A PRINCIPAL'S PERSPECTIVE:

INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP IN THE 21ST CENTURY

by

Maria Calzadilla Tracy

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This dissertation was prepared under the direction of the candidate's dissertation advisor, Dr. Robert Shockley, Department of Educational Leadership and Research Methodology, and has been approved by all members of the supervisory committee. It was submitted to the faculty of the College of Education and was accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE:

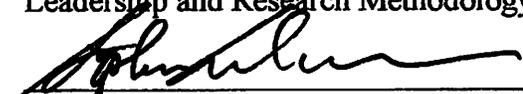_____
Dr. Robert Shockley, Ph.D.
Dissertation Advisor

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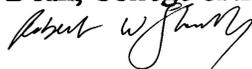Daniel Reyes-Guerra, Ph.D.

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Chair, Department of Educational
Leadership and Research Methodology

_____
Stephen Silverman, Ed.D.
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_____   _____
Robert W. Stackman Jr., Ph.D.   Date
Dean, Graduate College

_____   _____
Robert W. Stackman Jr., Ph.D.   Date
Dean, Graduate College

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me to make this dream a reality. To my sister, Flo (a.k.a., Gertie) and John: your courage in meeting life's challenges head-on has been a great inspiration. To my very special friends, Maryellen and Jody: thank you for sharing your time, words of encouragement, and sincere support over the years. Finally, to my Florida colleagues—teachers and principals—in the trenches, whether near or far, who make the magic come alive every day for our children: thank you. You are AMAZING!

Como siempre,

MT

ABSTRACT

Author: Maria Calzadilla Tracy

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Ever since No Child Left Behind in 2001 to the present, school accountability

reform initiatives have concentrated on raising achievement. Critical to figuring out the

relationship between instructional practice and student achievement is forming an

awareness of the relationship from the perspective of school leaders—both principals and

teachers—charged with improving student achievement. The study, a quantitative quasi-

experimental design using the School Survey of Practices Associated with High

Performance, representing instructional practices associated with improving student

performance, collected survey data via social media from teachers, principals and other

school leaders in Florida public schools.

The SSPAHP grouped instructional practices into five domains: effective

leadership, curriculum, professional development, school culture, and ongoing use of data

for school improvement, which served as the predictor variables. Achievement data from

the Florida Standards Assessment for the schools mentioned by participants in the survey

functioned as the criterion variable. While 130 surveys were collected, only 84 of the responses reflected schools that took part in the FSA and met the criteria for data analysis.

The three research questions of the study focused on examining the relationship between instructional practices and student achievement from the perspective of teachers and principals, a school, and SSPAHP practices. However, because of the small sample size, findings were restricted to studying the relationship from the perspective of teachers, principals, and SSPAHP practices. Descriptive analysis revealed both principals and teachers related the instructional practices of curriculum, school culture, and professional development to raising student achievement. Multilinear analysis of the SSPAHP and FSA data found school culture and professional development as having a considerable relationship with student achievement. The findings of this study support research connecting instructional leadership focused on strengthening the professional learning capacity of teachers with improving student achievement.

DEDICATION

To my heavenly angels and lifelong teachers, my parents Juan and Maria: the lessons learned while at the kitchen table have served me well and continue to guide me. It is those lessons learned that influenced my dissertation journey, and it is in memory of your legacy, that I dedicate this study.

And to my sons Michael, Matthew, and Mark: yep, I'm done!

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Being held accountable for student learning or school accountability—whether directly or indirectly—is not a foreign idea for schools, principals, and teachers to appreciate (Figlio & Loeb, 2011; Domaleski, D'Brot, Keng, Keglovits, & Neal, 2018). While the concept of school accountability has evolved, it has remained a pillar of reform efforts designed to improve achievement (Murphy, 2020). Explaining the historical evolution of school accountability, Cuban (2004) stated that "the aims of accountability, its means, who is answerable to whom and for what actions have been shifted over time, but responsibility has been fixed and durable for nearly two centuries" (p. 19). The concept of school accountability has endured, remaining a key provision of legislative reforms purposed with improving achievement (Tolo, Lillejord, Flórez Petour, & Hopfenbeck, 2020).

Background

In 2002, under the leadership of President George Bush, the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, a reauthorization of the Elementary Secondary Educational Act (ESEA), authorized the Federal government to set student achievement benchmarks in reading and math, beginning with students in the third grade and continuing through twelfth grade (No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 [NCLB], 2002; Rothstein, 2009). NCLB expected that by the year 2014, the nation's students in third to twelfth grade would be 100% proficient in reading and math (NCLB, 2002; Ravitch 2010; Supovitz,

2009). NCLB introduced school accountability reform by relying on results from state-wide assessments to hold school districts and schools accountable for student achievement (Koretz, 2017; Ravitch 2010).

The legacy of school accountability established by NCLB in 2002 evolved, influencing subsequent school reforms for holding responsible those involved with student learning (Mintrop & Sunderman, 2009; NCLB, 2002; Printy, 2010; Shirrell, 2016). NCLB held schools accountable for student achievement but excluded principals and teachers (NCLB, 2002). As the 2014 reauthorization of NCLB approached, achievement goals remained unmet and led to broadening accountability reform to include principals and teachers (Koretz, 2017; Vinovskis, 2019).

The focus of school accountability expanded to include holding teachers and principals accountable for achievement with President Barack Obama's Race to the Top (RTTT) competitive federal grant initiative in 2009 (Hallgren, James-Burdumy, & Perez-Johnson, 2014; Manna & Ryan, 2011; McGuinn, 2016; U.S. Department of Education [USDOE], 2009, 2011). RTTT, through personnel appraisals, directly tied student achievement in evaluating the performance of teachers and principals (Deming & Figlio, 2016; Guisbond, Neill, & Schaeffer, 2013; USDOE, 2011; Winters, Trivitt, & Greene, 2010). Taking part in the grant required states to revise the educational personnel performance appraisal process to include using state-wide, student assessment data in the performance evaluation of public school principals and teachers (USDOE, 2009).

After being awarded an RTTT federal grant in 2011, Florida enacted the Student Success Act (SSA) (FLA. STAT. § 1012.34, 2011) amending annual school personnel evaluations to include assessment data. Thus, Florida launched a process for holding

teachers and principals accountable for student achievement. The SSA agreed with

Florida's commitment to school accountability reform while complementing the research

on the influence of instructional leadership on student achievement (FLA. STAT. §

1012.34, 2011; Horng & Loeb, 2010; Leithwood, Seashore Louis, Anderson, &

Wahlstrom, 2004; Mendels, 2012).

Statement of the Problem

School accountability goals, Chenoweth and Theokas (2011) emphasized,

envisioned to improve achievement and hold schools accountable, and had an over-

arching influence on the instructional practice of school leaders. Robinson (2011) added

that if improving student achievement is the goal, "Leaders need trustworthy advice

about the leadership practices that are most likely to deliver those benefits" (p. 8).

Summarizing the dilemma, Hallinger and Ko (2015) explained that principals bear the

responsibility of complying with reform mandates and are responsible for student

achievement. "They are responsible for integrating education reforms into the existing

platform of school practices and accountable for the school results" (Hallinger & Ko,

2015, p. 20). Leading school accountability reform efforts compelled school leaders,

including principals and teachers, to engage in instructional practices purposed with

improving student learning and achievement (Flanigan, 2002; Wohlstetter, Datnow, &

Park, 2008). Thus, the emphasis on increasing achievement caused a reexamining of

instructional leadership practices in response to accountability reforms (Catano &

Stronge, 2006; Chenoweth & Theokas, 2011; Lezotte & Snyder, 2011; Luo & Childress,

2009).

Purpose of the Study

     This study relied on the Regional Education Laboratory (REL) Midwest study conducted in partnership with the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) in 2013 to guide examining the relationship between instructional practice and improved student achievement (Weinstock, Yumoto, Abe, Meyers, & Wan, 2016). In 2013, after conducting the validity and reliability of the School Survey Practices Associated with High Performance (SSPAHP) the MDE established the SSPAHP to examine the relationship between instructional practice and student achievement (Weinstock et al., 2016). Building on the foundation set by the MDE, this study used the SSPAHP to survey Florida public school educators and examine the relationship between instructional practice and student achievement (Weinstock et al., 2016).

Research Questions

     Research question 1 asked: How do principals' perceptions of instructional practice compare with teachers' sense of instructional practice when viewed through the lens of student achievement? This question investigated the instructional leadership of principals and teachers to understand how each perceive the relationship of instructional practice on student achievement (Barth, 2001; Crowther, Kaagan, Ferguson, & Hann, 2002; Deal & Peterson, 2009; Harris, 2003; Schlechty, 2002).

     Research question 2 asked: How does a school's perceived view of instructional practice influence student achievement? This question concentrated on examining the relationship from the viewpoint of teachers from an individual school. According to Fullan (2001), teachers add to instructional practice within the school through shared experiences, norms, and interactions with colleagues. Examining the relationship from

the perspective of a specific school helped develop an understanding of the connection between instructional practice and student achievement.

Research question 3 asked: How does instructional practice influence student achievement? This question turned its attention to examining instructional practices and their relationship to achievement. While school leaders' influence on student achievement is indirect, Leithwood and Sun (2018) pointed out that "one of the most important goals for leadership research is to identify potentially powerful mediators or school-related variables that make significant, relatively direct, contributions to student learning" (p. 350). For school leaders (principals and teacher-leaders) the connection between instructional practices and achievement provide key insights related to developing the professional capacity of teachers.

Significance of the Study

Since NCLB, principals have primarily focused on leadership efforts to increase student achievement (Catano & Stronge, 2006). This reality has shifted leadership expectations (Schmidt & Burroughs, 2016). For principals to be instructional leaders, they must bring about sustainable change, which readily promotes teacher leadership capacity and improves student achievement (Fullan, 2001; Kotter, 1996; Leithwood & Sun, 2018; Noonan & Renihan, 2006). This study adds to the school leader's toolbox and provides insights into leadership practices related to improving achievement and school accountability (Hallinger & Murphy, 2013; Noonan & Renihan, 2006; The Wallace Foundation, 2013).

Conceptual Framework

As the instructional leader, the principal is primarily responsible for leading learning and increasing achievement (Blasé & Blasé, 1999; Chenoweth & Theokos, 2011; Fullan, 2001; Lezotte & Snyder, 2011; Lunenburg, 2010). From NCLB to present day, school accountability reform has focused on improving achievement and reawakened the need to clarify the relationship between instructional leadership and student achievement. As Halverson, Grigg, Prichett, and Thomas, (2007) stated, "the recent demand for schools to respond to external accountability measures challenges school leaders" (p. 3), and brought forward the need for principals to build a bridge between instructional leadership and school accountability reform.

Over time, school accountability reform has expanded to include holding principals and teachers accountable for achievement (Hallgren et al., 2014). The continued focus on accountability reform renewed the urgency to examine the leadership of school leaders as "their actions as instructional leaders matter for what happens in classrooms" (Rigby, 2014, p. 3).

Leithwood et al., (2004) added that instructional leadership should "focus on improving classroom practices of teachers" (p. 6). This is essential to sustaining innovative reform initiatives and student learning growth. Research has found that instructional practices that address learning the curriculum, classroom practices, and student learning are equally important to sustaining reform (Darling-Hammond, 2004b; Elmore, 2007; Hanushek & Lindseth, 2009; Hess, 2004; Ravitch, 2010; Tucker, 2003). Similarly, Sammons, Gu, Day, and Ko (2011) found that engaging in a wide range of comprehensive classroom practices catalyzed improvement in student achievement. Bryk

(2010) explained that schools that build capacity, advocate for professional development, use data to monitor instruction, align the curriculum with instruction, and embrace a shared approach to school leadership to improve student achievement.

The complexities of accountability reform require multi-faceted leadership not solely dependent on the principal to enact (Hamilton, Stecher, & Klein, 2002; Rothstein, Jacobsen, & Wilder, 2008). Distributed leadership (DL), a partnership approach to leadership as Spillane (2006) explained, "is as a product of the joint interactions of school leaders" (p. 3) involving the principal and teacher-leaders sharing in implementing reform initiatives within a school. Instructional leadership, according to Waters, Marzano, and McNulty (2003), is inclusive, participatory, and not limited solely to the principal.

The focus on assessment outcomes, Hallinger (2012) asserted, led to rediscovering instructional leadership as the "new paradigm for 21st century leadership" (p. 2), which embodies a collaborative approach to leadership. The continued attention on assessment outcomes renewed the urgency for examining the instructional leadership of school leaders (principals and teacher). Teacher-leaders, as informal school leaders, are vital instructional leaders instrumental to enacting reform.

Applying the lens of DL, this study examined the relationship between instructional practice and student achievement (Chenoweth & Theokos, 2011; Fullan, 2001; Lezotte & Snyder, 2011; Lunenburg, 2010). For principals, the complexities of leading within the context of school accountability regulation requires a diverse approach to leadership, inviting teacher-leaders to take part in the process (Bolden, 2011; Gronn, 2008; Spillane, 2006). DL embraces the leadership of principals and teacher-leaders by

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sharing in the leading and providing direction that supports school reform initiatives (Blasé & Blasé, 1999; Chenoweth & Theokos, 2011; Fullan, 2001; Lezotte & Snyder, 2011; Lunenburg, 2010).

Methodology

Research design. This study applied quantitative, non-experimental, descriptive and correlational statistical methods to explore the relationship between instructional practices and student achievement via survey research to tap into social media to survey public school educators in Florida regarding instructional practices. Like the MDE study, this study used convenience sampling to generate the pool of participants (Weinstock et al., 2016). Descriptive and correlational analysis of the data with SPSS software enabled the development of the results of the study (Arkkelin, 2014; Ong & Puteh, 2017).

Study population. This study mirrored the 2013 MDE study and targeted public school teachers and principals in Florida. Following the MDE, the study surveyed public school principals and teachers to explore the relationship between instructional practice and student achievement. However, unlike the MDE study that specifically invited schools in Michigan identified as having a history of improved student achievement to take part, this study used social media sites (SMS) to make the SSPAPH readily available to those who accessed the online survey and chose to participate.

Instrumentation. The study employed the 107-item SSPAHP with a 4-point, Likert-type, fixed response scale, to collect survey data from public school educators in Florida, which has been psychometrically validated (Weinstock et al., 2016). The SSPAHP, representing practices identified with improving student achievement, emanated from a study conducted by MDE in 2013 involving public schools, teachers,

and principals in Michigan. The instructional practices included in the SSPAHP are organized into five domains based from research associated with improving student achievement. The five SSPAHP domains include effective leadership, strong curriculum, professional development, school culture, and ongoing data use for school improvement (Weinstock et al., 2016). These served as the predictor variables in this study's data analysis. Results from the FSA for each school mentioned by participant response served as the achievement indicator and criterion variable for data analysis.

The online version of the SSPAHP survey was developed using Qualtrics provided by a Florida Atlantic University software license for conducting research. SPSS software enabled performing descriptive and correlational analysis of the data; specifically, multi-liner regression to examine the relationship among the predictor and criterion variables (Arkkelin, 2014; Ong & Puteh, 2017).

Definition of Terms

Distributed leadership (DL): DL encompasses the interaction of multiple leaders in formal or informal roles (Spillane, 2015) and "acknowledges the work of all individuals who contribute to leadership practice" (Harris & Spillane, 2008, p. 32) engaged in guiding school improvement efforts.

Elementary Secondary Education Act (ESEA): Signed into law in 1965 by President Lyndon Baines Johnson, the ESEA provided school districts serving low-income students federal grant dollars to improve the quality of education and increase educational resources for low-income elementary and secondary students (Hanushek & Lindseth, 2009).

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Florida Educator Accomplished Practices (FEAPs): The FEAPs represent the core

> standards for effective educators and serve as Florida's standards for effective

> instructional practice and form the foundation for the state's teacher preparation

> programs, educator certification requirements, and school district instructional

> personnel appraisal systems (Florida Department of Education [FLDOE], 2020e).

Florida Principal Leadership Standards (FPLS): The FPLS contain the research-based

> core expectations, skills, and knowledge base expected of Florida school leaders.

> The FPLS also form the foundation for school leader personnel evaluations and

> professional development systems, school leadership preparation programs, and

> educator certification requirements (FLDOE, 2020f).

Florida Standards Assessments (FSA): The FSA in English language arts (ELA),

> mathematics, and end-of-course (EOC) subjects (algebra 1 and geometry) are the

> annual assessments measuring education gains and progress of Florida public

> school students (FLDOE, 2020d).

High-stakes assessments: High-stakes assessments are grade-specific, curriculum

> standards-based assessments used to report student achievement progress (Corbett

> & Wilson, 1991; Hamilton et al., 2002).

Instructional leadership: Macneill, Cavanagh, and Silcox (2005) defined instructional

> leadership as those actions which influence instruction and impact achievement.

> Lunenburg (2010) further specified instructional leadership as leadership actions

> focused on teaching, learning that promotes collaboration among stakeholders,

> and use of assessment data to drive instruction and align curriculum. Weber

(1987) offered that instructional leadership carries an integral expectation of accountability for instruction.

Instructional practice: Instructional practice focuses on curriculum and instruction with the purpose of improving student achievement (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012).

No Child Left Behind (NCLB): Public Law 107-110 enacted by the U.S. Senate and the House of Representatives, the NCLB Act of 2001 is a reauthorization of the ESEA establishing standards-based accountability reform relying on the application of sanctions or incentives to ensure conformity (NCLB, 2002). Compliance requires each state to test students in reading and math in grades three through eight and once in high school (NCLB, 2002; Hanushek & Lindseth, 2009).

Principal: Florida classifies the school administrator as the principal of the school responsible for the instructional and non-instructional duties related to running the school (FLA. STAT. § 1012.01(3)c, 2019).

Race To The Top (RTTT): The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 funded the RTTT fund, a competitive grant program designed to reward states for creating conditions for educational innovation ensuring a significant improvement in student achievement (U.S. Department of Education [USDOE], 2009). The grant requires states to institute teacher and instructional personnel performance systems that integrate student test scores into the evaluation process (Ravitch, 2010; USDOE, 2009).

School accountability: School accountability addresses the system authorized through legislation designed to measure the achievement growth made by students on

state-wide assessments and rates schools based on the outcomes (Figlio & Loeb, 2011; Domaleski et al., 2018).

Student Success Act (SSA): On July 1, 2011, Florida enacted the SSA (FLA. STAT. § 1012.34, 2011), an educational personnel evaluation system using student achievement as a primary component of school personnel evaluations. The statute requires school districts to administer assessments for each course offered in the district and incorporating student achievement as the key indicator for determining compensation and employment for classroom teachers, other instructional personnel, and school administrators. As part of the classroom teacher's evaluation, instructional practice and professional responsibilities merged into the overall evaluation (FLA. STAT. § 1012.34, 2011).

School Survey of Practices Associated with High Performance (SSPAHP): The SSPAHP was developed by the REL Midwest, in partnership with the MDE, and measured the degree to which schools employed practices associated with raising student achievement (Weinstock et al., 2016). The survey was designed for teachers and school administrators, including principals, assistant principals, and other instructional support personnel. The SSPAHP consists of five domains containing instructional practices, supported by research discovered in high-performing schools:

- Effective leadership: how leadership efforts uphold a school's mission and goals aimed at improving student achievement.
- Strong curriculum (with a focus on literacy): how the curriculum and standards integrate within a school and at the classroom level.

