Understanding the Distributed Leadership Experiences of Principals, Assistant Principals, and Teacher Leaders in High Schools

by

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Abstract

The theory of distributed leadership is a relatively new concept; thus, it has been under-researched. It is important to understand distributed leadership because there is a need to acknowledge an even broader perspective of leadership. The principals, assistant principals, and teacher leaders are all key players in translating distributed leadership theory into practice.

The researcher utilized a multiple-case study approach to capture the essence of the theory of distributed leadership translated into practice in three high schools.   Principals, assistant principals, and teacher leaders were interviewed in their school setting to afford the researcher an opportunity to gain an in-depth understanding of their perspectives.

The researcher analyzed similarities and differences within and across the three cases. All three groups perceived that leaders who promote a broad perspective of leadership practiced distributed leadership in the school. Assistant principals and teacher leaders perceived that when leadership is distributed in schools, collective activities that promote a cohesive environment take place and there is a coordinated flow of communication. However, principals and teacher leaders ascertained that a lack of buy-in/ownership was a challenge that existed when distributed leadership was practiced in schools. The findings from this study of principals,' assistant principals,' and teachers leaders' perceptions of the practices and the benefits and challenges of the distributed leadership theory confirmed what the literature states about the theory of distributed leadership.

Acknowledgements

As I pen my acknowledgements, I feel as if though I am on stage and I have just been presented an Oscar and I am trying to figure out who to thank first. Funny right, yes, I think so too. I'll make this simple so that I eliminate the process of me getting bogged down by emotional overload. First, I say thanks to my dissertation chairperson who stood by me with utmost sincerity. My greatest takeaway from our writing journey is when you said to me: "It is well, all is well, and all manner of things are well." That is a settling statement and it go into my valise of mantras. I will call upon it each time I am threatening a meltdown. Thanks Dr. Searby, for all your editing, mentoring and genuine care. A special thanks to each of my committee members, I could not have completed this study without your support.

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now cross earning a PhD off my bucket list. Life is funny, isn't it?

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Chapter I: Introduction

It is important to explore the concept of distributed leadership and its connection with educational leadership. As literature on the subject matter was reviewed, it became evident that many researchers reference distributed leadership when discussing leadership and school reform, organizational leadership, leadership theory and educational outcomes, and practice. "A review of the educational administration literature suggests that the concept of distributed leadership has been embraced with enthusiasm by educational researchers and scholars" (Menon, 2015, p. 2).

Theoretical Framework- Distributed Leadership

Mayrowetz (2008) in his research on distributed leadership wrote, "At the start of this decade, Peter Gronn and James Spillane, working separately, popularized the concept of distributed leadership in the field of educational leadership" (p. 424). "Minimal research was published on the concept until 2000. Since this time, distributed leadership has gained notoriety as a justifiable style of leadership" (Gronn, 2000).

Distributed leadership. "The term 'distributed leadership' is believed to have been used for the first time by Gibb (1954), an Australian psychologist, who drew attention to the dynamics of influence processes as they impact on the work of different groups. Gibb suggests that leadership should not be viewed as the monopoly of the individual but rather as shared functions among individuals" (Hulpia, Devos, & Rosseel, 2009, p. 291)

To get a full glimpse of distributed leadership and the impact that it has on leadership practices at the secondary level, the roles and tasks of multiple school leaders must be described, along with other terms that are sometimes used to understand distributed leadership. Spillane

(2005) explained that the term-distributed leadership often is used interchangeably with 'shared leadership', 'team leadership', and 'democratic leadership" (p. 143). Some use distributed leadership to indicate that school leadership involves multiple leaders; others argue that leadership is an organizational quality, rather than an individual attribute. Still others use distributed leadership to define a way of thinking about the practice of school leadership.

Principal sharing influence. Distributed leadership involves the principal of the school sharing influence with team members who step forward when situations warrant, providing the leadership necessary, and then stepping back to allow others to lead. Such shared leadership has become more and more important in today's organizations to allow faster responses to more complex issues (Pearce, Manz, & Sims, 2009). Some propose that distributed leadership is an attitude rather than a management technique. "It means seeing all members of the faculty and staff as experts in their own right – as uniquely important sources of knowledge, experience, and wisdom" (University, 2013, p.1).

Broader perspective of leadership. If the principal in the building is the only one making decisions, then teachers, along with other members of the staff, may view themselves and what they have to offer as being insignificant and of no value to the school as a whole. Principals utilizing a more extensive scope of leadership within the school combat a top down or hero/manager leadership style. "Distributed leadership acknowledges a broader perspective of leadership activities than just the leadership of school principals. A distributed perspective in school frames leadership practice as a product of interaction among leaders, followers and the situations" (Salahuddin, 2010, p. 22).

Principals often experience stressful days that are filled with problems that require immediate solutions, such as non-instructional routines. "Time to focus on improving instruction

can become non-priority when a school leader's typical day includes a string of crises and non-instructional routines: the lunch menu, the angry parent, the fight in the schoolyard" (Mitgang, Gill, & Cummings, 2013, p.27). Therefore, some consider distributing leadership as a necessity and as a means by which the principal can be a more effective school leader with more time to address issues that are more concentrated on academics.

Assistant principals. There has been considerable research and literature about the role of the principal over the last 50 years. However, the assistant principal, while vital to the function and performance of the school, has been extremely over-looked in scholastic literature (Brooks & Niewenhuizen, 2013, p. 185).

Teacher leadership. Another approach that is also associated with distributed leadership is the concept of teacher leadership (Hulpia, Devos, & Rosseel, 2009, p. 210). Teacher leadership may be seen as one important demonstration of distributed leadership; teachers are likely to be the individuals to whom leadership is distributed (Bush, 2015).

Organizational benefits. Organizational benefits are recognized when the principal realizes the strengths of teacher leaders. Teachers taking on leadership roles in schools have certain competencies and their expertise is warranted for school success and is an organizational benefit. Moller and Pankake (2013) noted, "Teacher leaders are those teachers who look for resources to help them survive in the complex world of teaching, and credible teacher leaders often become those resources. Within schools, there may be a silent acknowledgement that these teachers know how best to work with students" (pp. 25-26).

Distributing the leadership makes for much more successful secondary environments when leaders share the load of duties and responsibilities. "Many, rather than few, have a share of responsibility for the shared purpose— a view of leadership requiring the redistribution of

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power and authority toward those who hold expertise and not necessarily privileging those with formal titles (Copland & Boatright, 2006, p. 14)." The principal does have the title, which means leader, chief, first in command, head teacher, head of school, or headmaster. However, the title alone does not dictate that leadership cannot be shared and that the principal must be alone trying to make school work. With distributed leadership, decisions about who leads and who follows are dictated by the task or problem situation, not necessarily by where one sits in the hierarchy (Copland & Boatright, 2006).

Problem Statement

There has been expanding research and literature about the role of the principal over the last 50 years. Yet, the assistant principal, while vital to the function and performance of the school, has been extremely over-looked in scholastic literature (Brooks & Niewenhausen, 2013). Knowing more about how leadership is distributed in secondary schools, including how leadership is distributed to teacher leaders, will contribute to the knowledge base in school leadership, and help leadership preparation programs know how to better prepare future school leaders for a shared leadership role. This study will bring to light the ways in which the theory of distributed leadership is translated into everyday practice in secondary schools.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to understand how the theory of distributed leadership is translated into practice at the secondary school level as perceived by principals, assistant principals and teacher leaders in a southern state. The research will involve interviewing principals, assistant principals, and teacher leaders, examining their assigned roles and responsibilities, and their perceptions of how leadership is distributed in their school setting. The

study will examine the overall manner in which leadership is distributed and whether differences exist between group perceptions

This study was a multiple case study and evidence for this study was gathered from a purposeful sample of 3 principals, 7 assistant principals, and 3 teacher leaders as designated by the principal) in 3 suburban schools within Alabama. The researcher selected the 3 high schools based on student population, location, number of assistant principals, diversity of administrators, and number of teachers. Assistant principals and teacher leaders of diverse backgrounds were sought to interview to provide a different lens to the study.

Research Questions

The central research question was: In what ways is leadership distributed in secondary schools to assistant principals and teacher leaders? There are 5 sub questions.

     Sub questions.

1. In ways does the principal perceive that he/she distributes leadership in school?
2. In what ways do assistant principals perceive that leadership is distributed to them in the school?
3. In what ways do teacher leaders perceive that leadership is distributed to them in the school?
4. What benefits result when leadership is distributed?
5. What challenges exist when distributed leadership is the practiced in the school?

