix A – Permission to use Leadership Questionnaire
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Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire™

Third Edition
Manual and Sample Set

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Appendix B – IRB Memorandum of Approval

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH FLORIDA.
Office of Research and Sponsored Programs
1 UNF Drive
Jacksonville, FL 32224-2665
904-620-2455 FAX 904-620-2457
Equal Opportunity/Equal Access/Affirmative Action Institution

MEMORANDUM

DATE: September 12, 2018

TO: Ms. LaKenya Branch

VIA: Dr. Matthew Ohlson
Leadership, School Counseling & Sports Management

FROM: Dr. Jennifer Wesely, Chairperson
On behalf of the UNF Institutional Review Board

RE: Review of New Project by the UNF Institutional Review Board
IRB#1092429-3: “The Effects of Principals’ Transformational Leadership Behaviors on their Teachers’ Self-Efficacy in Secondary Urban Schools: A Multi-Site Case Study”

This is to advise you that your project, “The Effects of Principals’ Transformational Leadership Behaviors on their Teachers’ Self-Efficacy in Secondary Urban Schools: A Multi-Site Case Study” underwent “Expeditied” Category 7 review on behalf of the UNF Institutional Review Board. Your reviewer recommended approval without further modifications.

The contingency has been lifted and data collection may now begin at approved locations. This approval applies to your project in the form and content as submitted to the IRB for review. All participants must receive a stamped and dated copy of the approved informed consent document when possible. Any variations or modifications to the approved procedures or documents must be cleared with the IRB prior to implementing such changes. For example, if you plan to make changes to your stamped and dated informed consent form, it will be necessary to submit a copy of the revised form via an amendment so that it can be reviewed and approved prior to use. Once approved, a new stamp and date will be included on the revised consent form so that it can be used. To submit an amendment, please complete an Amendment Request Document and submit it along with any updated documents affected by the changes via a new package in IRBNet. Any unanticipated problems involving risk and any occurrence of serious harm to subjects and others shall be reported by completing this Event Report Form and sending it promptly to the IRB within 3 business days.

Your study has been approved as of 09/12/2018. When you are ready to close your project, please complete a Closing Report Form. Please note that it will be necessary to create a new package in IRBNet in order to submit amendments, status reports, or closing reports in the future. All applicable records relating to this research shall be retained for at least 3 years after completion of the research.
CITI Course Completion Reports are valid for 3 years. The CITI training for renewal will become available 90 days before the current CITI training expires. Please renew your CITI training when necessary and ensure that all key personnel maintain current CITI training. Individuals can access CITI by following this link: http://www.citiprogram.org/. Should you have questions regarding your project or any other IRB issues, please contact the research integrity unit of the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs by emailing IRB@unf.edu or calling (904) 620-2455.

This letter has been electronically signed in accordance with all applicable regulations, and a copy is retained within UNF's records. All records shall be accessible for inspection and copying by authorized representatives of the department or agency at reasonable times and in a reasonable manner.
Appendix C – Letter of Permission from Principals

Date

Principal’s Name, Title
School’s Name
School’s Address

Dear [Principal’s Name],

During the past four years, I have completed extensive coursework in the field of Educational Leadership for the University of North Florida’s doctoral program. Now that I am in my fifth year of study, I am preparing to conduct research based on the topic: The Effects of Principals’ Transformational Leadership Behaviors on their Teachers’ Self-Efficacy in Secondary Urban Schools: A Multi-Site Case Study. In order to complete my research study, I would like for a few members of the teaching faculty at your school to participate in a 30 – 45 minute interview.

The purpose of my study is to explore the effects of principals’ leadership behaviors on teacher self-efficacy in secondary urban schools. The results of my research study can provide additional knowledge to school leaders on methods of creating a positive school climate and culture, in addition to increasing the self-efficacy of teachers.

Upon your approval, I want to ensure you that the following will take place:

- The name of the school, administrators, nor participants of the study will be identifiable. All data collected will be kept confidential.
- My research will be organized in a way in which each teacher will be assigned a number on my documentation, and these numbers will help me to ensure that I have communicated with each participant.
- Each teacher will have the option to decline participating in this study. And, should they begin the interview process, they have the option to stop the interview at any time of their choosing.
- Only 5 teachers from your school are needed to participate in a recorded interview. Five teachers will be asked, but if any decline to participate, then more will be asked, until the total number of willing participants equals 5.
- The interviews will take place either after school on-campus, after school off-campus, or during the teacher’s planning period (upon your approval). The teachers will be given the option to decide the location and time that best suits their availability.