- Professional development: how a school provides for professional learning and collaboration among teachers.

- School culture: how a school engages parents in helping to enable an orderly school environment and high academic standards for students.

- Ongoing data use for school improvement: how a school uses achievement data in decision-making (Weinstock et al., 2016).

Standards-based reform (SBR): SBR is an integral component of educational accountability initiatives designed to hold schools accountable for student achievement outcomes (Baker, 2004). Hamilton, Stecher, and Yuan (2008) explained that while there is no one mutually acceptable definition of SBR, initiatives typically include:

> academic expectations for students, alignment of key elements of the educational system to promote attainment of these expectations, use of assessments of student achievement to monitor performance, decentralization of responsibility for decisions relating to curriculum and instruction, support and technical assistance fostering improved services, and accountability provisions that reward or sanction schools or students based on performance (p. 2).

Teacher-Leader: A teacher-leader is characterized as a teacher who assumes additional roles or responsibilities within the school, extending their leadership influence beyond the classroom (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001).

Chapter Summary

      Leading learning requires schools' instructional leaders to use leadership practices that promote student achievement. As Elmore (2000) explained, instructional leadership is at the nexus of school reform and imperative for improving student achievement. Leithwood et al. (2004) also added that instructional leadership "focus on improving classroom practices of teachers" (p. 6), essential in sustaining innovative reform initiatives. Teacher-leaders, as instructional leaders, are instrumental in leading the learning and enacting reform initiatives. Using the SSPAHP to examine instructional leadership through the lens of DL aids in exploring how the leadership of principals and teacher-leaders promotes student achievement (Blasé & Blasé, 1999; Chenoweth & Theokos, 2011; Fullan, 2001; Lezotte & Snyder, 2011; Lunenburg, 2010).

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

School accountability, Chenoweth and Theokas (2011) pointed out, designed to

raise achievement and hold schools accountable, had an over-arching influence on

principals' instructional practice. Figlio and Loeb (2011) defined school accountability,

as "the process of evaluating school performance based on student performance

measures" (p. 384) and is the guiding force behind school reforms aimed at boosting

achievement. The reliance on student outcomes on state-wide assessments impacted how

principals viewed the relationship between instructional leadership and achievement

(Halverson et al., 2007; Sanders & Kearney, 2008). Over time, using achievement data

as a tool of school accountability reform shifted from schools and school districts to

teachers and principals. The expansion of school accountability reform started a

reexamination of the relationship between instructional leadership and student

achievement.

NCLB

At the start, NCLB, a 2002 reauthorization of the ESEA under the leadership of

President George W. Bush as part of school accountability reform, held schools and

school districts accountable for student achievement (NCLB, 2002; Hanushek &

Lindseth, 2009). During this time, Ravitch (2010) emphasized, "the idea that testing and

accountability would lead to better schools" (p. 95), supporting the drive tying

assessment results and achievement in schools. Fast forward to 2009 when President

Obama's federal grant, RTTT, extended school accountability reform to holding public school teachers and principals accountable for achievement (Hamilton et al., 2002; Koretz, 2017; Paige, Stroup, & Andrade, 2002; USDOE, 2009, 2011; Ramirez, 2004; Ravitch, 2010). RTTT broadened the reach of accountability reform and found a path forward to build on the tenets of NCLB.

Under the leadership of President Bush, NCLB sought to ensure that "all children have the opportunity to high-quality education and reach proficiency on challenging state academic standards and assessments" as it concentrated on addressing the national problem of declining achievement (NCLB, 2002, p. 13). By 2014, NCLB expected 100% of students in grades three through eight to be proficient in reading and math (Darling-Hammond, 2004b; Hanushek & Lindseth, 2009; Linn, 2008; NCLB, 2002; Ravitch, 2010). A requirement of NCLB compelled states to name schools failing to make adequate yearly progress (AYP) toward the goal of having all students reach proficiency in reading and math by academic year 2013-2014 (Dee & Jacob, 2011). NCLB doled sanctions or rewards out to schools based on student outcomes on state-wide assessments (Dee & Jacob, 2011).

With NCLB as the law of the nation, the school accountability movement picked up momentum, directing who to test and when, and the establishing the consequences for schools failing to make learning gains (Darling-Hammond, 2004; Hanushek & Lindseth, 2009; Linn, 2008; Ravitch, 2010; Tucker, 2003). As the 2014 re-authorization period neared the goal of requiring students to be 100% proficient in reading and mathematics, but remained elusive, it raised the possibility of schools receiving sanctions for failing to meet the goals of NCLB (Husband & Hunt, 2015).

Attempting to ward off a crisis, President Obama signed an economic stimulus package in 2009 as part of the American Recovery Act, setting aside $4.35 billion for the RTTT competitive grant program (USDOE, 2009, 2011). RTTT incentivized states to devise reforms building on the vestiges of NCLB to improve student achievement (Fullan, 2009; Koretz, 2017; USDOE, 2009, 2011). The grant expanded school accountability reform to include holding public school teachers and principals accountable for student achievement (USDOE, 2009, 2011).

RTTT

RTTT primarily concentrated on incentivizing states to generate accountability reforms designed to raise achievement, expand educational opportunities for students, align curriculum standards with international expectations, and use data to improve instruction and evaluate the performance of teachers and principals (Deming & Figlio, 2016; Guisbond et al., 2013; USDOE, 2009, 2011; Winters et al., 2010). Although participation was voluntary, winning an RTTT grant committed the state to enact reforms that held public school principals and teachers accountable for achievement (USDOE, 2009). Specifically, the RTTT required states to address:

- adoption of internationally benchmarked standards and assessments that equip students for success in college and the workplace;
- recruiting, developing, retaining, and rewarding effective teachers and principals, specifically where needed most;
- building data systems that measure student success and inform teachers and principals how they can improve instruction; and
- turning around the lowest-achieving schools.

A significant requirement of the RTTT grant expected states to enact legislation revising the performance appraisals of public school teachers and principals by incorporating state assessment results (Finch, 2012; USDOE, 2009, 2011). Under RTTT, each state taking part had the autonomy to develop appraisal systems complying with RTTT requirements that incorporated achievement data in the performance appraisal of public school teachers and principals. RTTT stressed improving instructional practices as a remedy for raising achievement (Finch, 2012; Manna & Ryan, 2011; Onosko, 2011; USDOE, 2009, 2011).

The SSA: Florida's Response to RTTT

Florida, after being awarded a $700 million RTTT grant, passed the SSA in 2011 (FLA. STAT. § 1012.34, 2011) and established a process integrating achievement data in the annual performance appraisals of public school educators. With the SSA, Florida changed the culture of the teaching profession by ensuring that all public school teachers and school leaders were accountable for their students' achievement (FLA. STAT. § 1012.34, 2011).

The RTTT stipulation of incorporating "student growth as a significant factor" in appraisals, underscored the need for instructional practice to incorporate research-based practices in the delivery of instruction (USDOE, 2009, p. 9). The SSA, instrumental in connecting performance appraisals with student achievement, relied on Florida's established research-based practices for teachers and principals to serve as the base of the evaluation process (FLA. STAT. § 1012.34, 2011).

The FEAPs for teachers, and the FPLS for principals, detailed the professional expectations of each and reinforced the intent of the SSA of coordinating research with

performance appraisals (FLA. STAT. § 1012.34, 2011; FLDOE, 2020e, 2020f; Hill & Herlihy, 2011).

Teacher Development

Merging the expectations of the SSA with the FEAPs and the FPLS enabled Florida to produce an evaluation system based on established effective instructional or leadership practices to assess the performance of teachers and principals (Blazer, 2018; FLA. STAT. § 1012.34, 2011; FLDOE, 2020e, 2020f; Hanushek & Rivikin, 2012; Lezotte & Snyder, 2011). For teachers, the new process included embedding results from summative performance observations into final evaluations. "Professional development that was coherent, focused on content knowledge, and involved active learning" contributed to enhancing teacher knowledge and skills, thus improving performance (Garet et al. as cited in Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009, p. 1). Florida principals, reacting to the SSA, encouraged teacher-leaders to take part in sharing their expertise with colleagues to reinforce professional development programs and address evaluation expectations (DuFour & Marzano, 2011).

Envisioning Leadership Within a School

In schools, the principal is the recognized leader and is accountable for reform. However, informal leaders or teacher-leaders are likewise instrumental in leading and enacting school reform (Blasé & Blasé, 2000; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001). School leaders, whether in a formal or informal capacity, Heck and Hallinger (2009) explained, "identify a direction for the school, motivate staff, and coordinate an evolving set of strategies toward improvements in teaching and learning" (p. 662). School leadership,

communicating reform expectations and goals to colleagues, is a shared responsibility among the leaders of a school (Bush, 2007).

Instructional Leadership

Instructional leadership, Elmore (2007) asserted, provides the "guidance and direction for the instructional program" (p. 58) and serves as the catalyst for improving teaching, learning, and student achievement. According to Marzano, Waters, and McNulty (2005), instructional leadership is concerned with ensuring that it reflects the focus on improving student achievement in the actions and practices of principals and school leaders. Several models of instructional leadership also include practices addressing student learning and school culture as fundamental for sustaining improvements (Leithwood et al., 2004; Lezotte & Snyder, 2010; Marzano et al., 2005; Weber, 1987). Bryk, Bender Sebring, Allensworth, Luppescu, and Easton (2010) reported, leadership practices specifically addressing parent engagement, teacher development, and the use of data to monitor achievement in Chicago public schools had a significant impact on achievement. Serving as the base, instructional leadership embodied practices purposed with improving teaching, learning, and student achievement.

Instructional Practice

Research connecting student-centered leadership with instructional practice suggests that instructional practice is as fundamental to instructional leadership as instructional leadership is to increasing achievement (Hallinger & Murphy, 2013; Leithwood et al., 2004; Marzano et al., 2005; Robinson 2011). Leadership practices translate a leader's words into action (Chenoweth & Theokas, 2011; Leithwood & Riehl, 2003). Hallinger and Heck (2009) suggested that practices prioritizing teaching and

learning serve to create "a positive school climate, [embed] academic expectations in systems and processes and the academic support that students receive and support the ongoing professional learning of staff" (p. 662). Waters, Marzano, and McNulty (2004) clarified, however, "how to select and skillfully use leadership practices" (p. 10) remain the bedrock of effective leadership, requisite for improving achievement. Southworth (2002) pointed out that, "leadership practices contribute to the outcomes desired by schools" (p. 78) and are the foundation that drives reform.

Instructional Practice and Student Achievement

Waters et al.'s (2004) comprehensive assessment of over 5,000 studies associated with curriculum and instruction found "66 practices grouped into 21 leadership responsibilities that positively correlated with student achievement" (p. 3). Ruebling, Stow, Kayona, and Clarke (2004) added that leadership practices using student achievement data for the planning of the curriculum and interventions combined with providing feedback on performance to teachers had a positive impact on achievement. Leithwood et al. (2004) described practices reflecting "setting the direction," "developing people," and "redesigning the organization" (p. 9) that promote effectiveness by increasing leadership's indirect influence on teaching, learning, and student achievement.

Day and Sammons's (2013) comprehensive review of the research linking instructional leadership with improving student outcomes summarized and grouped practices into five key areas. While the effect size varied, each grouping represented leadership practices instrumental with promoting a school culture focused on achievement.

"1. Establishing goals and expectations (0.42),

2. Resourcing strategically (0.31),

3. Planning, coordinating, and evaluating teaching and the curriculum (0.42),

4. Promoting and participating in teacher learning and development (0.84), and

5. Ensuring an orderly and supportive environment (0.27)" (Day & Sammons,

2013, p. 12).

Of particular significance, "Promoting and participating in teacher learning and

development high effect size (0.84)," according to Day and Sammons (2013, p. 12), was

found to have the greatest influence on student learning and achievement. Principals, by

advocating for developing the professional capacity of teachers, make possible improving

the quality of instruction and student learning. As Elmore (2004) summarized, leadership

practices supporting school improvement efforts prove essential for improving teaching

and student learning.

Principal as Instructional Leader

NCLB's 19-year legacy reaffirms the importance of instructional leadership in

raising achievement (Hallinger & Murphy, 2013). Since NCLB was enacted in 2001, the

role of the principal as instructional leader has evolved. Research has established that

school leadership and, especially, instructional leadership—while indirect—have a

positive impact on student learning and achievement (Horng & Loeb, 2010; Leithwood et

al., 2004; Mendels, 2012).

Originally, the role of the principal was described as the head teacher running the

school and carrying out the operational tasks (Mehl, 1961; Mendels, 2012). Beginning

with the Effective School Reform movement of the 1970s, the role transformed from

manager to instructional leader responsible for constructing school conditions supporting

teaching and learning (Blasé & Blasé, 2004; Cuban, 1988; De Maeyer, Rymenans, Van Petegem, van den Bergh, & Rijlaarsdam, 2007; Edmonds 1979; Elmore, 2000; Lezotte & Snyder, 2011; Sergiovanni, 2000). Edmond's (1979) effective school, research-initiated change underscored the importance of principal leadership in promoting professional learning for teaching and student learning (Fullan & Hargreaves, 2016; Hallinger & Murphy, 1986; Marzano, 2000; Murphy, 1992).

The pairing of accountability reform with the curriculum caused principals to expand instructional efforts to focus on improving teacher performance (Hartley, 2010; Schmidt & Burroughs, 2016; Spillane & Healey, 2010; Valle, Almager, Molina, & Claudet, 2015). A significant feature of a principal's instructional leadership, research has identified, is nurturing teacher effectiveness by enhancing professional competencies essential to improving student achievement (Blasé & Blasé, 2004; Darling-Hammond, Hyler, & Gardner, 2017; Fullan & Hargreaves, 2016; Marzano et al., 2005). Developing teacher leadership capacity has allowed principals to expand instructional leadership efforts within schools (Hallinger & Murphy, 2013).

Revisiting Edmond's (1979) concept of the principal as the instructional leader, promoting teacher leadership supported reform efforts and facilitated innovation and a common understanding of effective practice (Leithwood & Sun, 2018; Lezotte & Snyder, 2011). Advancing shared knowledge and a common language of effective teaching practice, according to Hallinger and Murphy (2013), extended the principal's efforts to increase student achievement.

Teacher as Instructional Leader

Teacher leadership, originating with *A Nation at Risk* (The National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983), directed the country's reform efforts on improving teacher quality to increase student achievement (Andrews & Crowther, 2002; Rothstein et al., 2008). According to Lambert (2003), as instructional leaders, teacher-leaders assume many leadership roles that directly contribute to the school and to students. Their leadership is organic, occurring naturally because of their knowledge, expertise, and practice (Berg, Carver, & Mangin, 2013; Harris & Spillane, 2008). The instructional leadership of teacher-leaders has progressed naturally in reply to developing needs within schools (York-Barr & Duke, 2004). As agents for reform, teacher-leaders balance the instructional leadership of the principal through their direct association with students, colleagues, and the school community (Blasé & Blasé, 2004; Crowther et al., 2002). In this capacity they serve dual roles, that of teacher and school leader, actively applying their leadership to support school improvement efforts and advance student learning (Kilinç, 2014).

Likewise, peers recognize teacher-leaders as key stakeholders in the school and accept their leadership authority within the school and community (Crowther et al., 2002; Lambert, 1998). As Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001) highlighted, their influence is far-reaching: "Teachers who are leaders lead within and beyond the classroom, identify with and contribute to a community of teacher-learners and leaders, and influence others toward improved educational practice" (p. 5). The authenticity of their leadership and capacity to influence others is formidable. Allowing the instructional leadership efforts of principals and teacher-leaders to thrive expands their influence and ability to enact

school reform (Barth, 2001; Crowther et al., 2002; Deal & Peterson, 2009; Harris, 2003; Schlechty, 2002).

Distributed Leadership

DL has grown in prominence as school accountability has expanded and grown more complex, requiring innovative leadership (Gronn, 2002; Harris, 2008b; Spillane, 2006; Youngs, 2009). "[Distributed] leadership is not the reserve of an individual but results from multiple interactions at different points in the organization" (Spillane and Harris as cited in Harris, 2008b, p. 33). Thorpe, Gold, and Lawler (2011) added that it reflects a "variety of configurations which emerge from the exercise of influence that produces interdependent and conjoint action" (p. 241). Harris (2008b) further clarified that "[distributed] leadership within and across school and school systems requires a shift in power and resources. It demands alternative school structures that support alternative forms of leadership" (p. 5). Finally, Harris and Spillane (2008) rationalized, as a remedy to the sustained pressures of "increased internal demands on schools" (p. 31), that schools have adopted alternative leadership models allowing for teacher-leaders to take part in leading within their schools.

Gronn (2002) defined leadership as "emergent work-related influence" (p. 7) and offered two general explanations for DL. First, Gronn (2002) explained that the aggregate leadership practice of many or all members of an organization is "dispersed rather than concentrated" (p. 3). Second, he stated that the three main aspects of DL are: "spontaneous collaboration concerning tasks in which people with different skills, expertise and from different organizational levels" come together for the duration of the task (p. 5); "shared roles that emerge between two or more people;" and

"institutionalization of structures working together" (p. 6). Spillane (2005) characterized DL as a "leadership practice that results from interactions among leaders and followers, and that the situation is critical" (p. 144). DL opened the door for the expertise of followers to emerge and promoted collaboration.

DL facilitating leadership. DL conceptualizes school leadership as a plural experience, allowing for school stakeholders from the principal to teachers-leaders to take part in the leadership experience (Denis, Langley, & Sergi, 2012). As a theoretical approach to school leadership, DL provides a multi-dimensional leadership framework that enables stakeholders to take part in school leadership (Hernandez, Eberly, Avolio, & Johnson, 2011). DL's organic nature permits leadership fluidity and relies on shared experiences to build sense-making among school stakeholders, extending leadership efforts within the community (Hartley, 2010). Unlike traditional views of leadership where the decision-making authority lies only with the principal, DL embraces the participation of teacher-leaders in decision-making and problem-solving processes (Harris, 2012; Harrison, 2005).

Advantages of DL. DL can perform a fundamental role in influencing school and instructional improvement as correlated to school accountability. DL "offers a productive way to think about leadership…providing a means for more effective leadership practice" (Spillane, 2006, p. 103) and enables other approaches to surface, including navigating issues dealing with school accountability.

Lashway (2003b) stated that no matter how deeply a principal understands instruction, only classroom teachers have first-hand knowledge and that instructional methods should be guided rather than controlled. Robinson (2011) explained that using a

student-centered leadership approach allows teacher-leaders to share their expertise and knowledge with others. Lashway (2003a) believed that DL allows teacher-leaders to use Elmore's (2004) idea of comparative advantage, which asserts that "people should lead where they have expertise. When applied, it means that policymakers should use their knowledge to balance competing concerns by setting overall goals, but not to determine the best way to get there" (p. 3). According to Harris (2012), DL "implies the relinquishing of some authority and power, a repositioning of the role from exclusive leadership to leadership that is more concerned with brokering, facilitating and supporting others in leading innovation and change" (p. 8). In effect, DL provides a system of leadership organized and woven throughout the school.