Significance of the Study

Distributed leadership is becoming more and more relevant as demands are placed on senior leaders (principals) in secondary schools. This research study of distributed leadership

was designed to identify the leadership roles and responsibilities that principals share with assistant principals and teacher leaders.

Mayrowetz (2008), in his research on distributed leadership also wrote, "At the start of this decade, Peter Gronn and James Spillane, working separately, popularized the concept of distributed leadership in the field of educational leadership" (p. 424). Minimal research has been published on the concept until 2000. Since this time, distributed leadership has gained notoriety as a justifiable style of leadership. Gronn (2006) refers to this concept as the "new kid on the block" (p. 1). The history and the emergence of the theory have had much to do with education, as the previously mentioned researchers have disclosed.

There is a need to determine how the concept of distributed leadership is being practiced in high schools as perceived by assistant principals and teacher leaders, as well as the principals who distribute it. The findings of this research could shed light on how leadership is distributed to assistant principals and teacher leaders in high schools by identifying the roles and responsibilities they have been asked to assume.

The findings of this research could also encourage leadership preparation programs to review internship objectives for future assistant principals who are training also to be instructional leaders. With the restructuring of educational leadership programs, leaders are now supposed to be more prepared to assist the principal with those responsibilities that pertain to instruction. As Terosky (2013) points out, "In essence, the concept of instructional leadership is being promoted as a counter narrative to the image of the principal consumed with administrative tasks void of instructional substance" (p. 6). Candidates who have graduated from educational leadership programs since approximately 2005 have been conferred degrees in Instructional Leadership. Therefore, leaders who assume assistant principal positions and have graduated

recently are to be prepared instructional leaders and able to assist the principal with curriculum needs. Yet, the questions remain: Are senior principals allowing assistant principals to lead instructionally? And are teachers also taking on more responsibility for building-wide instructional leadership?

Delimitations

This section clarifies the boundaries of this study. A purposeful sample of 5 principals and 10 assistant principals, 10 teacher leaders (consisting of one formal teacher and one informal teacher leader as designated by the principal) in 10 urban schools within Alabama were interviewed. Assistant principals were sought with regards to their level of experience, formal leadership preparation, ethnicity, and gender. The factors were considered to provide the most diverse population of applicants. The study was also bound by time. The observations and interviews all occurred during January, February and March of 2016. The study only included principals, assistant principals and teacher leaders who met the criteria dependent upon school student population, leadership roles, ethnicity and gender.

Assumptions

The researcher assumed that participants gave honest answers about their roles in the school, and how leadership is distributed. The researcher assumed that the participants may feel somewhat uncomfortable answering some of the interview questions – thus, the researcher made it a point to assure the participants of the confidentiality of the information they shared, and outlined the safeguards that were put in place to insure that. The researcher assumed that the findings of the study cannot be generalized to all secondary schools, as the sample was purposeful and intentionally a small number of carefully selected cases.

Definition of Terms

Distributed Leadership - Collective activity, focused on collective goals, which comprises a quality or energy that is greater than the sum of individual actions.

Shared Leadership - leadership that is broadly distributed, such that people within a team and organization lead each other.

Transformational Leadership - a leadership style that leads to positive changes in those who follow. Learn why these leaders can be so effective.

Principal – school administrator

Vice Principal - commonly function as mediators and are usually the first to confront the fundamental quandaries of school systems on a day-to-day basis (Yu-kwong & Walker, 2010)

Assistant Principal – essential to the effective functioning of schools, especially in that assistant principals are asked daily, and often many times per day, to handle stressful situations presented by a wide variety of stakeholder groups, thus sheltering the principal from these time-consuming encounters.

Teacher Leader - those teachers who look for resources to help them survive in the complex world of teaching, and credible teacher leaders often become those resources. Within schools, there may be a silent acknowledgement that these teachers know how best to work with students

Secondary School - a school which provides secondary education, between the ages of 11 and 16 or 11 and 19, after primary school and before higher education.

High School - upper secondary school

Informal Leader -someone within an organization or work unit who, by virtue of how he or she is perceived by his peers (or others in the organization) is seems as worthy of paying

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attention to, or following. The major thing that distinguishes an informal leader from a formal one is that the informal leader does not hold a position of power or formal authority over those that choose to follow him or her.

Formal Leader - a member of organization who has given authority by virtue of his position to influence other members of organization to achieve organizational goals.

Suburban School - a school that exists in the outer suburbs of a city.

Organization of the Study

Chapter 1 provided the research problem, the above narrative provided the conceptual framework, purpose statement, research questions, and significance of the study, delimitations, assumptions, and definition of terms. Chapter 2 offers the review of literature in the topics of the traditional roles of assistant principals, non-traditional roles of assistant principals, Challenges of assistant principals in the secondary setting as it relates to distributed leadership, experiences of assistant principals in the secondary setting as it relates to distributed leadership, maintaining school culture, mediator roles, preparation for assistant principals to get the job done, distributed leadership as it relates to teacher leaders and the roles they assume, and distributed leadership for capacity building. Chapter 3 provides the methodology that was used for the study. Chapter 4 presents the findings of the study. Chapter 5 interprets the findings of the study.

Chapter II: Review of Related Literature

The purpose of the study was to understand how principals distribute leadership to assistant principals and teachers in high schools. For the purpose of this study, distributed leadership is defined as "collective activity, focused on collective goals, which comprises a quality or energy that is greater than the sum of individual actions" (Copeland & Boatwright, 2006, p. 12). Therefore, this study focused on the distribution of leadership functions among secondary school leadership teams, consisting of individuals in formal leadership positions (i.e., the principal, assistant principals, and teacher leaders). The central research question for the study was: In what ways is leadership distributed in secondary schools to assistant principals and teacher leaders? Topics discussed in this review of literature include the history of distributed leadership, traditional and non-traditional roles of assistant principals, experiences and challenges of assistant principals, best practices for implementing distributing leadership, and distributing leadership for building capacity.

A Review of Distributed Leadership

It is important to explore the concept of distributed leadership to understand its connection with educational leadership. As literature on the subject matter was reviewed, it became evident that many researchers reference distributed leadership when discussing leadership relating to school reform, organizational leadership, leadership theory, educational outcomes, and theory and practice. As stated by Menon (2015), "A review of the educational administration literature suggests that the concept of distributed leadership has been embraced with enthusiasm by educational researchers and scholars" (p. 2). For example, Diamond and

Spillane (2007) explore how a distributed perspective is different from other frameworks for thinking about leadership in schools. Distributed leadership is becoming more and more relevant as demands are placed on growing educational organizations and their leadership.

> The term 'distributed leadership' is believed to have been used for the first time by Gibb (1954), an Australian psychologist, who drew attention to the dynamics of influence processes as they impact on the work of different groups. Gibb suggests that leadership should not be viewed as the monopoly of the individual but rather as shared functions among individuals" (Hulpia, Devos, & Rosseel, 2009, p. 291).

Harris (2009) proposes that it is an idea that can be traced back as far as the mid '20s and possibly earlier.

Mayrowetz (2008) in his research on distributed leadership also wrote, "At the start of this decade, Peter Gronn and James Spillane, working separately, popularized the concept of distributed leadership in the field of educational leadership" (p. 424). Minimal research was published on the concept until 2000. Since this time, distributed leadership has gained notoriety as a justifiable style of leadership. Gronn (2006) refers to this concept as the "new kid on the block" (p. 1). The history and the emergence of the theory have had much to do with education as the previously mentioned researchers have disclosed.

Practice of school leadership. Distributed leadership is an idea that is increasing in recognition and there is wide ranging interest in the concept of distributing leadership although explanations and usages of the term fluctuate. Elmore (2000) made inroads with his research on distributed leadership and he has been influential in driving the popularity of the concept along with the work of Spillane, Sherer, and Caldre (2001, 2005), and Spillane, Halverson, and Diamond (2001). According to Elmore (2000), this type of leadership incorporates a realizable

and maintainable practice of school leadership that progresses to a broader distribution of fundamental leadership in a school.