Thank you for taking my request into consideration. It is greatly appreciated. Should you have any questions or concerns in regard to my study, please do not hesitate to contact myself or the Chair of my committee, Dr. Matthew Ohlson at [phone number].

Sincerely,

Ms. L. Tenae Branch, Doctoral Candidate
(cell) [phone number]    (email) [email address]

Permission Needed Below

I, ______________________________________, (circle one) will grant/will not grant, this research study to take place at my school.

____________________________________________    _______________________________________
Signature of Principal     Date of Approval
Appendix D – Script for Recruiting Teachers

SCRIPT for RECRUITING TEACHERS for RESEARCH STUDY
Total Time for Presentation: 10 minutes

(5 minutes for reading the script)
Greetings Teachers,

I am currently working on my doctorate degree at the University of North Florida, specifically studying the area of Educational Leadership. As a part of my research study, I would like to interview a few teachers, in order to find out your thoughts, opinions, and experiences that you have had being here at an alternative school. The purpose of my research is to study both the teachers and principals at alternative schools, but I want my information to only come from the perspectives of the teachers. I have reached out to Duval County Public Schools, and to the principal here, and I have been given permission to ask you all if you would like to participate. Please understand that this is voluntary, and that you do not have to do this. And, if you decide to volunteer, no one else will know that you are a participant except for me. I will use pseudonyms for each teacher as I work with the four members of my dissertation committee who will help ensure that my research is reported properly.

I really want to know your thoughts, your stories, and your experiences about teaching at an alternative school, and I also want to know your thoughts about the leadership of an alternative school (along with any suggestions or recommendations that you may have). My thought is this: If principals were to put some things in place, would it help the teachers to teach better in their classrooms? Well, by me asking your input, this will help me to understand better what school leaders can do in order to help the teachers and the students in the classroom. If you decide to participate, then I will schedule a time to interview you. You’ll be given the interview questions ahead of time, there are only 7. And the interview, depending on how
detailed your responses are, will last about 30-45 minutes. But, you will be able to stop participating at any time. I will allow you to pick the location and the time of your interview, because I appreciate you for even volunteering to help me with my research project. There will not be any compensation, but I want you to know that I plan to share your voices and the results of my research with district superintendents, in hopes that we can find ways to make teaching just “a little bit easier” in the classrooms.

Now, I have a consent form for each of you, and it details everything that I’ve just shared with you, including my contact information. It also details the minimal risks that align with participating in an interview, and I will be more than happy to explain those details if you’d like. I will hand each of you a consent form, but you only have to sign it and turn it in if you are interested in participating. If you don’t turn one in, my feelings won’t be hurt, and I will still continue to serve you as the Reading Coach, and support you in your classroom as I have always done. I understand that everyone has a busy schedule, so if you chose not to participate, I will completely understand.

If you have any questions, please feel free to ask me now, or you may email me, or stop by my room at any time.

Thank you again for taking this time to listen to me. And, if you decide to participate, then you can place your signed consent form in this manila envelope here (researcher will show the envelope to the group). I will leave it in my mailbox for your convenience, or you can just hand it to me when you see me.

Thank you so much. Are there any questions that you would like for me to answer right now?

(5 minutes for answering any potential questions)
Appendix E – Research Participant’s Consent Form

Research Participant’s Consent Form

Title of Research: Teachers’ Views on Principals’ Leadership and Their Own Self-Efficacy
Researcher: Ms. LaKenya Tenae Branch, Doctoral Student

Greetings Fellow Educator,

You are being asked to participate in a research study related to school leadership and teachers’ views. For you to be able to decide whether you want to participate in this project, you should understand what the project is about, as well as the possible risks and benefits in order to make an informed decision. This process is known as informed consent. This document describes the purpose, procedures, possible benefits, and risks. Once you have read this form and your questions about the study are answered, you will be asked to sign it. This will allow your participation in this study. You will receive a copy of this document for your personal records. **This study is voluntary and you are not required to participate.**

This study is being conducted to find out how teachers view their principal’s leadership behaviors and how it impacts teachers’ ability to reach students in the classroom. This research is important to society because we must look at various factors that influence a teacher’s performance in order to provide greater support for the educators in our communities. It is possible that principals’ leadership behaviors play a factor, and if so, encouraging better principal leadership will ultimately help teachers educate their students better.