Instead of being focused on one or two key individuals, DL disperses leadership roles and functions throughout an organization. A network of organized leadership throughout a school can help to improve the instructional practices of teachers. For instruction to improve in a school, teachers with different strengths must work together to solve a common problem (Elmore, 2004). This kind of distribution of expertise is central to school improvement.

Putting DL into practice in schools. Harris (2008a) asserted that DL is "essentially concerned with harnessing and enhancing the skills and knowledge of all those within an organization to create a common culture that functions positively and effectively" (p. 1). It can promote the efficient operation of an organization through DL by focusing on having many leaders who work together. To enact school reform effectively, a wider vision of shared leadership is needed:

Teacher leadership had implications for the division of labor, particularly when

the tasks within the school were shared. It also opens the possibility of all

teachers becoming leaders at various times. It is this last dimension that has the

most potency and potential for school improvement premised upon collaboration

among teachers. (Harris & Muijs, 2005, p. 17)

Leithwood and Mascall (2008) reasoned that DL included teacher-leaders and

other community partners involved in the school. In recent years, educators have been

trying to create DL in their schools, often with the support of influential groups in the

educational leadership policy community (Leithwood et al., 2004). DL has evolved as a

model that is an encouraging response to the multifaceted issues faced by many schools

and school districts. If schools can navigate the challenges of large-scale, school

accountability reform efforts, they will need to count on the shared expertise of teacher-

leaders and other school faculty members (Leithwood & Mascall, 2008).

Building leadership capacity. Lambert (1998) defined leadership capacity as the

"skillful participation in the work of leadership. The work of leadership involves

attention to shared learning that leads to a shared purpose and action" (p. 91). In schools,

DL could supplant traditional leadership by distributing duties to faculty members

according to their areas of expertise. Teachers who understand how instructional

practices can impact student learning and affect student achievement on standardized

tests could emerge as leaders in the school.

Lambert (2003) emphasized that there are some critical factors for principals to

consider when building leadership capacity among teaching staff. As seen in Figure 1,

principals build trust and relationships between and with their staff.
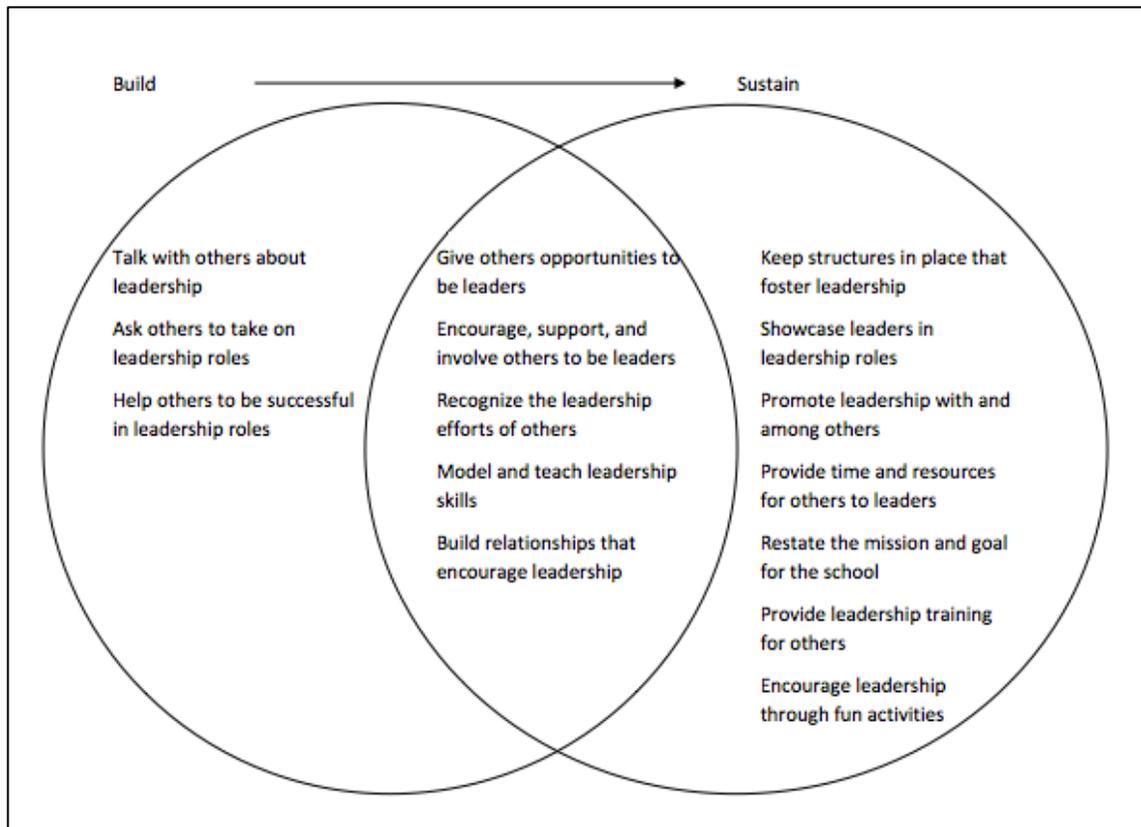
Figure 1. How principals build and sustain leadership capacity (Lambert, 2003). Reprinted with permission.

Building leadership capacity enhances the efficiency and effectiveness of DL in a school. However, Harris (2012) noted that "without the support of the principal, DL is unlikely to flourish or be sustained" (p. 8). She added that principals are the primary component in establishing the conditions for DL to succeed.

Effects of DL on student outcomes. Several research studies on the effects of DL on student outcomes have not fully assessed the impact on achievement. In a discussion of the evidence regarding the relationship between DL and organizational outcomes, Leithwood, Day, Sammons, Harris, and Hopkins (2006) pointed to two studies on the effects of leadership on student outcomes, a study by Leithwood and Jantzi (1999) in Canada and a study by Silins and Mulford (2002) in Australia.

Leithwood and Jantzi (1999) examined the effect of principal and teacher leadership on student engagement survey data analyzed from a sample of 1,762 teachers and 9,941 students in a large Canadian district. They discovered that principal leadership had larger effects on student engagement than teacher leadership. In a subsequent study, Leithwood and Mascall (2008) investigated the effects of collective leadership on student achievement. The authors defined collective leadership as "the combined effects of all sources of leadership and the differences in the contribution to such effects by each source (e.g., administrators, teachers, students, parents)" (p. 530). The study "significant but weak relationships between leadership and teacher capacity" and "collective leadership does explain significant variation in student achievement across schools" (Leithwood & Mascall, 2008, p. 554).

Silins and Mulford (2004) conducted another study of note in Australia. They examined leadership effects on student learning outcomes based on survey data collected from teachers and students. They concluded that student achievement was more likely to improve with the sharing of leadership within the school, when teachers felt empowered in matters they felt were important. These studies provide evidence supporting the indirect effect of school leadership on student outcomes.

DL and school accountability. Harris (2008a) emphasized that DL has been experiencing a positive reception in educational leadership for three key reasons. First, research states that DL influences student achievement positively. Second, 21st century instruction is well matched to DL practices. Third, a variety of leadership structures have emerged because of increased demands on principals in the last 15 to 20 years.

Several studies have underscored a positive link between certain student learning results and DL along with a positive impact on motivation and self-efficacy of teachers (Camburn & Han, 2009; Hallinger & Heck, 2009; Leithwood et al., 2007). Studies conducted by Harris (2012) and Hallinger and Heck (2009) also demonstrate a positive relationship between DL, school improvement, and student achievement.

These studies support and strengthen the significance of DL as a probable contributor to positive change and improvement in schools. The literature review brings to light how a DL approach to instructional leadership can complement accountability initiatives and improve student achievement. As illustrated, the DL lens supports the leadership of principals and teacher-leaders and expands their efforts to have a far-reaching impact on student achievement and the culture of schools (Barth, 2001; Crowther et al., 2002; Deal & Peterson, 2009; Harris, 2003; Schlechty, 2002).

Moving forward with DL. Recent research examining DL within school accountability reform continues to emphasize the benefits of DL and the instructional leadership of principals and teacher-leaders on student achievement (Harris, 2012; Hartley, 2010; Hitt & Tucker, 2016). In a recent study examining student achievement and the instructional leadership of the principal, Tan (2018) found that school leadership can "empower teachers so that the latter can make the best professional decisions in teaching to improve achievement" (p. 37), thus having a positive influence on student learning and achievement. While the focus on assessment, achievement, and accountability continues to influence school leaders, revisiting instructional leadership as envisioned by Edmonds (1979) and Hallinger and Ko (2015) endures by providing a framework for improving student learning and achievement.

Chapter Summary

This literature review delved into the following topics: (a) tracing the historical origins of educational reform embracing accountability; (b) DL as the theoretical lens framing the leadership practices of principals and teacher-leaders; (c) instructional leadership and its origins and development as a concept defining school leadership; (d) the role of the principal as an instructional leader; and (e) the instructional leadership of teachers.

The literature review promotes several conclusions regarding the evolution of the principal as an instructional leader within a school accountability environment.

- Current school accountability initiatives are a by-product of the 20th-century educational landscape response to the problem of declining student achievement (Paige et al., 2002; Ramirez, 2004; Ravitch, 2010; Sunderman & Orfield, 2007).

- Tying student achievement results in personnel performance evaluations add a dimension to the school accountability landscape.

- The instructional leadership of the principal within school accountability is critical in leading learning (Blasé & Blasé, 2004; Dufour & Marzano, 2011; Elmore, 2000; Horng & Loeb, 2010).

- DL provides principals the theoretical basis for building leadership capacity within the landscape of school accountability initiatives (Rutherford, 2009; Streck, 2009).

- Principals as instructional leaders embrace building instructional leadership capacity by partnering with teacher-leaders to sustain reform efforts and improve

achievement (Barth, 2001; Crowther et al., 2002; Deal & Peterson, 2009; Harris, 2003; Schlechty, 2002).

Within the school environment, the principal's knowledge and leadership skills are essential to providing the direction needed to bring about reform and improve student achievement. Using DL to facilitate change will provide principals with the leadership tools necessary to align efforts and provide leadership complementing a 21st-century school accountability environment. By tracing the historical beginnings of school accountability reform efforts to the current day and tying it to instructional leadership, the literature review illustrated how the leadership of principals and teacher-leaders continues to evolve within the context of school accountability reform.

CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY

Overview

NCLB's school accountability reforms have had a lasting influence on how schools, principals, and teachers perceive the impact of instructional practice on achievement (Hanushek & Lindseth, 2009; Sleegers & Leithwood, 2010). As 21st century instructional leaders, principals have needed to be cognizant of leadership practices aligned with school accountability reform targeted at improving achievement (Gronn, 2008; Harris, 2012; Rutherford, 2009; Smylie, Mayrowetz, Murphy, & Seashore Louis, 2007). The increased focus on assessment outcomes, Hallinger (2012) asserted, has led to a rediscovering of instructional leadership as the "new paradigm for 21st century leadership" (p. 2) supporting the work of principals and teachers with improving student achievement.

To improve achievement, Fullan (2001) suggested that principals need to seek instructional practices specifically addressing teaching and student learning. This study used the SSPAHP developed in 2013 by the REL Midwest in partnership with the MDE to conduct the research (Weinstock et al., 2016). REL granted permission to local districts, schools, and researchers to use the survey to aid with planning, developing interventions, training, or any other purpose associated with school improvement efforts.

Research Design

This study accessed SMS and distributed the SSPAHP to public school Florida

educators to examine the relationship between instructional practice and student achievement. Drawing on SMS to circulate the survey increased the probability of recruiting public school educators from across the state (Heppner & Heppner, 2004; Kayam & Hirsch, 2012; Muijs, 2004). This study analyzed the relationship by applying descriptive and correlational analysis in a quantitative research design using data from the SSPAHP and the FSA for the 2016-2017 school year.

This study was guided by the MDE study and used the 107-item, Likert-type SSPAHP in a quantitative, quasi-experimental research design. The survey, made available on SMS, took participants approximately 20 minutes to complete. The SSPAHP survey begins by asking participants to respond to a 7-item biographical section which included the name of the school district, school name, the position held in the school, years of experience, the area of responsibility and level of education (Weinstock et al., 2016). Participants, after completing the biographical section, responded to the rest of the survey using the 4-point Likert-type scale.

Research Questions

The three research questions that guided this study were:

1. How do principals' perceptions of instructional practice compare with teachers' sense of instructional practice when viewed through the lens of student achievement?

2. How does a school's perceived view of instructional practice influence student achievement?

3. How does instructional practice influence student achievement?

Participants

  This study targeted Florida public school educators to participate in the study. Initially, teachers, principals, other school leaders charged with teaching and leading in public schools was the central focus of the study. Additionally, educators attending a graduate program at a Florida university were also extended an invitation to participate in the study. The MDE selectively invited participants from schools identified as having a history of continuously improving student achievement to take part in its study. Unlike its predecessor, this study used SMS to make the SSPAHP readily available to public school educators within Florida willing to complete the online survey (see Appendix A). Public school teachers and principals directly affected by accountability reform were qualified to participate as in-the-field experts vital to exploring the relationship between achievement and instructional practice.

  Florida reported a student enrollment of 2,804,865 for grades kindergarten through 12 in its 4,200 public schools for the 2016-2017 school year (FLDOE, 2020g). The state reported a combined total of 325,421 instructional and administrative personnel for the 2016-2017 school year as well (FLDOE, 2020b). Table 1 displays the total number of full-time teachers, principals, and other school leaders teaching and leading in Fall 2016.

Table 1

Full-Time Staff and Assignments in Florida's Public Schools, Fall 2016

Major Activity Assignment Areas	Total	Percentage
Administrative	12,383	3.8%
Instructional	195,744	60.1%
Support	117,294	36.0%
Total	325,421	100.0%
Instructional Activity Assignments	Total	Percentage
Elementary Teachers	73,514	37.6
Secondary Teachers	65,898	33.7
Exceptional Education Teachers	26,682	13.6
Other Teachers	5,374	2.7
Total Teachers	171,468	87.6
Guidance	5,769	2.9
Visiting Teachers/Social Workers	1,141	0.6
School Psychologists	1,386	0.7
Librarians/AV Workers	2,038	1.0
Other Professional Staff/Instructional	13,942	7.1
Total	195,744	100.0

Note. FLDOE (2020b).

Sampling plan. A key feature of the sampling plan for this study is that it relied on SMS to draw participants to the study and form the sample. Similar to the MDE study, this study depended on convenience sampling (Heppner & Heppner, 2004; Muijs, 2004; Weinstock et al., 2016). As Warner (2008) stated, convenience sampling "consists

of participants who are readily available to the researcher" (p. 4), facilitating bringing together respondents for a study.

Using convenience sampling and SMS increased the probability of reaching public school educators from across Florida (Boyd & Ellison, 2007; Muijs, 2004). The use of social media has grown in popularity, giving researchers an outlet for conducting research and broadening the scope of the sample size (Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2007; Moreno, Goniu, Moreno, & Diekema, 2013; Phillips, 2011). For this study, SMS presented the opportunity of reaching public school educators linked professionally from school districts across Florida (Ellison et al., 2007; Kayam & Hirsch, 2012).

As a tool for conducting research, SMS facilitates communication by connecting virtual groups sharing similar interests (Ellison et al., 2007). According to Moreno et al. (2013), one of the most popular SMS, Facebook, permits online groups or individuals to post "surveys, or photographs, to build an online social network by friending profile owners, and to communicate with other profile owners via messaging" (p. 709). Using SMS to reach teachers and principals from across Florida facilitated the distribution of the survey and helped to establish a diverse sample (Whitaker, Stevelink, & Fear, 2017).

While access to an association's SMS is often for members only, limited public access is frequently available (Kayam & Hirsch, 2012). For example, the SMS for the United Teachers of Dade (UTD) with 3,438 followers at the time of data collection, and the Hillsborough Classroom Teachers Association (HCTA) with 4,667 followers at the time of data collection, allowed limited public access (Hillsborough Classroom Teachers Association, n.d.; United Teachers of Dade, n.d.). Both the UTD and the HCTA presented a viable outlet for recruiting participants for the study. According to the SMS

for two other professional associations, the Florida Education Association, a state-wide

professional association for teachers with over 5,000 members at the time of data

collection, and the Florida Association of School Administrators (FASA) for school

administrators, has restricted access available for non-members (Florida Association of

School Administrators, n.d.; Florida Education Association, n.d.). Accessing SMS to

recruit public school educators increased the likelihood of expanding the range of

responses to the SSPAHP.

Sample size. Given that the survey was accessible to teaching professionals from

across Florida, getting a reliable sample was critical. This study followed the sample size

targets established by the online pilot study for the SSPAHP in 2013 that required a

minimum of "20 respondents for a reliability of 0.70" and 100 surveys for the data

analysis (Weinstock et al., 2016, p. 4). The MDE also study stipulated a minimum of "13

survey respondents per SSPAHP domain for a reliability of 0.60" (Weinstock et al., 2016,

p. 4) for conducting a school-wide analysis of the responses.

Ensuring participant anonymity. Participation in the study was voluntary and

participants remained anonymous throughout the survey. Before starting with data

collection, approval from Florida Atlantic University's Institutional Review Board (IRB)

was requested to safeguard the privacy of participants (see Appendix B). The research

plan presented details informing of the steps taken to safeguard participant anonymity,

explained the online consent process (see Appendix C) and the Qualtrics SSPAHP

protocol, and specified that there was no penalty for not completing the survey (Allen,

2017).

Instrumentation

The SSPAPH is composed of 107 survey items grouped into five domains. The SSPAHP formed as a result of a pilot study and underwent a validation process to ensure its authenticity (Weinstock et al., 2016). Additionally, to add to developing an understanding of the connection for Florida educators, the FPLS were examined.

Construct validity of the SSPAHP. The SSPAHP underwent a detailed, seven-step process that assessed its reliability and validity (Weinstock et al., 2016). This process included a review of the literature, identifying schools with a history of high student achievement, reviewing the policies and practices of high-performing schools, examining existing surveys, interviewing, performing a small-scale pilot study, and administering the survey a second time with a different and larger sample (Weinstock et al., 2016). Upon meeting the criteria for internal consistency of survey items, the final SSPAPH was made available to the public (see Appendix D).

Validation of the survey began in 2013 when the MDE invited 27 schools representing elementary, middle, and high schools with a history of improving student achievement to take part in a pilot study (Weinstock et al., 2016). Eight principals from the group of 27 agreed to have their schools participate. The sample included 226 educators. The survey was emailed to the group with 95 surveys being returned. In addition to administering the survey online, interviews were also conducted with a separate group of teachers and principals as part of a pilot study data collection process (Weinstock et al., 2016).

After collecting 100 surveys, the threshold requirement for starting, the item response theory and classical test theory were employed to analyze survey responses

(Carlson & von Davier, 2013; Weinstock et al., 2016). Participation in the survey was not evenly distributed and hindered reliability. Differences in sub-groups caused by the disparity in the number of completed surveys from each participating school were addressed using the Spearman-Brown formula technique to ensure address the reliability issue (de Vet, Mokkink, Mosmuller, & Terwee, 2017). The results from the pilot study revealed that 67% of the survey respondents were middle and high school teachers averaging 10 years of teaching experience (Weinstock et al., 2016).