Timperly (2005) summarized the ideas of Cambren, Rowan, and Taylor (2003) about distributed leadership and how school leaders use the concept to promote and sustain conditions for successful schooling in interaction with others rather than relying on structures and programs necessary for success. According to Cambren et al. (2003):

> A more achievable and sustainable conceptualization of leadership has been coming increasingly to the fore to replace the model of 'a single 'heroic' leader standing atop a hierarchy, bending the school community to his or her purposes.' This alternative involves thinking of leadership in terms of activities and interactions that are *distributed* across multiple people and situations and involve role complementarities and network patterns of control (p. 348).

Spillane (2005) wrote, "The traditional notion of leadership is the vision of one person at the head of a group, directing, teaching, and encouraging others. This notion of 'heroic' leadership, however, is rapidly changing, and 'post-heroic', also known as distributive leadership is taking hold" (p. 143).

Leadership practice at the secondary level. To get a full glimpse of distributed leadership and the impact that it has on leadership practices at the secondary level, the roles and tasks of multiple leaders must be addressed along with other terms that are sometimes used to denote a similar concept to distributed leadership.

Spillane (2005) explained that the term or concept often is used interchangeably with 'shared leadership,' 'team leadership,' and 'democratic leadership.' Some use distributed leadership to indicate that school leadership involves multiple leaders; others argue that

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leadership is an organizational quality, rather than an individual attribute. Still others use

distributed leadership to define a way of thinking about the practice of school leadership (p.

143). Figure 1 illustrates the theory of distributed leadership as perceived by several researchers.
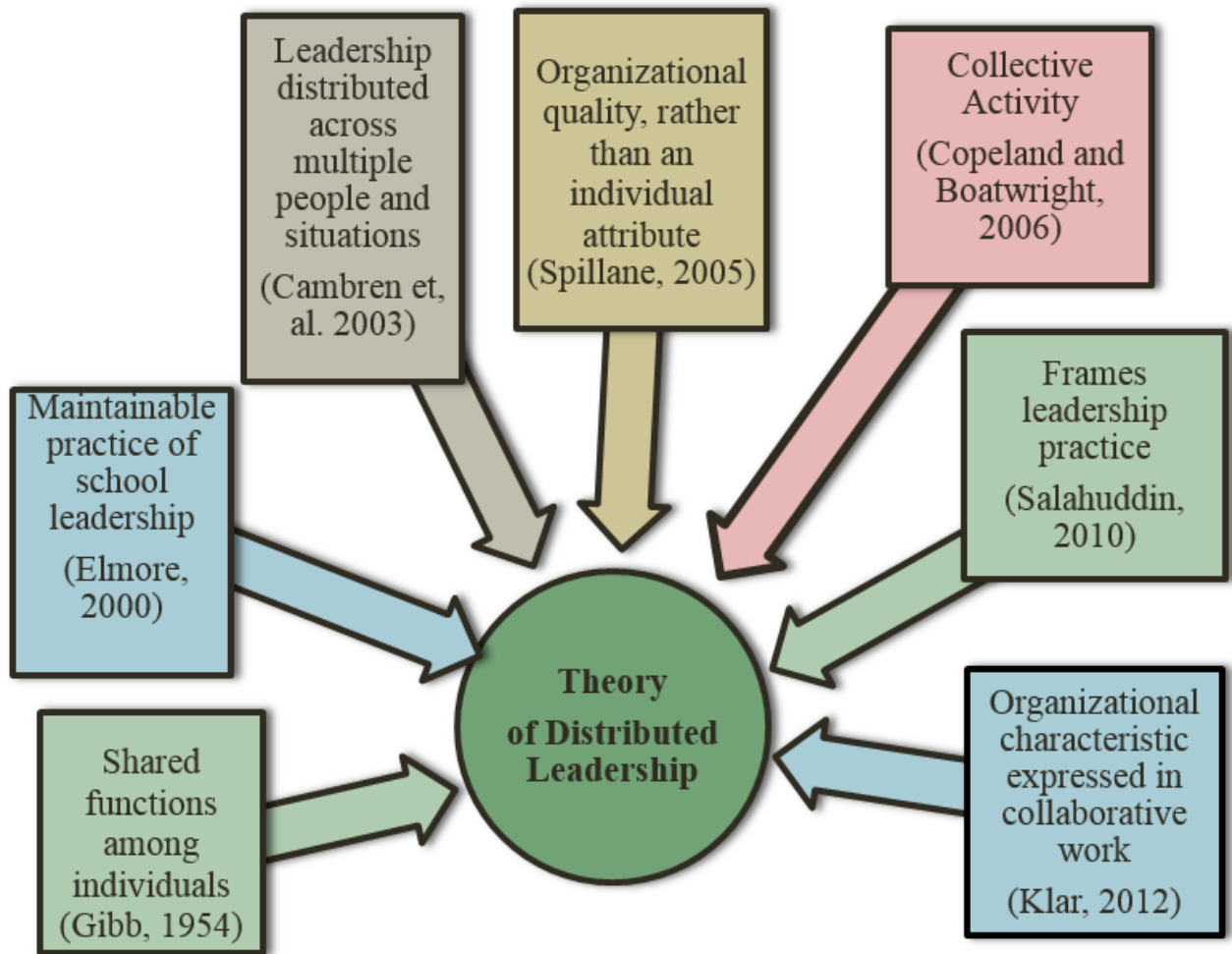
Figure 1. Theory of distributed leadership as perceived by several researchers.

The Principal and Distributed Leadership in Schools

      Wright (2008) in her literature on the merits and limitations of distributed leadership

report that, "Subsequently, principals can be barriers to distributing leadership by: (a) holding

tightly to power and control, (b) refraining from nurturing alternate leaders, and (c) choosing to

involve only those who support their agenda" (p. 1).

Interactive culture of leadership. Part of establishing distributive leadership is letting go of the status quo notions of how schools have been run and instituting a culture of leadership that is interactive and investigative of new knowledge that will bring about change for the better. If a distributed style of leadership is to become the norm for school improvement, then listed below are a few methods that should be put into play. Distributing leadership within the secondary school setting may include creating or developing the following teams: Leadership Team, School Improvement Team, Data Analysis Team, Response to Intervention Team, Goal Teams (to assist with implementing each building goal), Grade Level Lead Teachers, Middle Level Team Leaders, Department Heads, Professional Development Team, Peer coaching, mentors for novice teachers, and instructional coaches (Quinn, 2008). If the previously listed teams have not been established and a school wants to implement distributed leadership practices, then leaders can begin with building one team at a time until each team is fully established and functional.

Creating conditions. The school leader must be mindful when building teams that he is in the process of developing teams that will get results. It is about sound strategies linked to impressive outcomes. One of the ways principals love their employees is by creating the conditions for them to succeed. This notion as conveyed by Fullan (2008) is: "the difference between a flower girl and a lady is not how she behaves, but how she's treated. It is helping employees find meaning, increased skill development, and personal satisfaction in making contributions that simultaneously fulfill their own goals and the goals of the organization" (p. 26).

Sharing influence. Distributed leadership involves the principal sharing influence with team members who step forward when situations warrant, providing the leadership necessary,

and then stepping back to allow others to lead. Such shared leadership has become more and

more important in today's organizations to allow faster responses to more complex issues

(Pearce, Manz, & Sims, 2009). Some propose that distributed leadership is an attitude rather than

a management technique. "It means seeing all members of the faculty and staff as experts in their

own right – as uniquely important sources of knowledge, experience, and wisdom" (University,

2013, p.1).

Cordeiro (2009) suggested that distributed leadership is another common label for

transformational leadership, participative leadership, shared leadership, and democratic

leadership. In the concept of distributed leadership, administrators parcel out responsibilities

through co-principalships, site councils, and teacher leadership. Distributed leadership is a tool

that can be used to build leadership capacity and bring about lasting change. "Both the quality of

the change and its ability to endure have proven to be tenuous; but reforms have been

successfully sustained through a model of distributive leadership" (Cordeiro, 2009, p. 173). This

model stands in stark contrast to traditional hierarchical approaches of decision- making,

enlisting individuals throughout an organization, not simply those at the top (Connect Ed, 2010).

If principals exhibit characteristics of distributed leadership in this regard, they would

support the theory of transformational leadership. "Principals who lead from a transformational

perspective include an embracement of the complexity of school reform and letting go of

control" (Wright, 2014, p. 6). When principals implement a distributed leadership practice, they

take ownership of the transformational leadership style.