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to answer **4 – 7 open-ended questions** during an audio-recorded interview. You should not participate in this study if you are not currently teaching, or if you didn’t teach during the past school year. Your participation in the study will last around **30-45 minutes** for the interview, but you may stop participating in this study at any time.

Minimal risks are anticipated. Some of the interview questions will ask about your personal and professional feelings in regard to your principal’s leadership and situations that you have experienced. Some of your recollections may evoke slight discomforts, depending on the severity of your response. To prevent this, you will be provided a copy of the interview questions at least 24 hours before our scheduled interview time, so that you are aware of what will be asked. As well, you will have the opportunity to select the location of the interview, to ensure that there will be minimal risk of your interview responses and participation being disclosed. As the researcher, it is my goal to ensure that your story remains confidential, and anything shared that is too personal will be noted in a way that will not allow others to identify you.

Information you generate in support of this study will be kept confidential because **your name will not be recorded for the interview and demographic information will not be collected.** As well, there will not be any forms of compensation as a result of your participation with this study.

**Contact Information**

If you have any questions regarding this study, please contact Dr. Matthew Ohlson at [phone number]. If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research participant, please contact the Institutional Review Board for the University of North Florida at (740) 593-0664.

(Please read the reverse for granting permission)
By signing below, you are agreeing that:

- you have read this consent form (or it has been read to you) and have been given the opportunity to ask questions and have them answered,
- you have been informed of potential risks and they have been explained to your satisfaction,
- you understand the University of North Florida has no funds set aside for any injuries you might receive as a result of participating in this study,
- you are 18 years of age or older,
- your participation in this research is completely voluntary,
- and, you may leave the study at any time. If you decide to stop participating in the study, there will be no penalty to you and you will not lose any benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Printed Name: ________________________________________________________

Signature: ___________________________________________________________

Date: __________________________________________________________________
Appendix F – Participant’s Copy of Interview Questions

Interview Questions for Participants

Thank you for volunteering to participate in this interview. The following questions will be asked, and your voice will be recorded during the interview. Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns before the interview takes place. The total time for this interview process should take about 30 – 45 minutes.

1. Explain how (if any) the principal acts in ways that build your respect. Do you think that his actions in your example have helped you to be a better teacher for your students? Please explain.

2. Explain some of the times (if any) the principal has stated goals and expressed confidence that they will be achieved. Do you think that his actions in your example have helped you to be a better teacher for your students? Please explain.

3. Explain a time (if any) when the principal wanted different perspectives (maybe yours) to help solve a problem. Do you think that his actions in your example have helped you to be a better teacher for your students? Please explain.

4. Explain when (if any) the principal has helped you to develop your strengths. Do you think that his actions in your example have helped you to be a better teacher for your students?
5. Explain a time (if any) the principal has encouraged you to look at a problem from various points of view. Do you think that his actions in your example have helped you to be a better teacher for your students? Please explain.

6. Explain when (if any) the principal has taken into consideration your individual needs, abilities, and aspirations that may be different from the needs of others. Do you think that his actions in your example have helped you to be a better teacher for your students? Please explain.

7. Explain when (if any) the principal has displayed a sense of power and confidence. Do you think that his actions in your example have helped you to be a better teacher for your students? Please explain.