Confirming the authenticity of the SSPAHP included assessing the reliability of the Likert-type scale (Likert, 1932; Weinstock et al., 2016). The values for the SSPAHP scale had a range from 1 to 4. The values of the fixed-response, Likert-type scale were:

- 1 or *strongly disagree*

- 2 or *disagree*

- 3 or *agree*

- 4 or *strongly agree*

Internal consistency of the scales was established using Cronbach's alpha combined with classical test statistical analyses that showed differences in SSPAHP domain scores that were within an acceptable threshold for reliability (Hendrickson, Massey, & Cronan, 1993; Nunnally, 1978; Santos, 1999). Another classical test analysis and Rasch analysis was conducted to address inconsistencies and safeguard the integrity of the response scores (Holland & Hoskens, 2003; Weinstock et al., 2016).

In 2014, the survey was revised based on the results of the pilot study and re-administered online to a target group of 64 MDE schools, resulting in 212 returned survey responses (Weinstock et al., 2016). The second administration of the survey was

also subjected to the same validation process as the original. A comparison of the findings from each administration yielded similar results, showing that the instrument had achieved internal consistency and presented as a reliable tool for data collection (Weinstock et al., 2016).

Based on the outcomes from the pilot studies, interviews, and review of the literature, the instructional practices included in the SSPAHP survey items were established and grouped into five domains:

- effective leadership

- school culture

- strong curriculum

- professional development

- ongoing data use for school improvement (Weinstock et al., 2016).

Table 2 summarizes the leadership practices of each domain.

The practices are grouped into sub-headings within each of the SSPAHP domains (Weinstock et al., 2016). Effective leadership is divided into three sub-headings; organizational direction, collaborative leadership, and instructional leadership. The survey items found in the effective leadership domain addressed practices aligned to the mission and vision of the school, community engagement, and student learning (Bryk et al., 2010; Weinstock et al., 2016).

Table 2

SSPAHP Domain and Descriptors

SSPAHP Domain	Descriptors
Effective Leadership	Effective leadership is reflected in the administrator's ability to establish a shared school mission and goals to provide instructional guidance.
Strong Curriculum	A strong curriculum is supported by structured curricular goals at the school and classroom levels, with an emphasis on literacy.
Professional Development	Professional development is offered to allow teachers opportunities to both collaborate and attend meaningful professional development.
School Culture	The school's culture is supported by an orderly school environment that encourages parental involvement while emphasizing high academic standards.
Ongoing Data Use for School Improvement	Ongoing use of student achievement data by staff, including the principal to make decisions based on patterns.

Strong curriculum is also divided into three sub-headings; curriculum, instruction, and assessments, associated with literacy instruction and intervention (Weinstock et al., 2016). The strong curriculum domain assesses how assessments, achievement data, and literacy instruction guide classroom practice. The underlying premise of a strong curriculum places instructional leadership at the center of examining how teaching and learning are conducted and monitored within a school (Hallinger & Heck, 1996; Lezotte, & Snyder, 2011).

Professional development is divided into sub-headings associated with exploring how professional development is integrated into school programs supporting teacher training (Weinstock et al., 2016). Practices in professional development examine how

professional training and collaboration enhance classroom practice and improve instruction (Lambert, 2003; Stoll, Harris, & Handscomb, 2012). High-performing schools that offer teacher training and professional development promoting collaboration see improved student achievement (Kennedy, 2010; Waits et al., 2006).

School culture is divided into sub-headings focused on exploring how the culture of the school fosters student learning and achievement. Culture is often considered the heart of a school and the impetus for change (Sergiovanni, 2000). Emerging as a pivotal tool, school culture has brought about far-reaching change by supporting the leadership efforts of teachers and principals (Bolman & Deal, 2003; Dumay, 2009; Eilers & Camacho, 2007; Hargreaves, 1995). Specifically, school culture practices connect the culture of the school with achievement (Weinstock et al., 2016).

Ongoing data use for school improvement includes only one sub-heading that addresses the monitoring of classroom practices and student learning (Weinstock et al., 2016). With the continued focus on school accountability, using instructional leadership practices intended to monitor student progress and improve achievement surfaced as important (Chenoweth & Theokas, 2011). Each domain of the SSPAHP involves leadership practices backed by research as having a positive influence on learning and achievement (Weinstock et al., 2016). Table 3 displays each domain and a sampling of the accompanying sub-headings and practices.

Table 3

SSPAPH Sample Survey Item(s) with Accompanying Domain and Sub-Heading

SSPAPH Domain	Sub-Heading with Survey Item Number	Survey Item
Effective Leadership	(12) Organizational direction	(a). School administrators make clear the educational goals of the school.
		School administrators help the faculty develop high professional expectations of themselves.
	(14) Instructional leadership	(b). The principal observes teachers teaching.
		(e). The principal gives teachers specific ideas of how to improve instruction.
Strong Curriculum (focus on literacy)	(15) Curriculum, instruction, and assessments aligned with standards	(a). Our staff demonstrates an understanding of state learning standards for reading
		(d). This school uses curriculum that is relevant and meaningful.
Professional Development	(18) Focused professional development	(a). Objective data are used to guide building-directed professional development.
School Culture	(20) High academic standards	(f) Academic achievement is recognized and acknowledged by the school.
	(22) Professional teacher behavior	(c) Most teachers in this school exercise professional judgment.
	(23) Professional community	(j) Most teachers in this school exchange suggestions for curriculum materials with colleagues.
	(24) Parent and Community	(d) This school communicated effectively with families of all cultures.
	(25) Staff Collegiality	(a) School staff members work well together.
	(26) School support of innovation	(d) In my school, we systematically consider new and better ways of doing things.
Ongoing Data Use for School Improvement	Frequent monitoring of teaching and learning	(e) Staff are informed about our performance with evidence from observations, student progress, or other data.
		(f) The administration uses data to make recommendations regarding learning programs.

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Survey Delivery System

The online version of the SSPAHP developed using Qualtrics survey software. Qualtrics, a widely used research platform for industry and academia (Qualtrics, n.d.), was accessed through Florida Atlantic University's license for conducting research. Qualtrics contains a high-quality interface allowing simple point-and-click options for participants with very robust reporting features. Additionally, data stored in a specific location offline were processed and maintained in the United States. The process of data storage followed the general requirements set forth by the Federal Information Security Management Act of 2002 to prevent data breaches (Qualtrics, n.d.).

FPLS

The FPLS, ratified in 2005 and amended in 2011, represents "Florida's core expectations for effective school administrators" (FLDOE, 2020f, para. 1). The FPLS contains the leadership expectations for Florida public school principals and forms the basis of performance appraisal. The FPLS, composed of 10 standards and organized according to four domains, equips Florida principals with a framework of leadership practices aligned to Florida's vision for effective school leadership (FLDOE, 2020f). Table 4 lists each of the leadership domains and accompanying standards.

Table 4

FPLS Domain and Accompanying Standards

FPLS Domain	FPLS Standards
Domain 1: Student Achievement	Standard 1: Student Learning Results
	Effective school leaders achieve results on the school's student learning goals.
	Standard 2: Student Learning as a Priority
	Effective school leaders demonstrate that student learning is their top priority through leadership actions described throughout the Florida Principal Leadership Standards.
Domain 2: Instructional Leadership	Standard 3: Instructional Plan Implementation
	Effective school leaders work collaboratively to develop and implement an instructional framework that aligns curriculum with state standards, effective instructional practices, student learning needs and assessments.
	Standard 4: Faculty Development
	Effective school leaders, recruit, develop an effective and diverse faculty and staff.
	Standard 5: Learning Environment
	Effective school leaders structure and monitor school-learning environment that improves learning for all of Florida's diverse student population.
Domain 3: Organizational Leadership	Standard 6: Decision Making
	Effective school leaders employ and monitor a decision-making process that is based on vision, mission and priorities using facts and data.
	Standard 7: Leadership Development
	Effective school leaders actively cultivate, support, and develop other leaders within the organization.
	Standard 8: School Management
	Effective school leaders manage the organization, operations, and facilities in ways that maximize the use of resources to promote a safe, efficient, legal, and effective learning environment.
	Standard 9: Communication
	Effective school leaders practice two-way communications and use appropriate oral, written, and electronic communication and collaboration skills to accomplish school and system goals by building and maintaining relationships with students, faculty, parents, and community.
Domain 4: Professional and Ethical	Standards 10: Professional and Ethical Behaviors
	Effective school behavior leaders demonstrate personal and professional behaviors consistent with quality practices in education and as a community leader.

Note. FLDOE (2020f).

FPLS and SSPAHP

The FPLS and SSPAHP are both research-based and emphasize practices instrumental to improving achievement (FLDOE, 2020f; Weinstock et al., 2016). Unlike in form, but similar in purpose, the SSPAHP encapsulates practices aligned to the theme of improving student achievement (Weinstock et al., 2016). The FPLS also addresses student achievement and reflects the leadership practices expected of Florida principals (FLDOE, 2020f).

For example, FPLS domain 1: student achievement, standards 1: student learning results and standard 2: student learning and the SSPAPH effective leadership domain highlight practices related to supporting a school's vision and mission of prioritizing student learning and achievement (FLDOE, 2020f; Weinstock et al., 2016). Similarly, the SSPAPH survey domain, ongoing data for school improvement, and FPLS domain 1: student achievement and domain 2: instructional leadership, each address leadership practices using student achievement data as the tool for directing school decisions, assessing student progress, and providing feedback to teachers (FLDOE, 2020f; Weinstock et al., 2016). Although not strictly aligned, the focus on achievement resonates through both the SSPAPH and the FPLS, reinforcing the connection between instructional leadership and student achievement.

Overview of Florida's Student Assessment and Accountability Initiatives

Although the emphasis of this study was not on Florida's school grading program, it is important to understand how the current school grading system is structured, reinforcing Florida's commitment to improving student achievement. Starting in 1971, Florida, as part of its school accountability system, implemented the Florida Statewide

Assessment Program measuring third through 11th grade public school students' academic strengths and weaknesses in core academic subject areas (Blazer, 2018).

At the start, Florida's assessment-driven accountability reforms provided schools with valuable information for instructional planning and measuring achievement growth (Chakrabarti, 2013; Chakrabarti & Schwartz, 2013). However, beginning in 1999, holding schools accountable for student achievement by assigning a letter grade ranging from A to F based on a public school's overall performance on the Florida Comprehensive Achievement Test (FCAT) surfaced as the cornerstone of Florida's statewide student assessment program (Blazer, 2018). Transitioning in 2010 to the FCAT 2.0 Next Generation Sunshine State Standards, Florida continued the practice of assessing students yearly and using overall assessment results to assign letter grades to schools (FLDOE, 2020c). In 2014, the shift was made to the Florida Assessment Standards (FSA) English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics (MA) replacing the FCAT 2.0 as the state-wide assessment tool to assess students and grade schools (FLDOE 2020a).

Enacted in February 2016, Florida's Rule 6A-109981 School and District Accountability school grading formula was simpler than previous models, comprehensive, and inclusive (FLDOE, 2017). The school grading model was designed to report the progress of public school students taking part in the FSA (FLDOE, 2017). The model comprises 11 components, each one worth 100 points for a total of 1,100 points, representing the raw scores achieved by the students in a school (FLDOE, 2017). Table 5 summarizes the components for each school level and displays the maximum

number of points possible based on the grade configuration of the school which is used to calculate school grade.

Table 5

Maximum FSA Components Based on School Grade Configurations

Elementary Model (Grades K-5)	Middle School Model (Grades 6-8)	High School Model (Grades 9-12)	Combination School Model (Grades K-8 or 6-12)
Components	Components	Components	Components
Maximum of 7	Maximum of 9	Maximum of 10	Maximum of 11
0 to 100 points each	0 to 100 points each	0 to 100 points each	0 to 100 points each
ELA Achievement	ELA Achievement	ELA Achievement	ELA Achievement
ELA Learning Gains	ELA Learning Gains	ELA Learning Gains	ELA Learning Gains
ELA Learning Gains of Lowest 25%	ELA Learning Gains of Lowest 25%	ELA Learning Gains of Lowest 25%	ELA Learning Gains of Lowest 25%
MA Achievement	MA Achievement	MA (EOCs)	MA (EOCs)
MA Learning Gains	MA Learning Gains	MA Learning Gains	MA Learning Gains
MA Learning Gains of Lowest 25	MA Learning Gains of Lowest 25%	MA Learning Gains of Lowest 25%	MA Learning Gains of Lowest 25%
Science	Science	Science (Biology, EOCs)	Science (Biology, EOCs)
	Social Studies (Civics)	Social Studies (U.S. History, EOCs)	Social Studies (Civics, U.S. History, EOCs)
		Graduation Rate 2015-2016	Graduation Rate 2015-2016
		College and Career Acceleration 2015-2016	College and Career Acceleration 2015-2016
	Middle School Acceleration Success		Middle School Acceleration Success
Total Possible Score:700	Total Possible Score: 900	Total Possible Score: 1000	Total Possible Score: 1100

Note. FLDOE (2017).

Calculating FSA School Grade

The FSA grading model provides a detailed progress report of achievement of a school and its students by reporting data according to components. Calculating a school's grade begins by adding all of the points earned by students for each component for which the school has sufficient data, or at least 10 students who have been in attendance during the school year and took part in the state assessment. If a school has less than 10 eligible students, that component is not included in calculating its letter grade (FLDOE, 2017). All the component scores are added together to produce the total points earned (TPE) for the school.

Calculating the letter-graded involves dividing a school's TPE into total points possible based on the grade configuration of the school. Reporting the final score as a percentage translates into the letter grade for the school. Letter grades are determined based on where the school's percentage score falls on the scale ranging from 0 to 100 points (FLDOE, 2017). Schools achieving a percentage score of 62% or greater are awarded the letter grade of A. School percentage scores from 54% to 61% are awarded the letter grade of B. School percentage scores from 41% to 53% are awarded the letter grade of C. School percentage scores from 32% to 40% are awarded the letter grade of D. Lastly, school percentage scores of 31% or less are awarded the letter grade of F (FLDOE, 2017).

As an example, the TPE scores from the 2016-2017 academic year of four schools are presented. The names of the schools are omitted and a pseudonym assigned. Following Florida's school grading formula enacted in 2016, Elementary 123's TPE score of 459 divided into the total points possible of 700 results in a 65% score or school

grade of A. Middle 456's TPE score of 507 divided into the total points possible of 900

results in a 56% score or school grade of B. High School 8910's TPE score of 413

divided into the total points possible of 1,000 results in a 41% score or a school grade of

C. New School 1213 serves students in grades pre-k through eight and did not include

the middle school acceleration success component due to insufficient student data used in

calculating the grade for the school. New School 1213's TPE score of 378 divided into

the total points possible of 800 results in a 47% score or school grade of C. Advanced

2525 Academy with grades 6-12, unlike New School, had sufficient student data for all

11 components of the FSA. Advanced 2525 Academy's TPE score of 519 divided into

the total points possible of 1,100 for a 6-12 combination school results in a 47% score or

a school grade of C (see Table 6).

Table 6

Sample School FSA School Letter Grade

School Name	Level	Total Points Earned	Eligible Components	Points Possible	Percentage Score	Letter Grade
Elementary 123	Elementary	459	7	700	65	A
Middle 456	Middle	507	9	900	56	B
HS 8910	High	413	10	1000	41	C
New School 1213	Combination School K-8	378	8	800	47	C
Advanced Academy 2525	Combination School 6-12	519	11	1100	47	C

Data Collection

Before starting data collection, SMS aligned to educator interests were identified, contacted by email, and sent information about the study (Ellison et al., 2007; Kayam & Hirsch, 2012). Once an SMS agreed to take part, a link for the survey was emailed to collect data (Ellison et al., 2007). A list of participating associations was regularly updated during the data collection process.

The following process for data collection, storage, and use was employed:

1. Creation of a Qualtrics survey based on the SSPAHP

2. Testing with the release of the survey

3. Closing of survey

4. Data cleaning, coding, and transfer into SPSS

5. Data analysis

Once the data collection was complete, the results were summarized and a narrative report produced discussing the findings.

Statistical Analyses

Each of the research questions in the study echoed the content of the SSPAHP. To assess the relationship between instructional practice and student achievement, descriptive analysis and multi-linear regression were conducted (Field, 2013; Salkind, 2011). Data for conducting the analysis were gathered from the responses to the SSPAHP online surveys and student achievement data from 2016-2017 FSA results for the schools named in the responses. For each of the research questions, the TPE from the 2016-2017 FSA for the schools named in the survey served as the criterion variable. The five SSPAHP domains functioned as the predictor variables.

Descriptive analysis, because of its ability to summarize, synthesize, and analyze large quantities of data and generate the mean, mode, and median was employed to analyze the raw survey data (Green & Salkind, 2003; Muijs, 2004). Multiple linear regression provided clarity regarding the relationship between variables (Green & Salkind, 2003; Muijs, 2004; Salkind, 2011). The criterion variable was the FSA TPE score publicly available for each school. The SSPHAP predictor variables were defined using the content language from the SSPAHP survey instrument. The variables are summarized in Table 7.

Table 7

Predictor Variables and SSPAPH Domain with Descriptors

Predictor Variables	SSPAPH Domain with Descriptor
Effective leaders	The administrator establishes a shared mission, goals, and provides instructional guidance.
Strong Curriculum	Structured curriculum goals at the school and classroom level with an emphasis on literacy.
Professional Development	Teachers are provided opportunities to both collaborate and attend professional development training.
School Culture	The school presents a safe and orderly environment emphasizing high academic standards for students and welcomes parent involvement.
Ongoing data use for school improvement	Staff, including principals, review student data and based decisions on patterns observed.

Limitations

By surveying Florida public school teachers and principals, this study achieved the objective of exploring the relationship between instructional practice and student achievement. Other aspects affecting achievement were found worthy of discussion, but

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as Elmore (2000) has discussed, instructional leadership and practice are at the nexus of school reform and are essential for improving student achievement.

Limiting the study to K-12 public school participants from across Florida formed a diverse participant pool focused on student learning and achievement. However, the choice to concentrate solely on public school educators omitted the views of private school teachers and principals or other K-12 educators in non-traditional school settings. Furthermore, using SMS facilitated access, but this approach prevented attracting participants who did not frequent SMS or who favor paper surveys (Ellison et al., 2007). Relying completely on SMS restricted participation affecting the generalization of findings. Assigning any other meaning can only be inferred.

Lastly, using convenience sampling increased the study's reach, but the researcher could not anticipate conditions affecting participants at the moment they completed their surveys. Giving participants flexibility when doing the survey encouraged participation, but it cannot mitigate the impact of any extraneous circumstances that may have influenced survey responses.

Delimitations

This study employed a quasi-experimental, quantitative research design and sought to examine how Florida public school educators view the relationship between instructional practice and student achievement (Ellison et al., 2007; Muijus, 2004; Warner, 2008). The SSPAHP's attention to instructional practice complemented the study's purpose. The determination to use SMS facilitated access and data collection; however, the choice to use SMS made it problematic in addressing any over-

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representation that may have occurred within the sample (Field, 2013; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

The fixed-response scale of the Likert-type SSPAHP assures consistency yet hinders the ability to collect narrative data from open-ended responses (Likert, 1932; Weinstock et al., 2016). Expanding the survey to integrate open-ended responses was considered, but upholding the efficacy of the survey was accorded higher preference by the researcher.