Increasing capacity for leadership. Kelly (2010) found that if principals are to apply a

practice of distributed leadership, then they have to know their building constituents and the skill

set of those individuals. Some people have natural traits that lend themselves to leadership roles,

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but even with those traits, an effective leader must be developed over time. It is the responsibility of the principals to be able to determine the skills possessed by the individuals in their building, so that roles can be distributed accordingly. "The capacity of the organization increases when the principal distributes the leadership load to competent leaders on the ground who can make the best knowledge-based decisions" (para. 3).

Collection of interacting components. Making conscious leadership decisions requires skill and background knowledge about situations and even people; the principal will need to utilize many individuals and their professional strengths for task completion. "From a distributed perspective, leadership is a system of practice comprised of a collection of interacting components: leaders, followers, and the situation. These interacting components must be understood together because the system is more than the sum of the component parts or practices" (Spillane, 2005, p. 150). Some roles are delegated to specific leaders as determined by their level of skill with handling certain situations.

The situational component of distributed leadership is vital to simplifying the complexity of events. Spillane (2005) calls for leaders and followers to take into account the situation at hand and to make pertinent leadership decisions. "Leaders act in situations that are defined by others' actions. From a distributed perspective, it is in these interactions that leadership practice is constructed. The Distributed Leadership Study's analysis of leadership performance documents how leadership practice is defined through the interactions of two or more leaders" (Spillane, 2005, p. 145).

Broader perspective of leadership. If the principal in the building is the only one making decisions, then teachers, along with other members of the staff, may view themselves and what they have to offer as being insignificant and of no value to the school as a whole. They

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may feel left out, and as a result, staff morale could plummet. Principals utilizing a more extensive scope of leadership within the school could tend to combat a top down or hero/manager leadership style. "Distributed leadership acknowledges a broader perspective of leadership activities than just the leadership of school principals. A distributed perspective in school frames leadership practice as a product of interaction among leaders, followers and the situations" (Salahuddin, 2010, p. 22).

Utilizing the expertise of others. Administrative teams must assume responsibilities in many different areas, which include the school principal relinquishing some of his many duties or calling upon the expertise of others (Natsiopoulou & Giouroukakis, 2010). A distributed perspective on leadership does advocate a different role for the principal. Harris (2007) wrote: "This shift is quite dramatic and can be summarized as a move from being someone at the apex of the organization, making decisions, to seeing their core role as developing the leadership capacity and capability of others" (p. 8).

Maintain school culture. The school principal is expected to be the instructional leader, building manager, and one who builds and maintains school culture, planning, maintenance, hiring/firing, and community outreach. "Any one principal will have difficulty successfully managing all these areas on his or her own" (Natsiopoulou & Giouroukakis, 2010, p.1). The ideal situation is that there are competent and knowledgeable school leaders throughout the campus to meet the academic and social demands of the school. "To address these demands, principals in the United States and many other countries are being urged to build organizational capacity by creating learning organizations in which leadership is distributed and adults collaboratively enhance their knowledge and skills to support student achievement through professional communities" (Klar, 2012, p. 365). Figure 2 provides an illustration of distributed

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leadership in schools.

Dispersing or sharing leadership is more than just distribution of roles
(Leithwood, 2006)

Distributed perspective is different from other frameworks for thinking about leadership in schools
(Spillane, 2007)

School principal relinquishing some of his many duties or calling upon the expertise of others
(Natsiopoulou & Giouroukakis, 2010)

Interacting components must be understood together
(Spillane, 2005)

Broader distribution of fundamental leadership in a school
(Elmore, 2000)

Distributed Leadership in Schools

Distributing leadership is a necessity and a means by which the principal can be a more effective school leader
(Mitgang, Gill, & Cummings, 2013)

Figure 2. Distributed Leadership in Schools

Structure and organization is still needed and distribution of leadership roles is dependent on expectations articulated by the administrators and other formal and informal leaders. The Silkwoods School in Australia, a pre-kindergarten through grade twelve school, sought to operate every area of their school from a transformative culture. Their efforts not only applied to the academics of the school, but to the management of and distribution of leadership within the school. Based upon the needs of the school, Silkwood developed its own unique system of management. It brought together three significant research ideas for change in school leadership: Distributed Leadership, Shared Decision Making and Facilitated Leadership. They call this their Distributed Leadership Model as illustrated in Figure 2.

Diagram

Silkwood's Distributed Leadership Model

silkwood school

Schools Vision

Strategic Plan

SCHOOL BOARD
Proprietor, employer, legitimise policies; oversee health of the system. They are not involved in the day-to-day operation of the school (this is mandated to the Facilitator to oversee). They oversee the Strategic Plan and are responsible for ensuring the strategic goals of the school are achieved.

The day-to-day operations line

College of Teachers meetings

Learning Support Manager

Site Manager

Mandate Action Lists

Student Behaviour Manager

Curriculum Manager

ICT Manager

Human Resources Manager

Syndicate Meetings

Teacher Development Manager

Facilitator

Front line Manager

Surveys Staff, Students & Parents

Syndicate Lead Learner

Student Assessment Manager

Business Manager

Debate Meetings

Task Groups

All Managers exercise leadership over their portfolio. They are governed by mandates/job descriptions.

BLUE TRIANGLES	Administrative Managers	These are paid professionals in their field. If teachers, they do not have classroom teacher responsibilities but focus solely on their mandate.
GREEN TRIANGLES	Teacher Managers	These are Class Teachers who are allocated time away from teaching duties to administer specific educational portfolios. Teacher Managers hold a mandate for three years and in their third year train a colleague to take over the role. Thus, all teachers are trained to lead.
PURPLE CIRCLES	Collaborative Processes	Collaborative processes that offer the school team and community opportunities to be involved in decision making at the school.

Figure 3. Distributed Leadership Model, managed by a facilitator who leads the school from the center (rather than from the apex) fostering teams to address specific issues, creating, maintaining, and improving policies, procedures and systems, and responding to the unexpected. The facilitator oversees three systems within the school: administration managers, teacher managers and tasks groups – to promote improvement and ensure day-to-day matters are dealt with expeditiously (Silkwood School Our Distributed Leadership Model, 2007).

Silkwood School promotes that their Distributed Leadership Model is one which stresses teamwork and enfranchisement along with emphasizing several common beliefs or premises:

1. Those closest to the children – "where the action is" – will make the best decisions about the children's education.

2. Teachers, parents, and school staff are able to have input about policies and programs affecting their school and children.

3. Those responsible for carrying out decisions are able to have a voice in determining those decisions.

4. Change is most likely to be effective and lasting when those who implement it feel a sense of ownership and responsibility for the process. (Silkwood School Management Structure, 2015)

The principal along with the faculty of Silkwood School believes that the implementation of the Distributed Leadership Model that they developed for their school creates a working environment that is self-motivated, multifaceted and always changing through its emphasis on improvement. The outcome is a way of operating a school where educating students is its core: a flawless counterpart for the vision of their school. One common tenant of their model is that change is most likely to be effective and last when those who implement it feel a sense of ownership and responsibility for the process.

Take notice that in this Silkwood School Management Structure (2015) model of distributed leadership, the leaders attest that teachers and other leaders experience leadership that "…is less like an orchestra, where the conductor is always in charge, and more like a jazz band, where leadership is passed around ... depending on what the music demands at the moment and who feels most moved by the spirit to express the music" (para. 2). As organizations grow in size

and complexity, it becomes even more critical to distribute the leadership load. Looking at the distributed leadership model that is exhibited by constituents of the Silkwood School shows that it can be done. Principals who do not employ predictable practices showing that they trust strong leaders to drive decisions towards the center, encounter the risk of becoming inhibited by their own organization. They also lose the chance to embolden a much larger segment of proficient leaders. "The capacity of the organization increases when it distributes the leadership load to competent leaders on the ground who can make the best knowledge-based decisions" (Kelly, 2013, para. 3). Pearce and Manz (2005) agree:

> In contemporary knowledge-based, dynamic and complex team environments, both the cognitive and the behavioral capabilities of the wider workforce are needed to achieve optimal effectiveness and competitiveness. While some may be drawn to the idea of a larger-than-life, charismatic, all-knowing leader who can inspire and single-handedly positively transform work systems and the employees who work in them, the realities and challenges of contemporary organizational life require an alternative view of leadership. Accordingly, we believe that self-leadership and shared leadership are at the heart of the new leadership forms needed to meet the organizational challenges of the 21st century (p. 132).