For questions, please contact: Researcher: L. Tenae Branch [phone number]
Co-chairs: Dr. Warren Hodge [phone number] or Dr. Matthew Ohlson [phone number]
## Appendix G – Interview Questions aligned with MLQ Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item Number</th>
<th>Item Statement</th>
<th>Interview Question</th>
<th>Follow-Up Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td><strong>Idealized Influence:</strong>&lt;br&gt;“Acts in ways that builds my respect”</td>
<td>#1. Explain how (if any) the principal acts in ways that build your respect.</td>
<td>Do you think that his actions in your example have helped you to be a better teacher for your students? Please explain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td><strong>Inspirational Motivation:</strong>&lt;br&gt;“Expresses confidence that goals will be achieved”</td>
<td>#2. Explain some of the times (if any) the principal has stated goals and expressed confidence that they will be achieved.</td>
<td>Do you think that his actions in your example have helped you to be a better teacher for your students? Please explain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td><strong>Intellectual Stimulation:</strong>&lt;br&gt;“Seeks differing perspectives when solving problems”</td>
<td>#3. Explain a time (if any) when the principal wanted different perspectives (maybe yours) to help solve a problem.</td>
<td>Do you think that his actions in your example have helped you to be a better teacher for your students? Please explain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td><strong>Individual Consideration:</strong>&lt;br&gt;“Helps me to develop my strengths”</td>
<td>#4. Explain a time when (if any) the principal has helped you to develop your strengths.</td>
<td>Do you think that his actions in your example have helped you to be a better teacher for your students? Please explain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td><strong>Intellectual Stimulation:</strong>&lt;br&gt;“Gets me to look at problems from many different angles”</td>
<td>#5. Explain a time (if any) the principal has encouraged you to look at a problem from various points of view.</td>
<td>Do you think that his actions in your example have helped you to be a better teacher for your students? Please explain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td><strong>Individual Consideration:</strong>&lt;br&gt;“Considers me as having different needs, abilities, and aspirations from others”</td>
<td>#6. Explain when (if any) the principal has taken into consideration your individual needs, abilities, and aspirations that may be different from the needs of others.</td>
<td>Do you think that his actions in your example have helped you to be a better teacher for your students? Please explain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td><strong>Idealized Influence:</strong>&lt;br&gt;“Considers the moral and ethical consequences of decisions”</td>
<td>#7. In your opinion, when (if any), has the principal considered the moral and ethical consequences of his decisions?</td>
<td>Do you think that his actions in your example have helped you to be a better teacher for your students? Please explain.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix H – TranscribeMe’s Security Policies

TranscribeMe's Security Policies
Last Updated: Feb 19, 2016 10:46AM PST
Standard Security Features


Our customers in enterprise businesses are satisfied with the security measures provided by TranscribeMe. We have passed the most rigorous security audits from Fortune 1000 companies concerned with security measures to protect their data, and we are confidently processing transcriptions for these customers today.

Our servers are located inside secure, dedicated Microsoft Azure data centers, with state-of-the-art physical and online intrusion prevention measures in place. The facilities are ISO certified, and are proactively monitored and kept up-to-date with the latest security patches by 24/7 Microsoft staff. The Azure data centers are amongst the most advanced in the world, and provide complete uptime reliability for the TranscribeMe service.

Our transcribers work on our proprietary WorkHub; meaning they cannot download audio, copy text, nor do they have access to the entirety of any audio file that is submitted by our clients - they are completing 10 to 60 second microtasks. The full audio is only accessible to our Quality Assurance Team after transcription, all of whom have signed NDAs.

Once completed, audio files do remain in our system, but they are not accessible to anyone but our internal team, all of whom have also signed NDAs. Audio files and transcription documents can be deleted from your Customer Portal account, and this will remove the files from our system permanently.

Micro-tasking Security and Confidentiality
As a major part of our service, we involve human crowd-workers in the delivery of transcriptions. To ensure confidentiality, we have invented a micro-tasking algorithm that splits complex content into bite-sized microtasks. Our proprietary platform ensures that no worker has more than a tiny portion of a single job, and jobs are randomized for the workers. In other words, our workers do not have the ability to select the work they will be processing, and do not see any connection between the short task they are performing and the context of the overall work or the identity of the client.

Quality Assurance Security Measures
To ensure quality of output, we often use multiple people to process the same content and compare their outputs to identify potential quality issues. This requires us to process parts of the content through our Quality Assurance team. The QA team members are permitted to see the complete text output, and are carefully selected, screened and legally bound to provide confidential and secure service. The QA team members are selected amongst the top 10% of our crowd, and all sign comprehensive Non Disclosure Agreements prior to processing any customer
content.

**Platform Security**
All of the content is streamed to the workers via our secure, encrypted work delivery platform. In fact, all client recordings are transferred with the same algorithms used to secure financial data in online banking transactions. This prevents the workers from downloading and storing files in progress on their computer, and provides them the benefits of accessing advanced TranscribeMe transcription and translation tools. The crowd-workers engaged with processing the content must pass a range of complex exams and tests, and are validated for quality and efficiency prior to engaging on client files.

**Additional Options**

**Geo-Location and Geo-Fencing**
A number of our customers, particularly those located in UK, Canada and Australia, have asked that their confidential information doesn't leave the geographical boundaries of their country. Our platform is capable of providing this service, and we can limit both the machine-based and the human processing of the content to users within a particular geography.

Geo-fencing not only provides a layer of security protection, but also allows filtering crowd-worker segments around areas of expertise - such as technical or financial knowledge. We can tailor our crowd in multiple ways to find the perfect group of crowd-workers for secure, confidential processing of the content.