Finally, administering the survey on SMS offered the convenience to reach educators from across Florida, but limited the sample to participants who frequent SMS. The benefits of accessibility and efficiency of implementation were of greater consideration over choosing to offer the survey in paper form (Stokes, Vandyke, Squires, Jacob, & Gifford, 2019).

Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the research questions, the study design, and the survey protocol used to gather data. The chapter also provided the background regarding Florida's statewide assessment program, the FSA, and described the process for determining the school letter grade for the public schools mentioned in the survey. In addition, the chapter depicted how the psychometric validation process was conducted for the SSPAHP. The 107-item SSPAHP containing practices linked with improving student achievement complemented the research-based performance expectations of effective practice for Florida educators. As the study's data-gathering tool, the SSPAHP provided the mechanism to examine the relationship between instructional practice and student achievement.

The on-line version of the survey was developed with Qualtrics software and analyzed using SPSS software licensed through Florida Atlantic University. Convenience sampling was used to determine the participant pool. The five SSPAHP domains: effective leadership, school culture, strong curriculum, professional development, and ongoing data use for school improvement, served as the predictor variables. Student achievement data for each school named in the survey, the TPE component from the Florida Standard Assessment, served as the criterion variable in the analysis. Quantitative statistical methods employed included descriptive and multi-linear regression analysis and served as the base for interpreting the data and arriving at the findings.

CHAPTER 4. RESULTS

Overview

Ever since NCLB (2002), the emphasis on improving student achievement by relying on state-wide assessments to gauge student achievement has remained a focus for schools and school leaders. Over time, the use of assessment results to measure student learning and achievement has evolved. The purpose of this study, by surveying public school educators in Florida, explored the relationship between achievement and instructional practice. The sample represented public school teachers, principals, and educators attending a graduate program at a Florida university who were recruited via SMS.

Originally the survey was made available on the SMS of professional associations for Florida educators and relied on participants who accessed the site to voluntarily complete in the survey. This initial approach, due to the hesitancy by professional associations to host the survey on the SMS, failed to generate the 100 responses as the MDE study did, needed for data analysis (Weinstock et al., 2016). As a result, the collection period was extended and the survey was made available to educators who were completing a graduate program in education at a Florida university. To ensure an adequate sample given the lower than expected response rate, the survey remained active and available for data collection from October 2018 to February 2019. As in the MDE 2013 study (Weinstock et al., 2016), once the study had reached the threshold of 100 survey responses, data collection ceased.

The SSPAHP was divided into two sections. The first part of the 107-item

SSPAHP consisted of a 7-item section requesting information from each participant

about their current school, position, and experience (Weinstock et al., 2016). The

remainder of the survey organized the practices into five domains: effective leadership,

strong curriculum, professional development, school culture and ongoing use of data for

school improvement (Weinstock et al., 2016). Participants used a 4-point Likert-type

response scale with values ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree) to

respond to the survey (Weinstock et al., 2016).

The results of the SSPAHP survey, combined with the total points earned on the

FSA for the schools mentioned in the survey, provided the data for analyzing the

intersection of instructional practice and student achievement. This chapter presents the

results of the descriptive and correlation analyses.

Summary of Responses

The 130 survey responses represented participants teaching or leading in public

schools across Florida. Limited response to the survey resulted in low participation rates

for the schools and school districts named in the survey. From the 130 surveys, the

sample ($n = 84$, 64%) formed by participant response, reflected schools taking part in the

annual FSA state-wide student assessment. As displayed in Table 8, most of those who

responded came from schools in Broward County Public Schools ($n = 55$, 65%), with the

remaining districts reflecting less than 10 completed surveys per school.

Table 8

Frequency Table with Sample Sizes for Districts Named in the Survey

Variable	*N*	%	Cumulative %
Bay	1	1.2	1.2
Brevard	8	9.5	10.8
Broward	55	65.5	77.1
Miami-Dade	2	2.4	79.5
Martin	1	1.2	80.7
Palm Beach	8	9.5	90.4
Pasco	1	1.2	91.6
St. Lucie	1	1.2	92.8
Wakulla	1	1.2	94
FAU	5	6	100

Note. Percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding.

Research Questions

The three research questions that guided this study were:

1. How do principals' perceptions of instructional practice compare with teachers' sense of instructional practice when viewed through the lens of student achievement?

2. How does a school's perceived view of instructional practice influence student achievement?

3. How does instructional practice influence student achievement?

Descriptive Statistics

      Research Question 1. Analysis of the 7-item demographic section of the survey revealed discrepancies in the frequency of responses among survey participants. Table 9 displays the demographic data of the participants who took the survey. Regular full-time teachers completed at a much higher rate ($n = 37$, 45%) compared to principals ($n = 9$, 11%) and assistant principals ($n = 10$, 12%). Also, elementary (K-5) teachers ($n = 34$, 41%), grade seven teachers ($n = 34$, 41%), and other support personnel (n = 24, 29%) had a higher response rate than any other positions.

      Differences in participation rates were also noted among participants based on years of teaching experience. The response, 2 to 4 years of experience ($n = 25$, 30%), was selected more often than the other responses for this item. Participants were also asked to combine the years spent in various teaching and/or leadership positions reflecting the span of experience. A significant number of participants ($n = 55$, 66%) selected the response of more than 12 years to reflect the total number of years in the profession. Additionally, a great number of survey participants ($n = 73$, 88%) indicated to have been at their school for over one year at the time the survey was completed.

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Table 9

Frequency Table for Nominal and Ordinal Variables

Variable	*N*	%	Cumulative %
Grade Level			
7	34	40.96	40.96
9	11	13.25	54.22
10	32	38.55	92.77
11	6	7.23	100
School Type			
Elem (K-5)	34	40.96	40.96
MS (6-8)	6	7.23	48.19
HS (9-12)	31	37.35	85.54
Combo (K-8 or 6-12)	12	14.46	100
Position			
Regular Full-Time Teacher	37	44.58	44.58
Assistant Principal	10	12.05	56.63
Principal	9	10.84	67.47
Regular Part-Time Teacher	2	2.41	69.88
Prefer Not to Answer	1	1.20	71.08
Other — Support Position	24	28.92	100
Year Tenure			
1 year	12	14.46	14.46
2 to 4 years	25	30.12	44.58
5 to 8 years	14	16.87	61.45
9 to 12 years	6	7.23	68.67
More than 12 years	23	27.71	96.39
Prefer Not to Answer	3	3.61	100
Total Years			
1 year	1	1.20	1.20
2 to 4 years	8	9.64	10.84
5 to 8 years	3	3.61	14.46
9 to 12 years	13	15.66	30.12
More than 12 years	55	66.27	96.39
Prefer Not to Answer	2	2.41	98.80
Missing	1	1.20	100
At Least 1 Year			
Yes	73	87.95	87.95
No	8	9.64	97.59
Prefer not to answer	2	2.41	100

Note. Percentages may not equal 100 due to rounding.

Research Question 2. This research question supported the focus of the study by using responses from a school to examine the relationship between instructional practice and student achievement. To perform the analysis, as in the MDE study of 2013, a minimum of 13 individual responses from a single school was required (Weinstock et al., 2016). A breakdown of participation by the school level, displayed in Table 10, shows participants at elementary level schools ($n = 34$, 40.5%) completed the survey in greater numbers. However, totals representing individual schools did not achieve the threshold of 13 responses needed from a single school for conducting the analysis. The inability to gain 13 responses from a single school prevented the descriptive analysis of the second research question.

Table 10

Frequency of Survey Participation by School Level

Variable	n	%	Cumulative %
Elem (K-5)	34	40.5	41
MS (6-8)	6	7.1	48.2
HS (9-12)	31	36.9	85.5
Combo (K-8 or 6-12)	12	14.3	100

Note. n = Sample size of the category.

Research Question 3. This research question sought to analyze the relationship between the SSPAHP variables: EffectiveAve, CurriculumAve, ProfDevAve, CultureAve and DataAve with WghtdFSA. The instructional practices of the SSPAHP: effective leadership, strong curriculum, professional development, school culture, and ongoing data use served as the predictor variables with the TPE from the FSA for the schools mentioned in the survey serving as the criterion variable for conducting the data analysis.

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Initial assessment of the skewness and kurtosis revealed both positive and negative values below zero for each of the variables. Table 11 provides evidence of an uneven spread of the values for each of the variables (Salkind, 2011). A skewness value of less than two suggests a lack of symmetry and implies a moderate distribution of the mean. With kurtosis values less than 3, the spread of values found from the mean differed significantly from a normal distribution impacted by outliers (Westfall & Henning, 2013). Skewness and kurtosis values depict the distribution of the normal curve and signal a lack of fitness of the data (Field, 2013).

Table 11

Summary Statistics Table for Interval and Ratio Variables

Variable	*M*	*SD*	*n*	*SE_M*	Min	Max	Skewness	Kurtosis
CultureAve	3.19	0.42	55	0.06	2.43	4	0.3	-0.42
CurriculumAve	3.21	0.46	63	0.06	2.16	4	0.1	-0.49
DataAve	3.31	0.52	56	0.07	2.29	4	-0.06	-1.27
EffectiveAve	3.23	0.54	65	0.07	1.89	4	-0.29	-0.75
ProfDevAve	3.1	0.58	60	0.07	1.42	4	-0.2	-0.15
WghtdFSA	60.83	11.75	83	1.29	40.14	86.36	0.64	-0.26

Assumptions of Multiple Linear Regression

Establishing the viability of the model to assess the relationship between the variables required applying the tenets of the assumption of multiple linear regression to the data. The assumptions of multiple linear regression tested whether EffectiveAve, CurriculumAve, ProfDevAve, CultureAve, and DataAve predicted WghtdFSA. The

assumption of normality clarifying the status of the residuals found in the data began the analysis.

      Normality. The assumption of normality was critical to detecting if residuals were not independent and instead were shared with the other variables. By plotting the quantiles of the model residuals against the quantiles of a chi-square distribution, also called a Q-Q scatterplot, the assumption of normality was analyzed (DeCarlo, 1997). As displayed in Figure 2, the Q-Q scatterplot of the model revealed the residuals dispersed around the horizontal axis.

      The assumption of normality requires that the quantiles of the residuals must not strongly deviate from the theoretical quantiles. Strong deviations could disclose the parameter estimates to be unreliable and impact the ability of the variables to function independently (Field, 2013). Having met the criteria, the examination of the data for the assumption of normality revealed a normal distribution of the residuals allowing the variables to function independently.
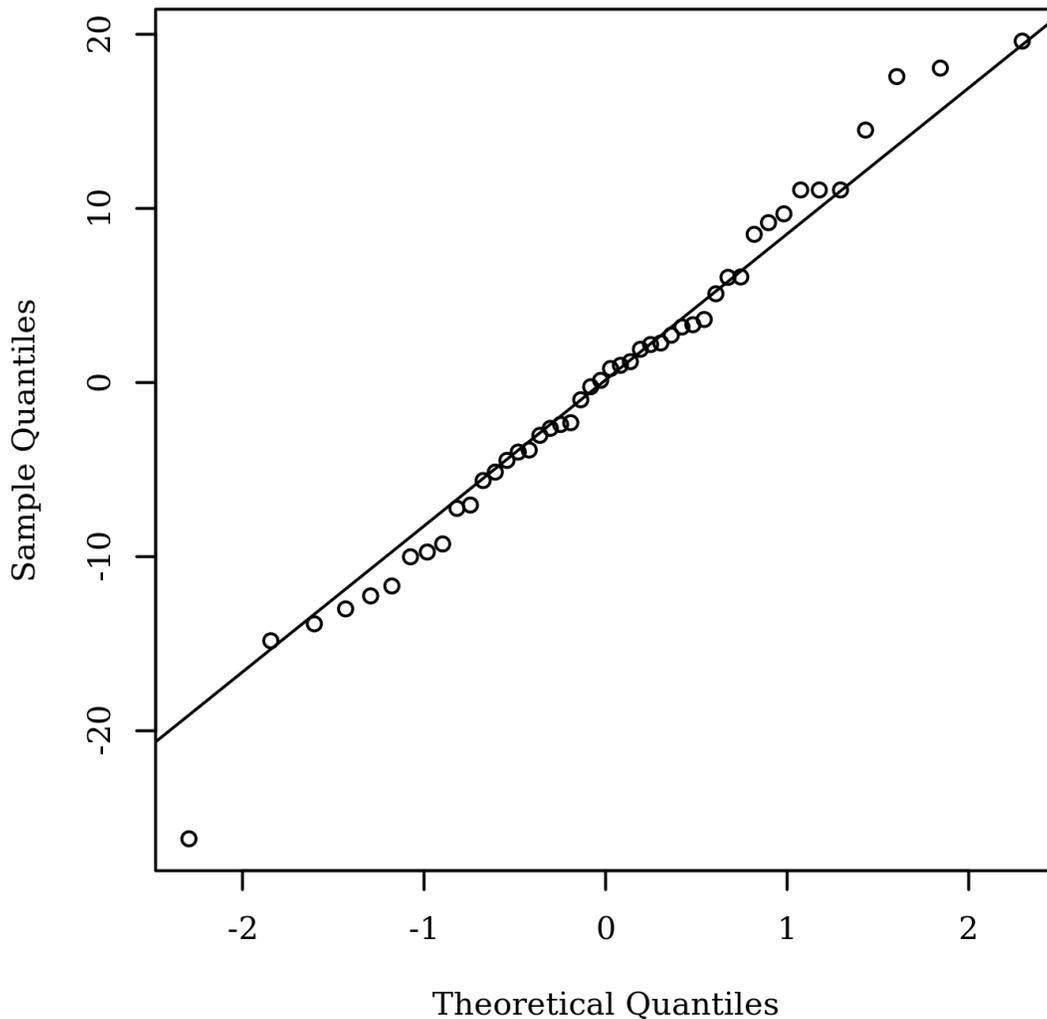
Figure 2. Q-Q scatterplot for normality of the residuals for the regression model.

Homoscedasticity. Homoscedasticity was evaluated by plotting the residuals

against predicted values (Bates, Mächler, Bolker, & Walker, 2015; Field, 2013; Osborne

& Waters, 2002). Inspection of the scatterplot to determine homoscedasticity revealed

data to be scattered and randomly distributed with no clear curve. Overall, this

established confidence in the coefficients in the model for conducting the analysis

(Intellectus Statistics, 2019). Figure 3 presents a scatterplot of the predicted values and

model residuals for the data and demonstrates random distribution of the residuals. Homoscedasticity was not present in the residuals, thus endorsing the model in making predictions about the variables tested (Field, 2013).
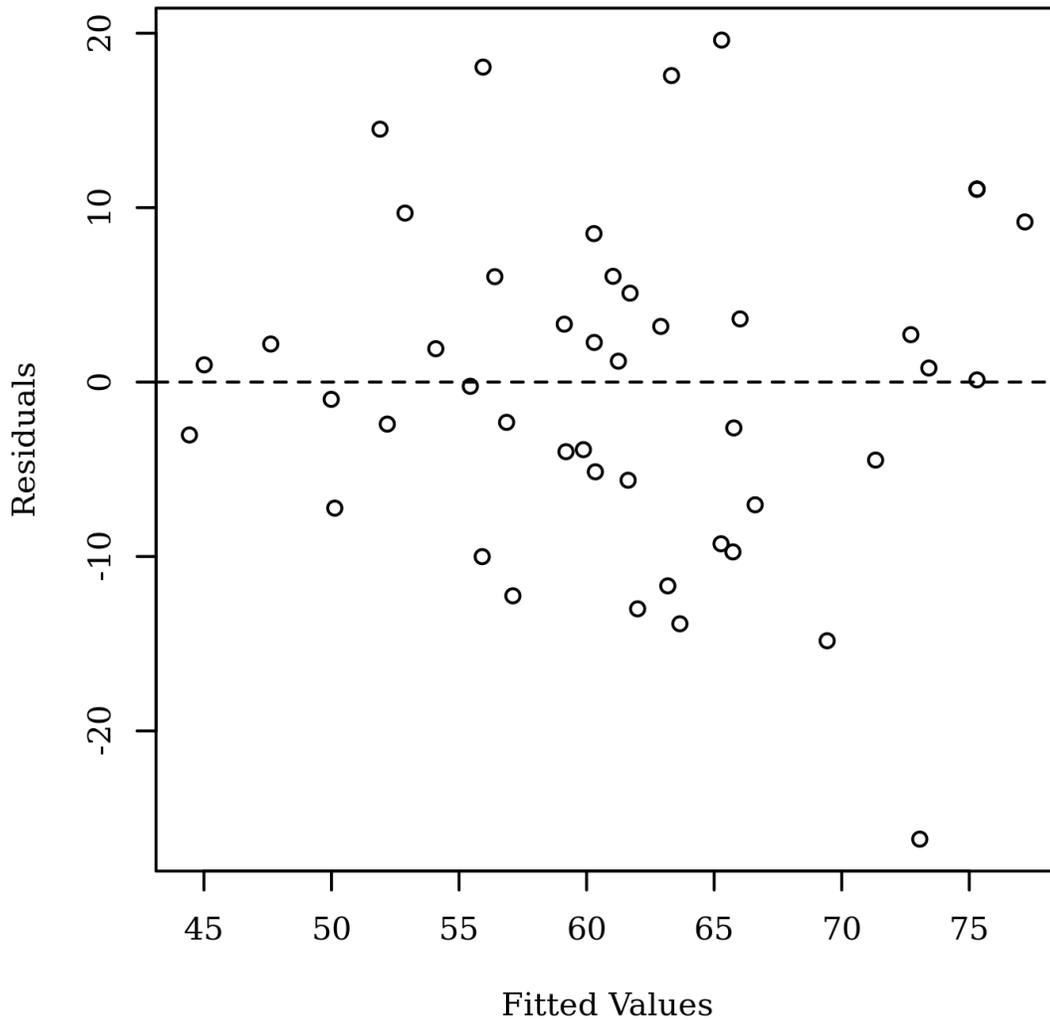
Figure 3. Residuals scatterplot testing homoscedasticity.

Multicollinearity. To evaluate multicollinearity among the predictor variables, the Variance Inflation Factors (VIFs) were calculated (Field, 2013). VIF values ranging from 5 or higher to values of 10 at the upper end indicates that a high degree of

multicollinearity is present in the model (Field, 2013). High VIF values suggest that a close relationship exists among the predictor variables and weakens the relationship with the criterion variable. Results for all predictors in the regression model had VIFs values less than 10 indicating multicollinearity was within acceptable limits.