Take notice from the previous quote that no one person can single-handedly run a school; it is a team effort, even for the best of leaders. "As principal responsibilities increase in quantity and complexity along with accountability demands for improved student achievement, some researchers argue that one person can no longer successfully lead a school; rather, schools should be led in a collaborative manner with school staff members in shared decision-making through a distributed leadership model" (Grant, 2011, p. abstract).

Effective school leadership. It is common knowledge in the arena of education that principals often experience stressed days that are filled with problems that require immediate solutions, such as non-instructional routines. "Time to focus on improving instruction can become non-priority when a school leader's typical day includes a string of crises and non-instructional routines: the lunch menu, the angry parent, the fight in the schoolyard" (Mitgang, Gill, & Cummings, 2013, p. 27). Therefore, distributing leadership is a necessity and a means by which the principal can be a more effective school leader with more time to address issues that are more concentrated on academics. Districts need to make sure that principals not only have time to focus on instruction but also the skills to help teachers improve (Mitgang, Gill, & Cummings, 2013). The principal's time is better spent devoted to school supervision and instruction so that his/her days can become less burdened with problematic situations that could be easily resolved by other building leaders (i.e., assistant principals). An examination of the traditional and non-traditional roles of the assistant principal is fundamental to determining how the principal distributes leadership.

Roles of Assistant Principals

There has been research and literature about the role of the principal over the last 50 years. Yet, the assistant principal, while vital to the function and performance of the school, has been extremely over-looked in scholarly literature (Brooks & Niewenhuizen, 2013). The original role of assistant principal or vice principal is described in this statement:

If the principal be a corporation, or be unable for any reason to discharge these obligations in person, they must be discharged through an officer, agent or foreman. The person, who is thus put in the place of the principal to perform for him the duties, which

the law imposes, is a vice-principal, and *quoad hoc* represents the principal so that his act

is the act of the principal (McCarthy, 1896, p. 765).

McCarthy (1896) penned the first description for the position as vice principal. The title

for the position in later years became synonymous with assistant principal. In some places, the

assistant to the principal is still called the vice-principal. Silver (2015) wrote, "Vice principals, or

assistant principals, fulfill a vital role in schools" (para .1). Being referred to as vice principal or

assistant principal does not mean that the duties or responsibilities related to the lead role

contrast. Vice-principals commonly function as mediators and are usually the first to confront the

fundamental quandaries of school systems on a day-to-day basis (Yu-kwong & Walker, 2010).

> Brooks and Niewenhuizen (2013) agree, classically, the duties of assistant principals,
>
> focus on monotonous, yet necessary, administrative tasks, including student discipline,
>
> supervision of hallways and lunchrooms, chaperoning dances and co-curricular activities,
>
> scheduling assemblies, meeting with parents, and, when the principal is away from the
>
> building, performing the duties of the principal (p. 187).

Although the position of assistant principal was introduced in U.S. schools during the

1930s (Glanz, 1994), the first comprehensive discussion of this critical position did not appear

until 1970 (Austin & Brown, 1970). Commissioned by the National Association of Secondary

School Principals, Austin and Brown (1970) provided the first thorough description of the

specific roles and responsibilities of the assistant principal, describing it as essential to the

effective functioning of schools, especially in that assistant principals are asked daily, and often

many times per day, to handle stressful situations presented by a wide variety of stakeholder

groups, thus sheltering the principal from these time-consuming encounters.

Centuries later, the role of the assistant principal has evolved and proven to be more diverse and academia-driven in comparison to the roles of yesteryear as McCarthy (1896) put into law. Three secondary assistant principals, an administrative assistant and a Director of Leadership Development had the following to say as they reflect on their current roles:

> The role of the assistant principal has changed dramatically in the past decade as accountability and political pressure for all students to succeed at high levels have increased… Assistant principals have traditionally been relegated to management roles, dealing with the daily operation of the school. Scheduling, crisis drills, bus and lunchroom supervision, and student discipline are common tasks for APs. In secondary schools, assistant principals often develop 'specific expertise' so the school will rely on the [assistant principal] year after year (Katz, Allen, Fairchild, Fultz, & Grossenbacher, para. 1).

Traditional role of the assistant principal. The traditional roles of the assistant principal have shifted and the need for roles and duties to be distributed is now part of the evaluation process in some school settings as evidenced by the North Carolina State Board of Education. To be an effective leader in North Carolina schools, "Successful work of the new principal or assistant principal will only be realized in the creation of a culture in which [leadership is] distributed among all members of the school community" (North Carolina State Board of Educatation, 2012, p. 5).

A study done by Barnett, Oleszewski, and Shoho (2012) examined the perceptions of assistant principals regarding the realities of their roles and responsibilities. Research from the study revealed traditional roles of assistant principals rested on "the three Bs – 'books, behinds

and buses'" (Barnett, Shoho, & Oleszewski, 2012, p. 94). Such tasks are familiar traditional roles of assistant principals. Glanz (2012), commenting on the roles of assistant principals noted:

> Assistant principals were subordinate to principals and were seen as advisors with little, if
> any, independent formal authority. The assistant principal was often warned, "not to
> forget that the superintendent runs the whole system and the principal runs his school,
> and you are merely an expert whose duty it is to assist improving instruction," (p. 286)

Fulfilling the role of a disciplinarian has traditionally been a major responsibility of the assistant principal. "Most professionals within the field of education commonly view assistant principals as disciplinarians. Glanz (1994) also found that ninety percent of assistant principals surveyed in New York perceive their chief duties as dealing with disruptive students, parent complaints, lunch duty, scheduling coverage, and administrative paperwork" (Barnett, Shoho, & Oleszewski, 2012, p. 94). These traditional roles and responsibilities may deter practitioners from taking on leadership roles and may reflect after job satisfaction.

In conclusion, as times have changed in the world, education systems have become more diverse. Thus, more complex demands have been placed on school leadership because what students are taught in reference to curriculum and how they are taught is dependent upon school leadership that can adapt and comply with the demands of society (Foster, 2007, p. 2). According to the literature on assistant principals, Glanz (2012) has evidenced that the traditional role of assistant principals was not to lead but to assist. School leadership has shifted and to meet the needs of today's students the role of the assistant principal has to be reflective of state, community, and local educational demands so that students can be college or career ready upon graduating high school.

Concerted efforts have been made to prepare assistant principals to perform more than just routine administrative tasks and to be more than disciplinarians and paper pushers. "The demand for leaders is unprecedented – a demand not merely for men who can 'keep the school running without friction', but rather for those who have a vision, who have knowledge, who have skill, who have the power, and above all consistent courage in the face of whatever obstacles may be to translate all of these into a program that works" (Briggs, 1922, p. 662). Unbeknownst to Briggs (1922), his research foreshadowed and laid out the fundamentals for the restructuring of educational leadership programs at today's universities both in America and abroad.

Assistant principals assuming non-traditional roles. Within the last decade, educational leadership programs have been redesigned to place more emphasis on preparing principals to be instructional leaders. "Matthews, Moorman, and Nusche (2007) discovered that many school leadership induction programs are aimed at improving student learning outcomes, embedded in school practice, informed by research, collaborative and reflective, evidence based, and ongoing rather than episodic" (Barnett, Shoho, & Oleszewski, 2012, p. 97). Before now, having a degree in instructional leadership was not as important. However, system accountability to student growth and leadership has made it necessary for leaders to not only be administrators, but also competent in the area of instructional leadership. It also states that leadership be shared.

Collaborative work. "Distributed instructional leadership, is defined as 'an organizational characteristic expressed in collaborative work among principals and teacher leaders that creates the conditions, structures, processes and communities of practice to influence instructional designs and practices that affect student learning in their schools'" (Klar, 2012, p. 72). This definition is non-reflective of the leadership concept that was most familiar to principals, assistant principals, and teachers and opposite of a management style of leading.

Originally, assistant principals served in the capacity of head teacher, and from this the term instructional leader and school administrator developed. Somewhere along the way, the role of head teacher became less functional. "Most of the early literature describing the functions and responsibilities of the assistant principal (in the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s) suggested that assistant principals were mostly responsible for clerical tasks, extracurricular activities, and pupil control. Assistant principals usually have not been charged with instructional responsibilities, in large measure because of the historical antecedents that led to the development of the position in schools" (Glanz, 1994, p. 286).