**Advanced Enterprise Confidentiality**
For very sensitive projects, we provide a service to background-check all the workers involved in the production workflow on our platform, and make their resumes available to the customer. This requires advance planning to undertake a full background check on each individual and is included as part of our premium service offering. In addition, we have the option of requiring crowd-workers to sign additional, client-specific NDA and legal contracts.

**Bringing in the Customer's Additional Resources**
In addition - for the most commercially sensitive content - our customers have the ability to process the content exclusively with their in-house staff instead of crowd-workers. The inside staff will have all the benefits of the streamlined, optimized TranscribeMe crowd-work platform designed to maximize transcription efficiency and throughput, and provide partial support with advanced speech recognition algorithms.

If you have any further questions about our security measures, or need assistance with anything else, please do write us at support@TranscribeMe.com

$0.79/minute  $2.00/minute  $2.75/minute
SUMMARY:
Seeking to utilize my instructional and transformational leadership skills, in order to enhance the training and development of professionals, while promoting the overall goals and objectives of the organization.

EDUCATION:
The University of North Florida
- Doctoral Program, 30+ hours, Educational Leadership, 3.5 GPA August 2013 – Present
Webster University
- Master’s Degree, Human Resource Management December 2003
The Florida State University
- Bachelor of Arts, Public Relations; Specialization, Spanish April 2000

LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCES:
Duval County Public Schools
Reading Coach, Instructor Jacksonville, FL
- Provide professional development for teachers that serve two alternative school populations
- Collect, analyze, and present school-wide reading data to teachers and the leadership team
- Explicitly teach and model instructional best practices in classrooms for developing professionals
- Provide feedback to teachers regarding instructional practices and give support when necessary

District of Columbia Public Schools
Instructor and Teacher Leader, English Washington, DC
- Provided professional development for teachers in the organization and management of school-wide technology and grading
- Instructed teachers on best practices to increase students’ reading scores
- Met with administrative team members to discuss best leadership practices for adults and children

Duval County Public Schools
Assistant Principal, Instructor, Reading Coach & Interventionist Jacksonville, FL
- Observed instructors and provide meaningful feedback to promote growth and development
- Maintained order and discipline throughout the school, ensuring the safety of all in the building
- Counseled, remediated and assigned discipline while processing student disciplinary referrals
Led the faculty and staff in a professional book study over the course of a 3-month period
Served in the administrative capacity in the absence of the principal or assistant principal
Organized monthly school-wide enrichment activities with students, faculty, and volunteers
Organized, prepared & facilitated professional development opportunities for the faculty and staff
Trained and developed novice teachers by modeling lessons and conducting weekly workshops
Taught other instructors various classroom strategies by hosting CHAMPs training sessions
Visited classrooms to provide feedback and assistance regarding classroom management

CERTIFICATIONS:
- Florida Educator Leadership Examination, FELE (2011)
- English for Speakers of Other Languages, ESOL (2010)
- Reading Endorsement (2009)
- English Endorsement, Grades 6-12
- Classroom Management Trainer (CHAMPs)
- Clinical Educator Trainer, CET (Mentor)

SKILLS:
- Webmaster: frequently updating and maintaining organizations’ websites
- Event Planner: organizing and planning field trips, workshops, meetings and programs
- Public Speaker: speaking at events, research conferences and hosting programs
- Technologically Savvy: proficient in Microsoft Office and the navigation of the World Wide Web
- Teacher: planning engaging lessons based on the needs of the organization and audience

SPECIAL AWARDS and INTERESTS:
- English/Language Arts Department Chair, Teacher of the Year (2006 – 2007 and 2013 – 2014)
- Aspiring Leader Academy participant, Duval County Public Schools (2011 – 2012)
- Praise Dancer, Bethel Baptist Institutional Church
- Spanish Language, semi-fluent speaker/translator

SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS at EDUCATIONAL CONFERENCES:
- Southwest Educational Research Association (SERA) in New Orleans, LA (February, 2016)
  Topic: “The Effects of Principals’ Transformational Leadership on Teachers’ Evaluations in Urban Schools”
- University of North Florida Doctoral Symposium in Jacksonville, FL (May, 2014)
  Topic: “How the Professional Development of Secondary Schools’ faculty affect the pedagogy in the classroom.”
- Center for International Studies in Educational Research and Development, Southeast Regional Conference in Tallahassee, FL (October, 2013)
  Topic: “How can the Professional Development of Secondary Schools’ faculty affect the Pedagogy in the Classroom?”