Table 12

Variance Inflation Factors

Variable	VIF
EffectiveAve	2.67
CurriculumAve	4.89
ProfDevAve	4.1
CultureAve	6.19
DataAve	4.61

Outliers. To further assess the linear relationship among the variables studentized residuals absolute values were calculated to identify influential points with results plotted against the observation numbers (Field, 2013; Stevens, 2009). Studentized residuals were calculated by dividing the model residuals by the estimated residual standard deviation. Figure 4 presents the studentized residuals plot of the observations. Observation numbers were specified next to each point with a studentized residual greater than 3.28. Studentized residuals greater than 3.28 in absolute value, the 0.999 quartiles of a t distribution with 45 degrees of freedom, were considered having a significant influence on the results of the model. Overall, the results signaled the model capable of analyzing the relationship between the variables.
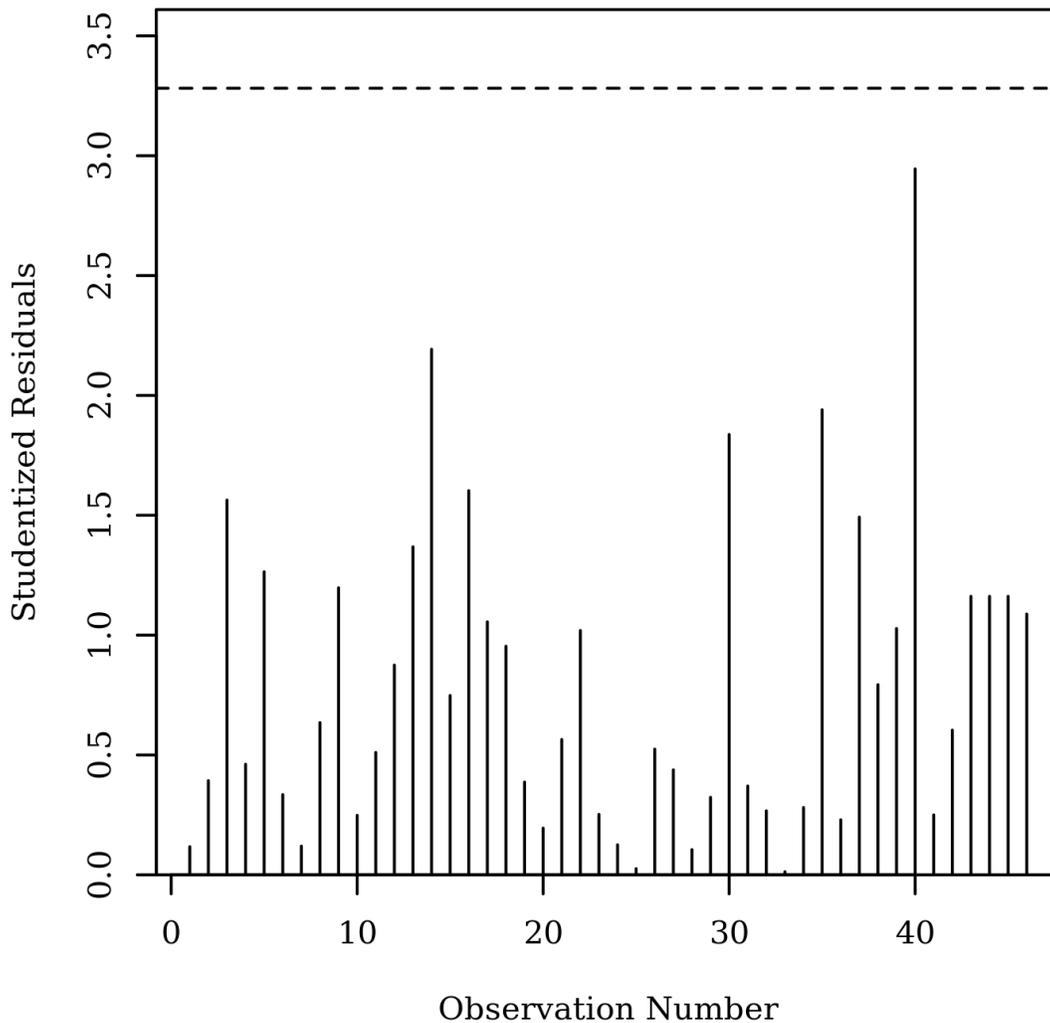
Figure 4. Studentized residuals plot for outlier detection.

On the whole, the assumption of multiple linear regression tests suggest that the model can accurately predict the influence of instructional practice on student achievement. The linear regression model linked the SSPAHP variables with WghtdFSA and showed the influence of each of the variables on achievement. Examining the data through the lens of the assumptions of multiple regression reveals that the results of the linear regression model, $F(5,40) = 6.28$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = 0.44$, indicates that approximately

44% of the variance in WghtdFSA was explainable by EffectiveAve, CurriculumAve, ProfDevAve, CultureAve, and DataAve.

Further inspection of the results of the model suggest that ProfDevAve and CultureAve each had a more significant relationship to WghtdFSA. In general the model discloses that a sizeable relationship exists between WghtdFSA and the SSPAHP practices found in ProfDevAve and WghtdFSA and CultureAve. Table 13 summarizes the results of the linear regression model for each of the variables.

Analysis of the model for ProfDevAve with WghtdFSA, $B = 15.56$, $t(40) = 2.87$, $p = .006$ shows a strong relationship between the variables. According to the model, a one-unit increase of ProfDevAve had the effect of increasing WghtdFSA by 15.56 units. The relationship between ProfDevAve and WghtdFSA implies that as professional development practices increase, student achievement increases as well. CultureAve also had a significant ability to predict WghtdFSA. Analysis of the model for CultureAve and WghtdFSA demonstrated by $B = 19.18$, $t(40) = 2.26$, $p = .029$ infers that CultureAve has a strong relationship to WghtdFSA. On average, as CultureAve increases, WghtdFSA increases by 19.18 units and infers a positive relationship between practices of school culture and student achievement.

Table 13

Results for Linear Regression with EffectiveAve, CurriculumAve, ProfDevAve, CultureAve, and DataAve Predicting WghtdFSA

Variable	*B*	*SE*	CI	β	*T*	*p*
(Intercept)	20.90	11.42	[-2.17, 43.97]	0.00	1.83	.075
EffectiveAve	-6.88	4.53	[-16.04, 2.29]	-0.29	-1.52	.137
CurriculumAve	-2.46	7.03	[-16.66, 11.74]	-0.29	-0.35	.728
ProfDevAve	15.56	5.41	[4.62, 26.50]	0.69	2.87	.006
CultureAve	19.18	8.48	[2.03, 36.33]	0.67	2.26	.029
DataAve	-11.80	6.20	[-24.33, 0.73]	-0.48	-1.90	.064

Notes. CI is at the 95% confidence level. Results: $F(5,40) = 6.28$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = 0.44$.

Inferential Statistics

Research Question 1. The goal of this research question, comparing the differences in the preference of instructional practices between principals and teachers, was hindered by the low response rate from school leaders (principals: $n = 9$, 11%; assistant principals: $n = 10$, 12%) as compared to teachers ($n = 37$, 45%). Due to the low response rate and small sample size, responses were combined and reclassified. Responses from principals and assistant principals were combined and reclassified to represent principal response to the survey. Likewise responses from teachers and teachers in non-classroom school support positions were also combined and reclassified to represent teacher response to the survey. The variable, Position_recode ($n = 58$, *SD* = .477), representing the responses from principals and assistant principals ($n = 19$, 22%), together with the responses for teachers ($n = 39$, 46%), provided the data to conduct the comparisons.

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Analysis of the *t*-test results for the Position_recode variable originating from the reclassified responses revealed that differences existed between teachers and principals. For the SSPAHP variable EffectiveAve, results of the two-tailed independent samples *t*-test based on an alpha value of 0.05, $t(44) = -2.42$, $p = .020$, disclosed that the mean for teachers ($M = 54.36$, $SD = 9.18$) was lower than the mean for principals ($M = 61.28$, $SD = 9.9$) in the Position_recode variable. The higher mean attributed to principal response suggests that principals more than teachers connected the practices found in effective leadership with having an influence on student achievement.

The *t*-Test for DataAve ($n = 42$) based on an alpha value of 0.05, $t(40) = -2.30$, $p = .027$ also exposed differences in the mean between teachers and principals. A comparison of both positions revealed the mean for principals ($M = 24.53$, $SD = 3.64$) was higher than the mean for teachers ($M = 22.16$, $SD = 3.01$). The differences in the means implies that principal perceived a link exists between instructional practices involving analyzing achievement data and student achievement more than do teachers.

In contrast, results of the two-tailed independent samples *t*-test for CurriculumAve, ProfDevAve, and CultureAve disclosed minimal differences between the mean reported for teachers and principals. Results for CurriculumAve ($n = 46$), based on an alpha value of 0.05, $t(25.38) = -1.08$, $p = .291$ produced similar results. Very little difference was found in the means for teachers ($M = 59.64$, $SD = 6.45$) and principals ($M = 62.64$, $SD = 10.46$), which implies that both groups connect curriculum practices to student achievement.

Similar results were also obtained in the two-tailed independent samples *t*-test for CultureAve ($n = 41$) and ProfDevAve ($n = 43$) for each position. For SchCulture based

on an alpha value of 0.05, $t(39) = -1.99$, $p = .054$, the mean for teachers ($M = 129$, $SD = 12.43$) and for principals ($M = 139$, $SD = 19.92$) were similar. For ProfDevAve based an alpha value of 0.05, $t(39) = -1.99$, $p = .054$, the mean for teachers ($M = 35.64$, $SD = 6.67$) and for principals ($M = 38.83$, $SD = 6.81$) also displayed minimal differences. Analysis of the data for Position_recode demonstrates that both positions connect professional development and school culture practices to student achievement.

On the whole, differences in the preferences of instructional practices emerged in the responses from teachers and principals in the areas of effective leadership and use of data, while both groups agree that curriculum, school culture, and professional development practice impact student achievement (see Table 14).

Table 14

Two-Tailed Independent Samples t-Test for Effective, Curriculum, ProDev, SchCulure and Data by Position_recode

	Teacher		Principal					
Variable	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*n*	*t*	*p*	*d*
Effective	54.36	9.18	61.28	9.9	46	-2.42	0.02	0.72
Curriculum	59.64	6.45	62.61	10. 46	46	-1.08	0.291	0.34
ProDev	35.64	6.78	38.83	6.81	43	-1.52	0.136	0.47
SchCulture	129	12.43	139.06	19.92	41	-1.99	0.054	0.61
Data	22.16	3.01	24.53	3.64	42	-2.3	0.027	0.71

Notes. n = sample size of each variable. Degrees of Freedom for the *t*-statistic = 44. *d* represents Cohen's *d*.

Research Question 2. This question sought, from a school's perspective, to examine the relationship between instructional and student achievement. Analyzing the data representative of an individual school, as in the MDE 2013 study, required collecting

13 separate responses from a school (Weinstock et al., 2016). Participant responses to
the survey ($n = 84$, 64%) did not produce the required number of multiple responses from
an individual school to conduct a school-based analysis of the results. However,
recapping the findings from the first research question revealed that teacher and principal
responses identified the practices of curriculum, professional development, and school
culture with weighted FSA score as having a relationship with student achievement.

      Research Question 3. This research question was focused on the relationship
between SSPAHP domain variables and FSA scores. To better understand the
relationship between the variables, a Pearson correlation analysis was conducted. The
strength of the relationship was evaluated using Cohen's standard, which specifies that
coefficients between .10 and .29 represent a small effect size, coefficients between .30
and .49 represent a moderate effect size, and coefficients above .50 represent a large
effect size (Cohen, 1992).

      As seen in Table 15, each variable has a relationship to student achievement with
varying degrees of significance. The large effect size for ProfDevAve with WghtdFSA
($df = 0.55$, $p < .001$) was highly significant and alludes to a strong relationship between
these variables. Equally significant, the correlation observed between WghtdFSA and
CultureAve ($df = 0.53$, $p < .001$) also suggests the variables share a strong relationship.
The results for CurriculumAve ($df = 0.46$, $p = .001$) with WghtdFSA disclosed a
significant relationship between the variables with a moderate effect size, suggesting that
as CurriculumAve increases, a modest increase in WghtdFSA is realized. The correlation
between WghtdFSA and DataAve ($df = 0.35$, $p = .018$) was also significant with a
moderate effect size, implying that increases are positively related between these

variables. However, results for EffectiveAve with WghtdFSA yielded a small effect size, implying a weaker relationship may exist between these variables.

Table 15

Pearson Correlation Results Among WghtdFSA, EffectiveAve, CurriculumAve,

ProfDevAve, CultureAve, and DataAve

Variable	r_p	Lower	Upper	p
WghtdFSA-EffectiveAve	0.28	-0.01	0.53	.061
WghtdFSA-Curriculum Ave	0.46	0.19	0.66	.001
WghtdFSA-ProfDevAve	0.55	0.31	0.73	<.001
WghtdFSA-CultureAve	0.53	0.28	0.71	<.001
WghtdFSA-DataAve	0.35	0.06	0.58	.018

Notes. The confidence intervals were computed using $\alpha = 0.05$; $n = 46$; Holm corrections were used to adjust *p*-values.

Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the data analyses results of this study. Using the SSPAHP instrument, the study surveyed public school teachers and principals within Florida via SMS to examine the relationship between instructional practices and student achievement. Participant responses to the survey along with the FSA scores for the schools mentioned in the survey provided the data for the analyses. Survey data for each of the SSPAHP domains—effective leadership, curriculum, professional development, school culture, and data—served as the predictor variables. Achievement data from the FSA for each school mentioned by participants in the survey served as the criterion variable.

Analysis of Researcher Question 1 used *t*-tests for the Position_recode variable disclosed similarities and differences among teachers and principals. Responses for

curriculum, school culture, and professional development suggest that both teachers and principals connect these instructional practices to student achievement. The *t*-test results for effective leadership and data use found that differences exist among teachers and principals. Principals, more often than teachers, connect effective leadership and analysis of data to improvements in student achievement.

Research Question 2 was focused on using the schools identified by participant responses to examine the relationships between variables from within each school. However, the lack of multiple responses representing individual schools impeded this analysis. Analysis of the responses for Research Question 3 disclosed a strong and positive relationship between professional development and school culture practices and student achievement, a moderate and positive relationship between curriculum and data use practices and student achievement, and a weak and positive relationship between effective leadership and student achievement.

Overall, results of the data analyses established that relationships exists with varying levels of strength and significance between instructional practices and student achievement. Teachers and principals both link the instructional practices of curriculum, school culture, and professional development to student achievement. Principals connect the practices of effective leadership and ongoing use of data for school improvement to student achievement more than teachers do. A Pearson correlation analysis revealed relationships between professional development and school culture with student achievement.

Although the responses to the survey were limited, the results gleaned from the data provided insight into the intersection of instructional practices and student

achievement. Chapter 5 presents a discussion of the results, implications, and

recommendations for future practice and research.

CHAPTER 5. DISCUSSION

Review of the Problem

Since NCLB (2002), large-scale reforms intended to improve student achievement have placed external pressures on school leaders to increase achievement (Seashore Louis & Robinson, 2012; Murphy, 2020). The principal, as a school's formal leader accountable for student achievement, oversees the school's instructional program and manages school operations (Lingard & Lewis, 2016). In comparison, teacher-leaders are informal leaders recognized within the school for their influence, knowledge, and expertise (Lambert, 2003). However, Davis and Boudreaux (2019) asserted that instructional leadership and practice are integral to raising student achievement.

Review of the Purpose

Normally when discussing student learning, school leaders often consider instructional practice and achievement separate from accountability reforms (Seashore Louis & Robinson, 2012). However, school accountability reforms are an aspect of leading in the 21st century, causing exploration of the relationship between instructional practice and achievement (Seashore Louis et al., 2010). This study surveyed Florida public school principals and teachers to delve into the relationship between instructional practice and student achievement.

Review of the Methodology

This study used the 107-item SSPAHP to gather data from Florida public school educators. The survey developed with Qualtrics software was made available on SMS

for educators within Florida. SPSS was employed to analyze the relationships between the variables (Arkkelin, 2014; Field, 2013). Each of the SSPAHP domains—effective leadership, strong curriculum, professional development, school culture, and ongoing use of data for school improvement—served as the predictor variables. The FSA scores for the schools mentioned by the participants in the survey functioned as the student achievement indicator and criterion variable.

Research Questions

Each of the three research questions examined the relationship between the variables from different perspectives. The first question focused on principals and teachers, the second on the school, and the third on instructional practices. Results from each of the research question analyses formed the basis for developing the conclusions for this study. They were:

1. How do principals' perceptions of instructional practice compare with teachers' sense of instructional practice when viewed through the lens of student achievement?

2. How does a school's perceived view of instructional practice influence student achievement?

3. How does instructional practice influence student achievement?

Research Question 1. As discussed in the literature review, principals and teachers are each instructional leaders whose knowledge and expertise are fundamental to school improvement efforts (Barth, 2001; Crowther et al., 2002; Deal & Peterson, 2009; Harris, 2003; Schlechty, 2002). Teachers and principals, as informal or formal leaders

tied to accountability reform, join in sharing the expectation to improve student achievement.

      Research Question 2. Teachers, engaging in the delivery of instruction, are directly connected to student learning and achievement. Lashway (2003b) and Robinson (2011) each pointed out that the delivery of instruction clearly connects teachers to the achievement of students. Using the school as the unit of analysis recognizes the collective effort of teachers in a school to student achievement.

      Research Question 3. The urgency to comply with external mandates has caused a resurgence in examination of the link between instructional practice and student achievement. Instructional practice is the essence of teaching and student learning (Leithwood et al., 2004). "Classroom instruction can be seen as the most direct teacher-level influence on student achievement" (Fisher et al., 2018, p. 108). Delving into the relationship advances a shared view of the language of effective teaching and sets the expectations defining quality instructional practice. Table 16 presents each question and the subject of analysis for each of the questions.

Table 16

Research Question and Target Audience

Research Question	Subject of the Analysis
1. How do principals' perceptions of instructional practice compare with teachers' sense of instructional practice when viewed through the lens of student achievement?	Principals and teachers
2. How does a school's perceived view of instructional practice influence student achievement?	Responses generated from a single School
3. How does instructional practice influence student achievement?	SSPAHP practices

Discussion of Results

Instructional practice, Polikoff (2012) explained, joins the curriculum with teaching and student learning and serves to facilitate the delivery of instruction. Despite the low response rate to the survey, the findings present a noteworthy insight into the relationship of instructional leadership with practices within Florida's statewide student assessment program. The findings of the study provide school leaders with relevant insights relating to instructional practice and student achievement.

Research Question 1. This research question, viewing instructional practice through the lens of student achievement, examined how principals and teachers perceived the relationship between these variables. The sample group ($n = 84$, 64%) established by Florida public school teachers and principals representing schools taking part in the annual FSA statewide assessment program produced the data for the research. To remedy the low participation, survey responses from the principals ($n = 9$, 11%) and assistant principals ($n = 10$, 12%) coupled with those of the teachers ($n = 39$, 46%) formed the Position_recode variable used to conduct the analysis.

Analysis of the mean for the independent t-test Position_recode for each of SSPAHP variables found differences and similarities in how each group interprets the relationship to student achievement. Generally, teachers find practices directly related to teaching and learning as having a more direct impact on achievement (Hallinger, 2011; Harris & Muijs, 2005). In contrast, principals responsible for the instructional program and who are held accountable for the school's achievement see leadership as critical to teaching, learning, and improving student performance (Fuller, Young, Richardson, Pendola, & Winn, 2018).