Non-traditional roles. When assistant principals take on non-traditional roles as mentioned by Glanz (1994) then, leadership is developed as both a collective and an individual construct. As future leaders matriculate through educational leadership programs of today, whether they subsequently become administrators or remain teachers, Jacobson & Cypress (2012) suggest that they acquire knowledge that will allow them to:

Articulate and clarify their educational beliefs, values, and visions; focus on the teaching-learning process to develop their ability to lead instructional teams; encourage and demonstrate risk taking and flexibility; encourage and demonstrate an appreciation for diversity and a commitment to equity; use critical reflection and thoughtful inquiry as constant components of practice; act in ways that are informed by the outcomes of systematic inquiry and moral deliberation; understand and facilitate a change process for creating and implementing a collective vision of school improvement; promote the involvement of the wider community in education; develop professional and personal support systems and networks (pp. 227-228).

Fulfilling role demands. The knowledge that leaders acquire coupled with skill and experience will fulfill the role-demands of the non-traditional assistant principal. Effective leadership in high schools is an issue of measureless urgency for many people concerned with education these days. Reformers depend on it and all levels of stakeholders believe that it is what schools need more of (Leithwood, Day, Sammons, Harris, & Hopkins, 2006). In the event that assistant principals do not acquire the training and skill level needed for the non-traditional roles then being an effective leader may be unreachable. Today, assistant principals assume an array of instructional as well as administrative duties as distributed to them by the principal. Glanz (1994) gives an overview of some of the roles and duties in the following Table 1. He expressed that, "the assistant principalship has changed very little in practice since its inception" (Glanz, 1994, p. 285). Table 1 illustrates the actual duties of assistant principals according degree of importance.

Table 1

Actual Duties of Assistant Principals According to Degree of Importance

Rank	Duty	Rank	Duty
1	Staff Development (in-services)	14	Instructional Media Services
2	Teacher Training	15	Counseling Pupils
3	Curriculum Development	16	Faculty Meetings
4	Evaluation of Teachers	17	Ordering Textbooks
5	Instructional Leadership	18	School Clubs, etc.
6	Formulating Goals	19	Assisting PTA
7	Innovations and Research	20	Student Attendance
8	Parental Conferences	21	Student Discipline
9	Articulation	22	Lunch Duty
10	Courage	23	Public Relations
11	Emergency Arrangements	24	School Budgeting
12	Assemblies	25	Teacher Selection
13	Administrative Duties (paperwork)		

Coverage refers to scheduling substitute teachers.
Articulation refers to the administrative and logistical duties required to prepare students for graduation (e.g. Preparing and sending cumulative records graduating fifth graders to middle school) (Glanz, 1994, p. 285).

Challenges of assistant principals in the secondary setting

Pounder and Crow (2005) stated:

Most training in university preparation programs focuses on the role of the principal rather than on that of the assistant principal. Consequently, the training that assistant principals receive—in instructional leadership, for example—may not be relevant to the demands of their new positions. (p. 59)

Training in university programs is aimed at preparing leaders who will be in a position to assume the principal role once the time comes. As Hilliard and Newsome (2013) stated, "based on data, a high percent of principals are near or at retirement age across the nation and a pool of qualified, certified and experienced assistant principals must be ready to take the position as a principal." (p. 154). Students who enrolled in training programs realized that their roles as assistant principals assumed many duties and soon catapulted them into the principal role. One of the major challenges that has been presented to assistant principals was the fundamental dilemma of discharging responsibility effectively.

Discharging responsibilities effectively. Transitioning into the principal role at the secondary level usually occurs after having been an assistant principal for a period of time (Pounder & Crow, 2005). Leaving the classroom and moving into an assistant principal leadership position can be trying when it comes to discharging job responsibilities effectively. As the principal distributes duties, many decisions have to be made as to how assigned tasks will be carried out by the assistant. One thing that the assistant should keep in mind is that the job must not only be done, but also done well.

Hilliard and Newsome (2013) attest that "there are many demands on schools today to perform at a high level with competence that improves teaching and learning and promotes

higher student achievement" (p. 153). A level of competence must be exhibited in order to move schools along; competent leaders make for competent schools. Competency of leaders can be derived from the principal utilizing the strengths of each assistant principal for implementing best practices. "Redesigning the position of assistant principal to expand instructional leadership responsibilities can help develop and support a pipeline of quality school leaders" (Pounder & Crow, 2005, p. 59).

Sustained communication. As the strengths and talents of assistant principals are utilized, the more equipped they become at discharging responsibility effectively. Salahuddin (2010) revealed "effective school leadership is a basic tenet for [a] successful school since the outcome of a school depends on the quality of leadership" (p. 19). According to Hilliard and Newsome (2013), favorable outcomes would be demonstrated for the learning organization if the designated leader, mainly the principal, sustained communication strategies akin to those of a transformational leader in distributing leadership. "The principal needs to know the talents, skills and knowledge that the assistant principal processes and to utilize those skills and knowledge in a meaningful manner to help improve the quality of the school" (Hilliard & Newsome, 2013, p. 154).

Clarity of roles. Several researchers have agreed that there must be clarity of responsibilities and duties that have to be performed by assistant principals. "Coupled with their unclear and challenging work demands, the roles of assistant principals must be understood within the changing policy context of public schools" (Barnett, Shoho, & Oleszewski, 2012, p. 7). "The assistant principal seldom has a consistent, well-defined job description, delineation of duties, or way of measuring outcomes from accomplishment of tasks. Along with fixed, assigned tasks, assistant principals pick up multiple jobs every hour" (Marshall & Hooley, 2006, p. 7)**.**

"Instead of a specific job description, the common contractual phrase used for an assistant principal is 'performing any and all duties assigned by a superior'" (Weller & Weller, 2002, p. 13).

Individual strengths. There are many facets to being an assistant principal at the secondary level, and there is a level of competence that must be exhibited. Clarity of roles and expectations as suggested by Kealy (2002), could make the job more doable and provide some sense of accomplishment at the end of each day. Accordingly, discharging the responsibilities effectively encompasses formal training, responsibilities that are reflective of individual leader strengths, and knowing that assistants are there to support the leadership demands of the secondary school. Kealy (2002) contended that, "…some duties with the needed authority should be carried out by the assistant principal. Exactly what these duties are depends (upon the talents and experiences of both the principal and assistant principal" (p. 7).

Duties of secondary assistant principals. In light of the assistant principal duties, roles, responsibilities and tasks being unclear, Armstrong (2004) researched and compiled a list of the day to day task of assistants at the secondary level after receiving responses from 1230 participants (Marshall & Hooley, 2006). Marshall (2006) agreed with Armstrong (2004) as referenced in the following list that, "although specific job descriptions vary, most assistant principal positions have tasks in common" (Marshall & Hooley, 2006, p. 6). Singh (2012) has the following recommendations for principals:

> Principals must accept that the work in schools is changing, that schools are complex
> organizations, and that they cannot bring about change alone, no matter how skilled or
> knowledgeable they are. They must see the value in involving others and realize that true
> leadership lies in lighting the fire that ignites the passion and commitment of self and

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others. Administrators should not assume a "hero" leadership role. They must get to

know themselves and others in order to determine strengths and areas of opportunity; this

takes time, energy, a desire to connect, and a willingness to accept expertise outside of

oneself (p. 43). Table 2 illustrates the duties of assistant secondary principals.

Table 2

Duties of Assistant Secondary Principals in Texas

Duty
Discipline
Campus Building/Safety
Student Activities
Building Maintenance
Teacher Evaluations
Attend 504 Meetings
Text Books
Duty Schedule
Tutorial Programs/At-risk Programs
New Teachers/Mentor Program
Assessment Data
Staff Development
Supervise Departments
Community Activities
Attendance
PEIMS
Graduation
Campus Decision-Making Team
Lockers
Master Schedule
Curriculum Development
Transportation/Keys/Parking

Adapted from "Personal Change and Organizational
Passages: Transitions from the vice-principalship in a
reform climate, roles of assistant principals" by
Armstrong, D.E., 2004, p.66.

Armstrong (2004) revealed that the list does indicate that assistant principals are

relegated to the infamous three "*Bs – books, butts, and buses.*" According to Glanz (1994), there

is still major research that needs to be done to more clearly define the role of assistant principal

(p. 283).

Keeping in mind the ambiguity of the roles and the time constraints to complete tasks, it is paramount that the assistant principal does whatever is necessary to save time. According to Anderson (2011), there are a few things that the assistant principal can do to handle the demands of the job more efficiently. For example, the assistant principal can foster workdays that are a little less chaotic by fostering a self-discipline system of organization. This organization can be done by way of creating a label-in-basket system, maintaining telephone logs, establishing a top-drawer folder, and maintaining a desk calendar with all appointments. Another method assistant principals can use to make workdays run smoother is be well are aware of stress reducers.

Experiences of Assistant Principals in the Secondary Setting

Accepting the job of assistant principal in a secondary school setting comes with varied challenges and experiences. From one high school to another, assistant principals are assigned roles, responsibilities, and certain duties. "An assistant principal's job description can vary between schools in the same district, according to each principal, or from year-to-year" (Barnett, Shoho, Oleszewski, 2012). Usually it is the principals who do the distributing of the assistant principal roles, since they are the ones ultimately responsible for jobs being completed (Marshall & Hooley, 2005). "The distribution of school leadership roles and tasks varies both within schools (depending on the task) and between schools, and is contingent on particular goals, sources of expertise, and the principal preferences" (Anderson, 2011, p. 11).

Some of the challenges that assistant principals deal with include: maintaining the norms of school culture, playing the role of mediator, encountering the fundamental dilemmas of the school system, job satisfaction, discharging responsibilities effectively, finding time for professional development, personal achievement in their jobs, beliefs about their chances of

advancement, perceptions about ability utilization, and school policies and practices (Yu-kwong & Walker, 2010).

Socialization of the Assistant Principal

Assistant principals are the chief consultants to the principal. They satisfy many roles in the school, as distributed by the principal. Usually, unless a school is quite small, there will be more than one assistant principal, and they will each be dispensed a share of the jobs that need to be completed. One of the jobs or roles of the assistant principal is to maintain the school culture. Yu-Kwong & Walker (2010) realized "vice-principals maintain the norms and rules of school culture" (Yu-kwong & Walker, 2010, p. 533). This maintenance requires that the assistant principal become immersed in the culture and desire to familiarize themselves with cultural norms, so that school relationships through socialzation may be established. This task can be challenging as Yu-kwong and Walker (2010) revealed.

Assistant principals must be prepared for their role, which encompasses learning the norms and expectations of the organization. This practice is often referred to as career socialization. Socialization has been defined as the process of learning and performing a social role (Marshall, 1997). Mertz (2006) crafted a definition of career socialization that exposed the experiences of school administrators: the organization's norms and expectations created occasions and restrictions which socialized the new school administrator (Mertz, 2006).

One possible unspoken limitation is that if the assistant principal does not "fit in" or perform that social role, then he/she may not be able to establish that level of influence required to bring about change. Researchers, such as Hartzell et al. (1994), Marshall and Hooley (2006), Marshall and Mitchell (1991) have identified a number of socialization and enculturation tasks that new vice-principals are required to master in order to be accepted within the administrative

culture. There are three specific enculturation tasks that the assistant principal must accomplish to navigate the assistant principal role. Marshall (1985) stated that the first one is making the decision to move from being a classroom teacher to the assistant principal leadership position. The next task is learning what to do and what not to do; what is priority and what is not priority. The third task of enculturation is keeping cool and collected in the midst of a typhoon while functioning in the new environment and role.

As job roles and responsibilities are distributed, the assistant principal becomes the mediator in certain situations. Mediation occurs for the sake of maintaining an environment of calm and order; without proper attention to this area, chaos can easily arise. Part of being a mediator is maintaining a calm front which entails being an authoritarian or disciplinarian, not only for students, but teachers too. Marshall (1985) marks that this is all a part of the enculturation process of the assistant principal that fits into the social role (Marshall,1985). More importantly, the assistant principal must develop or hone skills to manage conflict to keep a stable and suitable environment that is conducive to learning and engagement. According to Grubb and Flesha (2006), as leadership is distributed among assistant principals, many patterns and roles will surface. Functioning in an assistant principal role demands certain levels of what Grubb and Flesha (2006) call decision-making power.

Preparation for Assistant Principals to Get the Job Done

Although managing conflict or being the mediator has been a commonplace role for assistant principals, it is not usually taught as part of a principal preparation program. This skill of being a mediator is mostly garnered by way of on the job training. A report from the Institute of Education Leadership (2000) revealed that, "principal training seldom is anchored in hands-on leadership experience in real schools, where principals-in-training might learn valuable lessons

in shaping instructional practice, sharing and delegating authority, nurturing leadership ability among school faculty and staff, and exercising community and visionary leadership" (Principalship, 2000, p. 9). Crow (2005) stated:

> Most training in university preparation programs focuses on the role of the principal rather than on that of the assistant principal. Consequently, the training that assistant principals receive—in instructional leadership, for example—may not be relevant to the demands of their new positions (p. 59).

A shift has taken place within education administration leadership preparation programs across the United States. "Changes in administrative practice subsequent to the major reform reports began to raise questions from the field about how school leaders were being prepared to meet the challenges that schools were facing" (Jacobson & Cypress, 2012, p. 227) . The shift began to take place as early as 2005 and has been on the rise ever since. There is a call for more fluid preparation programs due to the increased need for more competent leaders who can transition into the role of principal at the appointed time. Russell and Sabina (2014) conclude that "development of a high potential pool should occur through challenging and authentic work experiences as opposed to seminars and traditional coursework" (p. 607). Figure 4 provides a visual representation of what researchers believe are factors and challenges which are indicative to the success of the assistant principal at the secondary level.
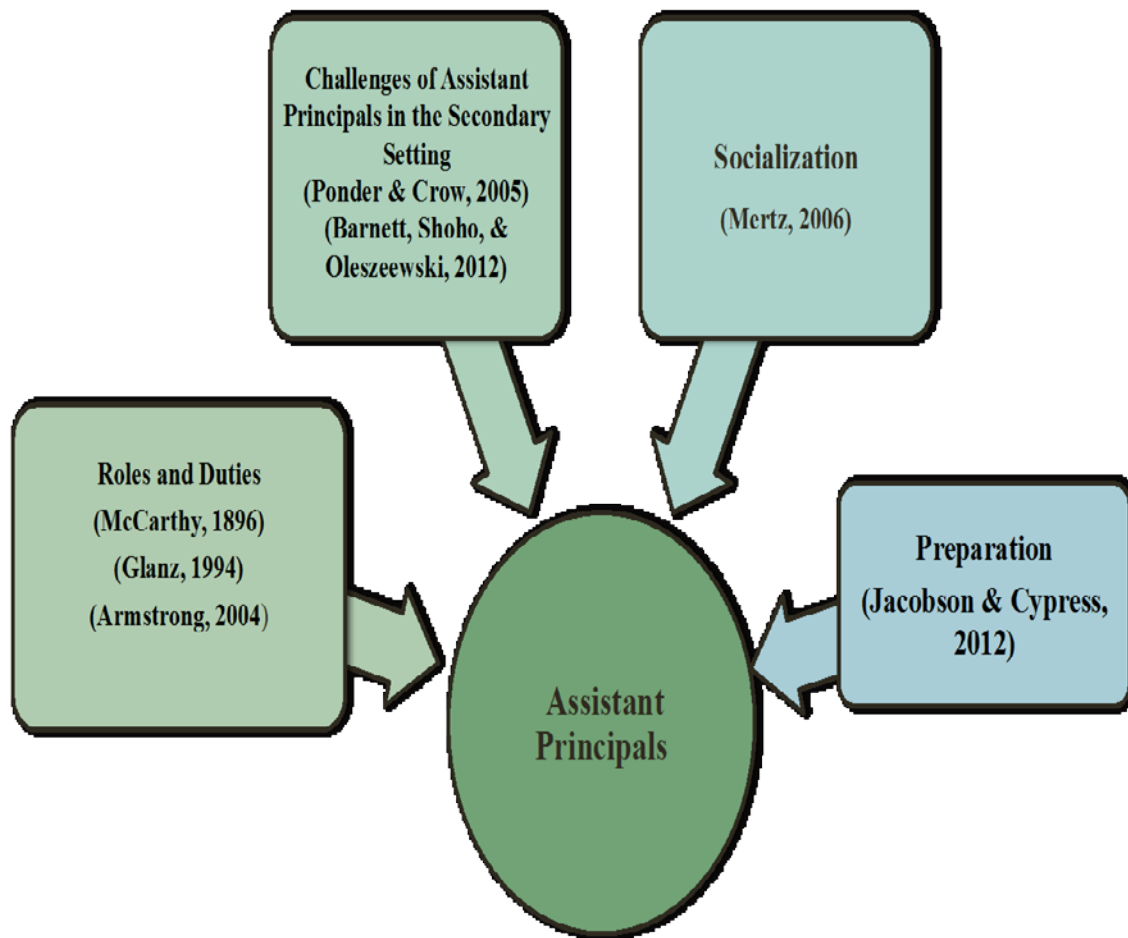
Figure 4. Experiences of Assistant Principals at the Secondary Level

Leadership for the 21st century. A report titled *School Leadership for the 21st Century*

Initiative, by the Task Force on the Principalship (2000) revealed the following:

The schools of the 21st century will require a new kind of principal, one whose role will

be defined in terms of: instructional leadership that focuses on strengthening teaching and

learning, professional development, data-driven decision making and accountability;

community leadership manifested in a big-picture awareness of the school's role in

society; shared leadership among educators, community partners and residents; close

relations with parents and others; and advocacy for school capacity building and

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resources; and visionary leadership that demonstrates energy, commitment,

entrepreneurial spirit, values and conviction that all children will learn at high levels, as

well as inspiring others with this vision both inside and outside the school building

(Usdan, McCloud, & Podmostko, 2000, p. 4).