The outcomes of two-tailed independent samples *t*-test for effective leadership and data use found the mean for teacher in the Position_recode variable was significantly lower than that of principals for each domain. Specifically, results for teachers regarding effective leadership from the two tailed independent samples *t*-test based on an alpha value of 0.05, $t(44) = -2.42$, $p = .020$, was significantly lower than for principals in the same category. For effective leadership the mean for teachers ($M = 54.36$, $SD = 9.18$) was considerably less than for principals ($M = 61.28$, $SD = 9.9$) for the same domain. Likewise results for data use based on an alpha value of 0.05, $t(40) = -2.30$, $p = .027$, the difference between the means for teachers and principals was noteworthy. The mean for teachers ($M = 22.16$, $SD = 3.01$) was less than the mean for principals ($M = 24.53$, $SD = 3.64$) in the domain.

Unlike effective leadership and data use, both teachers and principals connected the practices of curriculum, professional development, and school culture with student achievement. For curriculum, results of the independent samples *t*-test based on an alpha value of 0.05, $t(25.38) = -1.08$, $p = .291$, implies that the mean was not very different for each category.

For professional development, the two-tailed independent samples *t*-test with an alpha value of 0.05, $t(41) = -1.52$, $p = .136$ hinted little difference in the mean for teachers or principals. Similarly, the school culture two-tailed independent samples *t*-test yielded an alpha value of 0.05, $t(39) = -1.99$, $p = .054$, implying that little difference existed in the means for teachers and principals. Table 17 summarizes the means for each of SSPAHP domain variables and position category found in the Position_recode variable.

Table 17

Comparing Position_recode Variable Results for Principal and Teacher Categories

SSPAHP Domain	Principal	Teacher
Domain 1. Effective Leadership	M = 61.28	M = 54.36
Domain 2. Curriculum	M = 62.61	M = 59.64
Domain 3. Professional Development	M = 38.83	M = 35.64
Domain 4. School Culture	M = 139	M = 129
Domain 5. Data Use	M = 24.53	M = 22.16

Drawing on the results for principals and teachers, the data demonstrates that principals more than teachers related the SSPAHP practices of effective leadership and data use with student achievement. Why these discrepancies exist between the two groups the data do not address. Instead, speaking as a former principal, the discrepancy could be attributed to the influence of school accountability reform on the role of the principal. As part of Florida's SSA, public school principals are directly connected to the achievement progress of the school (FLA. STAT. § 1012.34, 2011).

For principals, this move raises awareness of the connection between instructional leadership and analysis of data as decision-making tools to aid with improving student achievement (DuFour & Marzano, 2011; Hitt & Tucker, 2016). The survey responses attributed to principals for effective leadership and data use confirms this relationship. The prevalence of school accountability reforms finds principals needing to balance instructional leadership and improving student achievement.

As it is interesting to see how principals and teachers responses differed, it is more meaningful to notice where they agreed. Individually, the teachers and principals

responding to survey found the practices of curriculum, professional development, and school culture with having an influence on student achievement. The SSPAHP practices of curriculum provide the foundation for reinforcing a culture focused on student learning and build on a foundation of shared language of effective practice (Day & Sammons, 2013; Sergiovanni, 2000; Weinstock et al., 2016). Part of the dynamic of facilitating quality instruction relies on enabling a shared language of effective teaching practice aligned to the curriculum to emerge, reinforcing a collaborative culture within a school (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). According to Darling-Hammond et al. (2017), "job-embedded professional learning" (p. 7) invites collaboration and improves performance. Schools that support collaboration and the sharing of practices strengthen professional knowledge and skills of the teachers and the culture of the school.

Research Question 2. The second question, continuing with the focus on instructional practice, used the school as the unit of analysis based on the cumulative input of all teachers within a school. Descriptive data analysis of the demographic section of the survey (n = 84, 64%) failed to yield the required 13 individual responses from a single school. While unable to conduct the analysis, analyzing the perception of effective teaching at the school level remains important in understanding the collective effect of all teachers within a school on student achievement.

Research Question 3. The third question examined the correlation between instructional practices and student achievement. The effect size for four of the SSPAHP variables defined the extent of the positive relationships between the instructional practices and student achievement for the schools in the study. The effect sizes for professional development ($d = .55$) and school culture ($d = .53$) show a strong

relationship to student achievement for the schools in the survey. The effect sizes for curriculum ($d = .46$) and data use ($d = .35$) show a moderate relationship to student achievement for the schools in the survey. Only effective leadership ($d = .28$) yielded a weak and positive relationship to student achievement in the analysis. The findings provide the basis for developing a common understanding of teaching practices impactful on student achievement.

For principals, the value of instructional practice to leadership, teaching, and student learning is a priority to improve student achievement. The National Association of Elementary Principals summarized the findings from a 10-year survey which found that 55.8% of the principals replying to the survey disclosed instructional practices as an area of "extreme or high concern" (Fuller et al., 2018, p. 84). Other research has found that engaging in discussions of professional learning and practice has a significant impact on the quality of instruction, student learning, and enhancing teacher expertise (Darling-Hammond, Wei, Andree, Richardson, & Orphanos, 2009; Fullan & Hargreaves, 2016). With continued attention on raising student achievement, the findings offer a starting place for grasping how teachers and principals view the relationship of instructional practice and student achievement. Table 18 displays the effect sizes for each of the domains discussed in the third research question.

Table 18

Cohen's d (Effect Size) for the SSPAHP Domains

SSPAHP Domain	Cohen's d
Domain 1. Effective Leadership	0 = .28
Domain 2. Curriculum	0 = .46
Domain 3. Professional Development	0 = .55
Domain 4. School Culture	0 = .53
Domain 5. Data	0 = .35

Conclusions

Research Question 1. Analysis of the data revealed that principals and teachers

found common ground in the SSPAHP practices of curriculum and professional

development. Curriculum practices address the delivery of instruction and integrate

curriculum standards and reform directives with student learning (Weinstock et al.,

2016). For principals and teachers, the curriculum is the heart, foundation, and road map

guiding student learning (Robinson, Hohepa, & Lloyd, 2007). It stands to reason, that for

the educators completing this survey, their concept of curriculum aligns with the research

(Leithwood et al., 2004; Lunenburg, 2011).

The data disclosed that principals and teachers connect the practices of school

culture with student achievement. For school leaders, school culture facilitates

communicating a shared language of effective teaching practices to thrive within the

school. According to Bolman and Deal (2003) the culture of a school, while uniquely

individual, emerges as a pivotal tool assisting a school's efforts at improving student

achievement. School leaders—principals and teacher-leaders—by their functions and

through their interactions, play an important part in developing and indirectly building the culture of a school.

Examination of the responses for professional development agreed with the research that found that professional learning tied to curriculum, academic standards, and teaching strategies has a positive effect on student learning (Balan, Manko, & Phillips, 2011; Fullan 2001; Yoon, Duncan, Lee, Scarloss, & Shapley, 2007). A key aspect of professional development stresses professional collaboration and sharing of best practices as key for developing the skillset and knowledge of teachers (Weinstock et al., 2016). This includes examining a school's approach to promoting the sharing of best practices and assessing student learning and professional learning. Combined, the curriculum and professional development practices serve as a source for beginning the process for developing a shared language of effective instructional practice defining quality instruction.

Research Question 2. Every school has experienced teachers and those new to the profession who need professional training and development. By engaging in professional discussions and sharing their expertise, teachers help to shape the context of instructional practice in their schools. Previous research by Hallinger (2011), Blasé and Blasé (2000), and Lambert (1998) found schools that engaged teachers in conversations on professional training advanced a common knowledge of effective practice. Understanding the school's view of the relationship aids in identifying the areas for professional learning. While unable to conduct the analysis, investigating the relationship between instructional practice and student achievement from the perspective of the school remains worthy of consideration. The SSPAHP survey provides a starting

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place for schools to begin discussions addressing effective instructional practices and student learning.

Research Question 3. The practices of the SSPAHP align with the research and supplement national and local instructional practices defining the skill knowledge expectations of effective leadership and instruction (Branch, Hanushek, & Rivkin, 2012; FLDOE, 2020e, 2020f; National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2015; Weinstock et al., 2016). The continued focus on increasing student achievement brought about by accountability reforms has principals and teachers reflecting on how to best maximize the effectiveness of classroom practice (Bush-Mecenas, Motes de Oca, Marsh, & Hough, 2018). Examining these relationships presents a valuable method for maximizing classroom practice and building a shared view of effective instruction.

Interestingly, further analysis revealed professional development as having a significant relationship to student achievement. As discussed previously, analysis of the responses for teachers and principals found that both groups associate professional development with impacting student achievement. Likewise, when examining the relationship of instructional practices to student performance, professional development emerged as having a strong relationship to student achievement.

This finding aligns with the research connecting content-specific professional learning to a positive effect on teachers' classroom practices (Garet et al., 2016; Yoon et al., 2007). However, for this study, the benefit to professional learning and instructional practice was assessed through the lens of the FSA. While not specifically addressing a subject, content area, or grade level, the results expand on the benefit of cultivating teacher expertise in response to the continuing focus on improving student achievement

(Fisher et al., 2018; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012; Robinson et al., 2007). In summary,

Table 19 displays the outcomes for each of the research questions. Taken individually or

collectively, the findings provide a road map facilitating a common language of

instruction that upholds a school's focus on improving student learning and achievement.

Table 19

Summarizing the SSPAHP Results

Research Question	SSPAHP Domain / Findings
1. How did principals' perceptions of instructional practice compared with a sense of instructional development teachers' practice when viewed through the lens of student performance?	Domain 2: Curriculum Domain 3: Professional development
2. How did a school's perceived view of instructional practice due to insufficient data influence student achievement?	Unable to conduct analysis
3. How did instructional practice influence student achievement?	Domain 2: Curriculum Domain 3: Professional development Domain 4: School culture

Limitations

Overall, the choice to rely on SMS to administer the survey to educators within

Florida, coupled with seeking to reach teachers and administrators from across the state,

neglected to generate a generous sample. The reluctance by professional associations to

post a link to the survey on their website further impeded access and participation.

Regardless of the modest sample, the findings afford a brief glimpse into how those in the

field—both principals and teachers—connect instructional practice with student

achievement.

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Research Question 1. Though small, the sample represented teachers' and principal's impressions of the link between instructional practice and student achievement. To perform the analysis, replies from teachers, principals, and assistant principals merged to create the Position_recode variable. Combing the responses helped conduct the analysis but prevented further exploration off the differences based on the position held by the participant, years of experience, the grade composition of the school, or other criteria.

Research Question 2. The requirement for conducting a school-wide analysis required a minimum of 13 responses coming from a single school. Using the snowball technique to recruit participants failed to provide the additional respondents required for running the analysis based on school-wide responses to the survey. The inability of meeting the criterion to perform the analysis prevented assessing the data to arrive at any findings.

Research Question 3. A criterion for the analysis required that the school take part in the annual statewide student assessment program, the FSA. The findings reflect schools taking part in the assessment program and excludes responses from schools that appear not to take part in the statewide assessment program. The limited size of the sample prevented assessing variations in the data based on the position of the respondent, the grade composition of the school, and whether the school was a traditional or charter public school.

Recommendations for Practice: The Professional Learning Portfolio of Practice Model

This study began with the purpose of examining the relationship between instructional practice and student achievement. For principals as the instructional leaders of their schools, assessing the efficacy of classroom practice is imperative to improving student achievement. This study was able to reach a limited sample of Florida public school educators, offering valuable insights into the relationship between instructional practice and student achievement.

The analysis of the SSPAHP responses from principals and teachers responding to the survey disclosed a relationship between the practices of professional development and student achievement. The connection between student achievement and professional learning makes sense. Speaking as a former principal, professional development provides the means for strengthening teacher know-how and furthering student achievement. While the current annual performance appraisal process incorporates professional development, it appears not to assess the impact on student achievement.

In Florida, the SSA (FLA. STAT. § 1012.34, 2011) spells out the process and purpose for the annual performance appraisal of teachers and principals. The purpose of the performance appraisal is to "increase student learning growth by improving the quality of instructional, administrative and supervisory services in the public schools of the state" (FLA. STAT. § 1012.34, 2011, para. 1). The appraisal process combines data relating to student achievement, instructional practice, and job responsibilities to determine annual performance ratings (FLA. STAT. § 1012.34, 2011). The SSA process combines all of the data amassed from each section to arrive at a performance rating for

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the teacher varying from highly effective to unsatisfactory (FLA. STAT. § 1012.34, 2011). In particular, the expectation is that "that all teachers can increase their expertise from year to year which produces gains in student achievement from year to year" (FLA. STAT. § 1012.34, 2011, para. 3). Robinson (2006) explained that increasing the effect of professional training on student learning requires that "each teacher must exercise professional judgment" (p. 72) in selecting their professional learning which complements student learning and the curriculum.

The expectation of the SSA addresses a teacher's professional development and misses the opportunity of connecting it with student learning (FLA. STAT. § 1012.34, 2011). To amend this missed opportunity, the proposed model, the Professional Learning Portfolio of Practice (PLPP), broadens professional development by placing the teacher at the center of the process with a connection to student learning (see Figure 5).

Fullan and Hargreaves (2016) stipulated that "professional learning focuses on learning something new and that is potentially of value" (p. 3) and has meaning for the teacher. The PLLP borrows from Fullan and Hargreaves' (2016) concept of professional learning as the cornerstone of the portfolio. Teachers directly involved in designing their professional learning aligns with the research showing that relevancy of the content, association with practice, and connection to the curriculum facilitate acquiring new knowledge (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). The SSA requirement for professional development in the evaluation process is the same for all teachers regardless of the years of experience (FLA. STAT. § 1012.34, 2011).

The PLPP extends the concept of professional development beyond the expectations of the SSA and accommodates the professional learning of teachers

respective of years of experience (FLA. STAT. § 1012.34, 2011). According to Hattie's

(2012) meta-analysis of the research related to student learning, professional

development ($d = .41$) as opposed to school accountability ($d = .31$) had a greater

influence on teacher development and student learning. Much consideration is given to

the professional learning of teachers early in their careers even though mid-career or

more experienced teachers continue to develop and grow professionally (Fullan &

Hargreaves, 2016; Podolsky, Kini, Darling-Hammond, & Bishop, 2019).

Adjusting the professional development expectations of the SSA to accommodate

the professional learning of a teacher's experience and expertise creates a shift in the

present performance evaluation process. The PLPP would give teachers the autonomy to

develop their professional learning to reflect years of experience, expertise, and student

outcomes. In this scenario, student achievement and professional learning are related and

not separate components of the process.

The PLPP would build on the structure of Florida's instructional evaluation

process and expand the professional development component. The current requirement

of a yearly performance evaluation for all instructional personnel and "twice a year for

newly hired classroom teachers in their first year of teaching in the district" (FLA. STAT.

§ 1012.34, 2011, para. 3) would be redefined. The professional development component

would transform into a portfolio documenting the professional learning plan developed

by the teacher reflecting their experience, expertise, and student outcomes.

Initially, a self-appraisal of instructional practice based on the FEAPs to pinpoint

the areas for development would prepare the groundwork for determining the three

professional learning goals for the portfolio. Next, the goals grounded in data from the

self-assessment would serve as the primary source to create the professional learning plan. As before, data from the observation of performance conducted by the principal would become part of the PLPP portfolio and complete the performance appraisal (FLDOE, 2020e). Lastly, a narrative analysis of the benefit of professional learning to student learning with a reflective assessment of the impact on instructional practice would complete the process.

The PLPP redirects the process and puts more emphasis on developing the expertise of teachers early in their careers. In the PLPP, twice a year for teachers with 0 to 5 years of experience, the principal would provide feedback on performance gleaned from formal observations of classroom practice. Interim observations of classroom practice could also be conducted to continue the cycle of support and feedback on classroom practice. Also, as in the current system, the observations of a teacher's classroom practice displaying less than satisfactory performance would follow the cycle of assistance in the SSA process (FLA. STAT. § 1012.34, 2011).

Every quarter, for teachers with less than five years of experience, the principal and teacher would review the PLPP and other data points to assess progress. Based on the feedback, the teacher would adjust the plan as needed. The process would continue throughout the year with the teacher taking part in professional learning to support the goals of their PLPP. The yearly appraisal evaluation of performance would merge a summary of the findings from PLPP and data from the observations of performance conducted by the principal.

Teachers with over five years of experience would move into the tiered system of the PLPP, reducing the frequency of formal observations. The process for developing the

PLPP and the expectation for the teacher to take part in professional learning aligned to expertise and student performance would remain the same. Recent studies reveal that teachers' capacity for development continues to evolve beyond the early years resulting in a positive relationship with student outcomes (Coenen, Cornelisz, Groot, Maassen van den Brink, & Van Klaveren, 2018; Podolsky, Kini, Darling-Hammond, & Bishop 2019).

A summative report, requiring the teacher to reflect and assess the impact on classroom practice with the connection to student learning, closes out the PLPP and generates the foundation for planning. The final evaluation of performance would incorporate the findings from the PLPP data from the observations of performance conducted by the principal and student achievement data available for the teacher. The PLPP extends the reach of professional development by developing the expertise of teachers. Teachers know their students and what works best for them. By prioritizing professional development and putting the teacher at the center of the process, the PLPP aims to motivate teachers to take an active role in their professional learning.

Teachers new to the field require more time to build and develop their skills. The tiered cycle acknowledges that teachers' professional learning needs vary based on their level of experience. Likewise, staggering the performance appraisal cycle permits time for cultivating the muscle memory or habits of effective instructional practice and provides for variations in the learning needs of teachers new to the field to those with more experience. Tying professional learning to student achievement honors the aim of increasing student learning and shifts the focus to teacher self-assessment and reflection to influence instructional practice.

Professional Learning Portfolio of Practice (PLPP)

Tier 1: Novice (teachers new to the profession with 0 to 5 years of experience)

- Twice a year observation of classroom practice conducted by the principal.

- Interim observations of classroom practice conducted by a school leader.

   o As in the SSA, if the observations of classroom practice are less than satisfactory, plans to aid the teacher are initiated.

- Quarterly and Annual Analysis of the PLPP.

- Annual performance evaluation.

   o Data points: PLPP findings, classroom practice observation, and student achievement.

Tier 2: Emerging (teachers with 6 to 10 years of experience)

- Evaluation of performance conducted every three years will include:

   o Data from observation of classroom performance and interim observations.

   o Data from the PLPP and student achievement data.

- Quarterly and yearly analysis review of the findings from the PLPP.

Tier 3: Mid-Career (teachers with 11-20 years of experience)

- Evaluation of performance conducted every five years will include:

   o Data from observation of classroom performance and interim observations.

   o Data from the PLPP and student achievement data.

- Twice a year review of the PLPP which includes pre/post synopsis of the current year.

Tier 4: Established (teachers with over 21 years of experience)

- Evaluation of performance conducted every five years will include:

   o Data from Observation of classroom performance with interim observations as needed.

   o Data from the PLPP and student achievement.

- Twice a year analysis review of the PLPP which includes pre/post synopsis of the current year.

Figure 5. The PLPP model.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study illustrates how teachers and principals perceive the complexities of the relationship between instructional practice and student achievement. The one striking discovery from the analysis, the link between professional development and student achievement, provides the groundwork for planning more research. To expand on the findings from the study, more research delving into the practices conducted according to the type or level of the school and experience level of the teachers may add to understanding this relationship.

The study relied on quantitative research methods to analyze the survey data gathered through SMS to arrive at the findings. The use of SMS facilitated access and simplified distributing the survey. While this approach provided valuable data, a mixed-method research design incorporating quantitative and qualitative methods would enable delving deeper into the data. Using quantitative research incorporating SMS combined with qualitative research methods would provide a more in-depth understanding of relationship from the perspectives of teachers and principals.

Final Summary

Despite the narrow scope of the sample, the findings disclose how Florida teachers and principals perceived the relationship of instructional practice to student achievement. An unanticipated finding disclosed that principals found the practices of effective leadership and data use as having a relationship with student achievement. However, the finding for teachers found that practices related to teaching and learning as having more of an influence on student achievement. While this difference could have

many reasons, these findings help demonstrate how school accountability reforms continue to influence how principals see their role as instructional leaders.

Speaking as a former principal, many initiatives proposed over the years to boost student achievement have had long-lasting benefits, while others have not. Regardless, it is the teacher who serves as the direct bridge between external reform mandates, student learning, and achievement, thus ensuring that teachers are prepared to implement the curriculum and meet the diverse learning needs of students adds to the pressures faced by school leaders. As Florida school leaders continue to struggle to fill teaching positions while keeping pace with accountability mandates, the urgency to retain and grow the professional knowledge of staff rises in urgency. For principals, knowing how best to support teachers and enhance their professional knowledge is fundamental to instructional leadership and increasing student achievement.

APPENDICES

Appendix A. Recruitment Flyer

FLORIDA ATLANTIC UNIVERSITY™

A Principal's Perspective:
Instructional Leadership in the 21st

Don't forget:

Sshh! It's not a secret-spread the word
SSPAHP Survey & FSA

For Florida public-school teachers and principals trying to improve student achievement
continues to dominate school life. A Principal's Perspective, using the School Survey of
Practices Associated with High Performance (SSPAHP) will explore how school
instructional practice and student performance are connected.

➢   What : School Survey of Practices Associated
        with High Performance
➢   Who: Florida Public-school teachers, principals and other
        teachers
➢   Why: Exploring the connection between school practices and
        the FSA
➢   How : Online anonymous 20 minutes survey

➢   Contact M. Tracy, FAU Graduate Student and Investigator
        mtracy1@fau.edu for more information

Please do not send any private or confidential information to us by social media. We urge you to
only access the survey on a private device or computer and to ensure you log-out after you are
finished.

Research Investigators
➢ Dr. Robert Shockley, Chair and Professor, College of Education
    shockley@fau.edu
➢ Dr. Michael DeDonno, Assistant Professor, College of Education
    mdedonno@fau.edu
    Ms. Maria Tracy, Graduate Student, College of Education
    Mtracy1@fau.edu

FAU
Institutional
Review Board

1281607-1	
Approved On:	September 18, 2018
Expires On:	N/A

Appendix B. FAU IRB Letter of Exemption

DATE: September 19, 2018

TO: Robert Shockley
FROM: Florida Atlantic University Social, Behavioral and Educational Research IRB

PROTOCOL #:   1281607-1
PROTOCOL TITLE: [1281607-1] A Principal's Perspective: Instructional Leadership in the 21st Century

SUBMISSION TYPE: New Project
REVIEW CATEGORY: Exemption category # *A3*

ACTION: DETERMINATION OF EXEMPT STATUS
EFFECTIVE DATE: September 18, 2018

Thank you for your submission of New Project materials for this research study. The Florida Atlantic University Social, Behavioral and Educational Research IRB has determined this project is EXEMPT FROM FEDERAL REGULATIONS. Therefore, you may initiate your research study.

We will keep a copy of this correspondence on file in our office. Please keep the IRB informed of any substantive change in your procedures, so that the exemption status may be re-evaluated if needed. Substantive changes are changes that are not minor and may result in increased risk or burden or decreased benefits to participants. Please also inform our office if you encounter any problem involving human subjects while conducting your research.

If you have any questions or comments about this correspondence, please contact Donna Simonovitch at:

Institutional Review Board
Research Integrity/Division of Research
Florida Atlantic University
Boca Raton, FL 33431
Phone: 561.297.1383
researchintegrity@fau.edu

* Please include your protocol number and title in all correspondence with this office.

**This letter has been electronically signed in accordance with all applicable regulations,
and a copy is retained within our records.**

- 1 -   Generated on IRBNet

Appendix C. Adult Consent Form

Consent 3 - Paragraph Low Risk Anonymous

TITLE: A Principal's Perspective: Instructional Leadership in the 21st Century
Investigator(s):

              Dr. Robert Shockley, Principal Investigator, Chair and Professor, College of Education, Florida Atlantic University
              Maria Tracy, Graduate Student and Investigator, College of Education, Florida Atlantic University

Thank you for participating in this research. We know that your time is valuable, and we greatly appreciate your willingness to complete this survey. The research project, A Principal's Perspective Instructional Leadership in the 21st Century is attempting to survey Florida public school teachers and school leaders to explore the relationship between school practices and student achievement. The survey is anonymous, voluntary and will take 20 about minutes to complete.

Your participation in this study is your choice. You may skip any questions that make you feel uncomfortable and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. Your input is vital and will of great benefit in understanding how school practices influence student learning.
The survey is divided into five areas:
- Effective leadership
- Strong curriculum
- Professional development
- School culture
- Ongoing data use for school improvement

Risks for participating are minimal and will be the same as ordinarily encountered when engaging in social media for personal use. The survey data, will be managed through Qualtrics software, which abides by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy (FERPA) Act, will be secure, sent to a database server maintained by FAU and deleted after a period of 3 years.

If you experience problems or have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, please contact the Florida Atlantic University Division of Research at (561) 297-1383. For other questions about the study, please contact the principal investigator: [Dr. Robert Shockley, Principal Investigator, Chair and Professor, College of Education, Florida Atlantic University at shockley@fau.edu or Maria Tracy, Student Investigator and Graduate Student, College of Education, Florida Atlantic University at mtracy1@fau.edu].

By clicking the on-survey link below, I confirm that I have read or had read to me the information describing this study. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I am 18 years of age or older and freely consent to participate. I understand that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. I have received a copy of this consent form. [Please feel free to print a copy of this consent form.]

<div align="center">Example of Survey Instrument

School Survey of Practices Associated with High Performance (SSPAHP)</div>

Please respond to the following questions:

1. How would you classify your position at THIS school? [Mark only one response]
    __ Regular full-time teacher (in any grades prekindergarten-12 or comparable ungraded levels).
    __ Regular part-time teacher (in any grades prekindergarten-12 or comparable ungraded levels).
    __ Principal
    __ Assistant principal
    __ Other non-classroom school teaching position

2. Have you been at THIS school more than one year?

Yes _____   No _____

3   How would you describe grades taught at the THIS school? [Mark only one]
        __   Elementary Model (K-5 grades)
        __   Middle School Model (6-8 grades)
        __   High School Model (9-12 grades)
        __   Combination Model (K-8 grade or 6-12 grades)

4.   What is the name of THIS school and the name of the school district for THIS school ?

        School name _____ School District _____

Appendix D. Modified SSPAHP

TITLE: A Principal's Perspective: Instructional Leadership in the 21st Century

Investigator(s):

        Dr. Robert Shockley, Principal Investigator, Chair and Professor, College of Education,
Florida   Atlantic University
        Maria Tracy, Graduate Student and Investigator, College of Education, Florida
        Atlantic University

Survey Instrument

School Survey of Practices Associated with High Performance (SSPAHP)

Demographics

Please respond to the following questions:

(*New*) 1. What is the name of the school you are currently teaching or leading in?

    _____

(*New)* 2. What is the name of the school district for this school?

    _____

3. What are the grades taught at the school? [Mark only one]
    __   Elementary Model (K-5 grades)
    __   Middle School Model (6-8 grades)
    __   High School Model (9-12 grades)
    __   Combination Model (K-8 grade or 6-12 grades)

4. How would you classify your position at THIS school? [Mark only one response]
    __   Regular full-time teacher (in any grades prekindergarten-12 or comparable ungraded
levels).
    __   Regular part-time teacher (in any grades prekindergarten-12 or comparable ungraded
levels).
    __   Principal
    __   Assistant principal
    __   Other non-classroom school teaching position

(*New*)5. How many years have you held your current position? [Mark only one response.]
    __ One year
    __ 2 to 4 years
    __ 5 to 8 years
    __ More than 12 years

(*New)* 6. How many years have you been in the teaching profession ? [Mark only one response.]
    __ One year
    __ 2 to 4 years
    __ 5 to 8 years
    __ More than 12 years

7.   Have you been at THIS school more than one year?

    Yes _____   No ____

Please click to respond to each survey item.

Effective leadership

Organizational direction

5. Based on your experience, to what extent do you disagree or agree with the following statements? [Mark only one response.]	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
a. School administrators make clear the educational goals of the school.	1	2	3	4
b. School administrators maintain high professional expectations for self, faculty, and school.	1	2	3	4
c. School administrators help the faculty develop high professional expectations of themselves.	1	2	3	4
d. School administrators communicate to teachers the directions the school's programs need to take for academic improvement.	1	2	3	4

Collaborative leadership

6. Based on your experience, to what extent do you disagree or agree with the following statements? [Mark only one response.]	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
a. Administrators, teachers, and staff work together effectively to achieve school goals.	1	2	3	4
b. Teachers can freely provide input and express concerns to administrators.	1	2	3	4
c. The school provides opportunities for parents to participate in important decisions about their children's education (e.g., scheduling, homework, discipline).	1	2	3	4
d. The school ensures teachers have a major role in decisions about curriculum development.	1	2	3	4
e. The school provides opportunities for teachers to plan and make school decisions about professional development and curriculum.	1	2	3	4
f. Teachers have needed instructional resources to teach effectively.	1	2	3	4
g. The school provides regular opportunities for all stakeholders to review the school's vision and purpose.	1	2	3	4

Instructional leadership

7. Based on your experience, to what extent do you disagree or agree with the following statements? [Mark only one response.]	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
a. The principal clearly defines or helps teachers understand standards for instructional practices.	1	2	3	4
b. The principal observes teachers teaching.	1	2	3	4
c. The principal attends teacher planning meetings.	1	2	3	4
d. The principal makes suggestions to improve teachers' classroom management.	1	2	3	4
e. The principal gives teachers specific ideas for how to improve instruction.	1	2	3	4
f. The principal empowers teachers to make decisions that improve teaching and learning.	1	2	3	4

g. The principal promotes the diagnosis of individual student learning needs.	1	2	3	4

Strong curriculum (with focus on literacy)

Curriculum, instruction, and assessment aligned with standards

8. Based on your experience, to what extent do you disagree or agree with the following statements? [Mark only one response.]	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
a. Our staff demonstrates an understanding of state learning standards for reading.	1	2	3	4
b. District or school-level common assessments are used to inform instruction.	1	2	3	4
c. The reading curriculum is aligned with the state learning standards.	1	2	3	4
d. This school uses assessments aligned to standards and curriculum.	1	2	3	4
e. This school uses curriculum that is relevant and meaningful.	1	2	3	4
f. Most teachers integrate literacy concepts into their teaching.	1	2	3	4

Culture of literacy instructional practices

9. Based on your experience, to what extent do you disagree or agree that the following activities are currently practiced throughout your school, across the curriculum? [Mark only one response.]	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
a. Most teachers use effective instructional practices in support of developing student literacy and comprehension of course content.	1	2	3	4
b. Most teachers provide personalized support to each student to improve literacy based on assessed needs.	1	2	3	4
c. Most teachers create literacy-rich environments with books, journals, and research texts to support content learning.	1	2	3	4
d. Most teachers effectively use instruction with small groups to improve student learning and comprehension of course content.	1	2	3	4
e. Most teachers effectively model how to use a variety of literacy/learning strategies for all students.	1	2	3	4
f. Most teachers effectively use a variety of literacy strategies that support learning of specific content texts for all students.	1	2	3	4
g. Most teachers regularly use vocabulary development strategies to support student learning.	1	2	3	4
h. Most teachers regularly use strategies to support the reading/writing connection.	1	2	3	4

Culture of literacy intervention to improve student achievement

10. Based on your experience, to what extent do you disagree or agree that the following activities are currently practiced at your school? [Mark only one response.]	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
a. Administrators and teachers develop instructional plans to meet literacy instructional needs of struggling students.	1	2	3	4
b. Intervention is highly prescriptive toward improving identified literacy deficits of individuals.	1	2	3	4
c. Highly skilled teachers work with struggling/striving readers.	1	2	3	4
d. Teachers use literacy strategies to support struggling/striving readers' learning of content/subject area texts.	1	2	3	4
e. The school has a plan to improve literacy that supports strategies ranging from intervention for struggling readers to expanding the reading power of all students.	1	2	3	4

Professional development

Focused professional development

11. Based on your experience, to what extent do you disagree or agree with the following statements? [Mark only one response.]	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
a. Objective data are used to guide building-directed professional development.	1	2	3	4
b. The training I have been to in this district helps me do my job better.	1	2	3	4
c. This school has one or more professional learning communities (a consistent, collaborative learning opportunity for teachers) focused on improving student learning.	1	2	3	4
d. This school's teachers engage in professional development activities to learn and apply reading skills and strategies.	1	2	3	4
e. This school's teachers engage in professional development activities to learn and apply math skills and strategies.	1	2	3	4
f. Teachers in this school are provided with training to collaborate on improving student learning.	1	2	3	4
g. Our teachers engage in classroom-based professional development activities (e.g., peer coaching) that focus on improving instruction.	1	2	3	4
h. We have opportunities to learn effective teaching strategies for the cultures represented in our school.	1	2	3	4
i. We are provided training to support a culturally responsive learning environment.	1	2	3	4

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Individual professional development opportunities

12. To what extent do you disagree or agree with the following statements about professional development over the last academic year? [Mark only one response.]	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
a. My professional development has been sustained and coherently focused, rather than short term and unrelated.	1	2	3	4
b. My professional development has included enough time to think carefully about, try, and evaluate new ideas.	1	2	3	4
c. My professional development has been closely connected to my school's improvement plan.	1	2	3	4
d. My professional development has included opportunities to work productively with colleagues in my school.	1	2	3	4

School culture

High academic standards

13. Based on your experience, to what extent do you disagree or agree with the following statements? [Mark only one response.]	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
a. Students respect others who get good grades.	1	2	3	4
b. Students try hard to improve on previous work.	1	2	3	4
c. Students seek extra work so they can get good grades.	1	2	3	4
d. The school sets high standards for academic performance.	1	2	3	4
e. Students in this school can achieve the goals that have been set for them.	1	2	3	4
f. Academic achievement is recognized and acknowledged by the school.	1	2	3	4

Goal clarity

14. Based on your experience, to what extent do you disagree or agree with the following statements? [Mark only one response.]	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
a. School improvement goals are well understood in my school by most teachers and staff.	1	2	3	4
b. The process to achieve school improvement goals is well understood in my school by most teachers and staff.	1	2	3	4
c. School improvement goals give me a sense of direction and purpose for my work.	1	2	3	4

Professional teacher behavior

15. Based on your experience, to what extent do you disagree or agree with the following statements? [Mark only one response.]	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
a. Most teachers in this school respect the professional competence of their colleagues.	1	2	3	4
b. Most teachers in this school "go the extra mile" with their students.	1	2	3	4

c. Most teachers in this school exercise professional judgment.	1	2	3	4
d. Most teachers in this school accomplish their jobs with enthusiasm.	1	2	3	4
e. Most teachers in this school are committed to helping their students.	1	2	3	4
f. Most teachers in this school help students on their own time.	1	2	3	4

Professional community

16. Based on your experience, to what extent do you disagree or agree with the following statements? [Mark only one response.]	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
a. Teachers in our school share a similar set of values, beliefs, and attitudes related to teaching and learning.	1	2	3	4
b. In our school we have high expectations for all students.	1	2	3	4
c. Our student assessment practices reflect our curriculum standards.	1	2	3	4
d. Most teachers in the school support the principal in enforcing school rules.	1	2	3	4
e. Most teachers in this school feel responsible for helping each other improve their instruction.	1	2	3	4
f. Most teachers in this school take responsibility for improving the school outside their own class.	1	2	3	4
g. Most teachers in this school help maintain discipline in the entire school, not just their classroom.	1	2	3	4
h. Most teachers in this school observe each other teaching.	1	2	3	4
i. Colleagues provide me with meaningful feedback on my performance.	1	2	3	4
j. Most teachers in this school exchange suggestions for curriculum materials with colleagues.	1	2	3	4
k. Most teachers in this school try to develop new curriculum or lesson plans together.	1	2	3	4
l. Most teachers in this school have conversations with colleagues about managing classroom behavior.	1	2	3	4
m. Most teachers in this school have conversations with colleagues about what helps students learn best.	1	2	3	4

17. Based on your experience, to what extent do you disagree or agree with the following statements? [Mark only one response.]	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
a. This school encourages parent involvement.	1	2	3	4
b. Our teachers effectively communicate student progress to parents.	1	2	3	4
c. For important decisions, we collaborate with parents and the community.	1	2	3	4
d. This school communicates effectively with families of all cultures.	1	2	3	4
e. The curriculum we teach reflects the cultures of the community we serve.	1	2	3	4
f. This school has activities to celebrate the cultures of its community.	1	2	3	4

Staff collegiality

18. Based on your experience, to what extent do you disagree or agree with the following statements? [Mark only one response.]	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
a. School staff members work well together.	1	2	3	4
b. School staff members are open to feedback regarding their instruction from other staff members.	1	2	3	4
c. I feel comfortable sharing my ideas with other staff members.	1	2	3	4
d. When needed, I can get help and support from other school staff members.	1	2	3	4

School support of innovation

19. Based on your experience, to what extent do you disagree or agree with the following statements? [Mark only one response.]	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
a. Leaders support innovation in teaching.	1	2	3	4
b. Most teachers in the school are continually learning and seeking new ideas.	1	2	3	4
c. The principal is interested in innovation and new ideas.	1	2	3	4
d. In my school, we systematically consider new and better ways of doing things.	1	2	3	4

Ongoing data use for school improvement

Frequent monitoring of teaching and learning

20. Based on your experience, to what extent do you disagree or agree with the following statements about your school? [Mark only one response.]	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
a. Student assessment results (from either classroom or district assessments) are used to identify student needs and appropriate instructional intervention.	1	2	3	4
b. Struggling students receive early intervention and remediation to acquire skills.	1	2	3	4
c. The administration monitors the effectiveness of instructional interventions.	1	2	3	4
d. School staff reflect upon instructional practice to inform our conversations about improvement.	1	2	3	4
e. Staff are frequently informed about our performance with evidence from observations, student progress, or other data.	1	2	3	4
f. The administration uses data to make recommendations regarding learning programs.	1	2	3	4
g. The administration uses data to assess learning equity for different populations.	1	2	3	4

[end of survey]

Adapted from Weinstock et al. (2016). (Unmodified content reprinted with permission).

Appendix E. Copyright Clearance-Leadership Capacity

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Confirmation Number: 11757856
Order Date: 10/19/2018

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Customer: maria tracy
Account Number: 3000896420
Organization: maria tracy
Email: mtracy1@fau.edu
Phone:

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Order Details

Leadership capacity for lasting school improvement

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Order detail ID: 71613712

ISBN: 9780871207784
Publication Type: Book
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              CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT
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