Considering the need for what Winter and Morgenthal (2002) called "a new kind of

principal" there also remains a parallel necessity for a new kind of assistant principal. There is a

need for assistant principals who can assume principalships, especially at the high school level.

In 2002, the state of Kentucky underwent school reform throughout their education system.

Research was done on principal recruitment as a part of state school reform. The study revealed

that given the pronounced accountability for student achievement required in Kentucky, high

school assistant principals may have been more agreeable to accept a principal position in a

lower achieving high school than were elementary and middle school assistant principals of high

school. Findings of this research exposed that assistant principals were already attuned to

demands of the high school atmosphere, and may have been more confident with their skills as

high school administrators (Davis, Darling-Hammond, L., LaPointe, & Meyerson, 2005).

Although the state of Kentucky was in systemic reform in 2002, the need became even

more apparent for skilled and competent educational leaders across the United States. The Task

Force on the Principalship (2000) reported that the 21st century principal has to be an

instructional leader, someone who can share leadership and someone who is committed to

always thinking forward; in other words he has to be a visionary. In this case, Usdan (2000)

agreed that, "while the principal must provide the leadership essential for student learning, the

roles of the principal and of other school staff can be restructured to reinforce that leadership and

manage the implementation of the school program effectively. Responsibilities for getting the

work done can be distributed among a leadership team or given to others as specific functions"
(p. 4).

   Assistant principals as instructional leaders.   With the restructuring of educational
leadership programs, assistant principals may now more prepared to assist the principal with
those responsibilities that are relative to student achievement. "In essence, the concept of
instructional leadership is being promoted as a counter narrative to the image of the principal
consumed with administrative tasks void of instructional substance" (Terosky, 2013, p. 6).
Candidates who have graduated from educational leadership programs since approximately 2007
have been conferred degrees in Instructional Leadership. Therefore, leaders who assume
assistant principal positions and have graduated recently should be prepared instructional leaders
and able to assist the principal with curriculum needs. On the other hand Usdan (2000)
contended, "…assistant principals and teachers sometimes receive little or no experience or
preparation to help them become school leaders" (p. 9), meaning that future assistant principal
also need to be experienced with handling day to day school operations. "Principal training
seldom is anchored in hands-on leadership experience in real schools, where principals-in-
training might learn valuable lessons in shaping instructional practice, sharing and delegating
authority, nurturing leadership ability among school faculty and staff, and exercising community
and visionary leadership" (Usdan, 2000, p. 9).

   Educational leadership graduates today have been trained and completed internships at
each school level and certified for pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade as instructional
leaders. There are certain curriculum standards that now steer leadership preparation programs.
Murphy (2003) maintains:

that school leadership roles require professional practice driven by standards focused in the development of effective leadership. The aim of the Interstate School Leaders Licensure consortium was to reform the concepts of educational leaders and raise the bar for school leaders to enter and stay in the profession. This effort produced something now known as the ISLLC standards. More than 40 states department of public instruction that license or certify school principals have adopted and used the ISLLC standards as the basis for principal certification (p. 224).

The new standards require that candidates take part in field-based internships at the elementary, middle, and high school levels so that they can get that hands-on leadership experience. "School-based leadership experiences like these help aspiring leaders understand and apply theory and research typically emphasized in formal university preparation programs. Schools that offer such experiences can become true leadership learning laboratories" (Crow, 2003, p. 745).

Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, Meyerson, Orr, and Cohen (2007), completed a report that examined eight exemplary leadership development programs. They found common elements that were linked to the success of these programs. Each of the eight programs had research-based content, curricular consistency, field-experience internships, problem-based education approaches, cohort arrangements, mentoring, and partnerships between universities and school districts (Darling-Hammond, 2007). Barnett (2000) added in the report on leadership preparation programs that champions of cohort grouping approaches uphold that adult learning is best accomplished when it is part of a communally consistent activity arrangement that accentuates shared rights for knowledge, chances for collaboration, and solidarity in practice-oriented conditions (Barnett, 2000).

Assistant principal owning a knowledge base of theory for practice. A review of the
Leadership Initiative for Tomorrow's Schools (LIFTS) model is an example of this change on
school leadership preparation programs. The LIFTS is a program model that began around 1994
at the University of Buffalo as a response to the need for a new curricular approach to
administrator preparation. LIFTS prepares principals to focus on the teaching-learning
process to develop their ability to lead instructional teams, which is a non-traditional role for
secondary principals (Jacobson & Cypress, 2012).

The idea of the assistant principal owning a knowledge base of theory that has been
gained from a leadership preparation program is commendable, but to be able to apply that
knowledge on the job exhibits competency. According to the LAMPS (learning about mastery,
practice and sustainability) model developed by the Leadership Learning Community, there are
four fields or quadrants of reflective practice (Green, 2014). The LAMPS model proposes that
throughout a leader's tenure he/she will experience or cycle through each quadrant and gain
useful knowledge for daily practice. Green (2014) provided the following explanation of the
model and its practicality:

> The four-quadrant model is utilized for continuous evaluation and development of
> programs in leadership and reflective practice. The model is built on the concept of two
> axes, horizontal and vertical. The horizontal axis is the time dimension, represented as a
> continuum. At one end is Short Term Focus and at the other end is Long Term Focus.
> The vertical axis is the process dimension, which attends to the locus of attention in
> leadership work. At the ends are Internal Process and External Process. The four
> quadrants generated are Learning, Mastery, Practice, and Sustainability. The model can
> also be thought about in terms of the acronym LAMPS, which stands for learning about

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mastery, practice and sustainability; the light that most leadership development programs attempt to bring. The quadrants in the model are not ritualistic, meaning that there is no certain time frame in which a leader should cycle through or experience a quadrant. Green (2014) showed the quadrants are as follows:

Quadrant I —Preparation: Learning "me" Internal Process/Short Term Focus Skill development, planning and preparation characterize this quadrant. It involves developing goals for work and evaluating internal competencies for action.

Quadrant II —Transformation: Mastery "I/we" Internal Process/Long Term Focus. This quadrant is characterized by mastery of key elements of the given area of focus. It involves a developmental process of implementing skills and a progressive capacity to take creative action. Quadrant III — Practice "you": External Process/Short Term Focus. This quadrant involves application of competencies and skills, either in a new way or for the first time. It may include a variety of forms, most commonly a presentation of plans to others or the initial "on the ground" efforts with those for whom service is offered. Preparation in this quadrant may involve seeking counsel from others and gathering resources needed to take action. Quadrant IV— Sustainability "we": External Process/Long Term Focus. This quadrant brings the focus to the ongoing implications of collective action. It is called sustainability because it is the locus where learning, practice and mastery converge to create an external process. It is the quadrant where growth potential can be realized and effectiveness most noted. (Green, 2014, pp. 1-3)

Once the leader has matriculated through each quadrant, certain levels of competency should be exhibited. The assistant principal is able to assist the principal and the school in a way that is advantageous to the entire organization. Once the organization comes together as a whole, it begins to operate as a system (Daft, 2013). Bringing all the pieces together to make the organization a system requires utilizing the skills of teachers as well and developing their leadership skills.

Teachers as Leaders

Another approach that is also associated with distributed leadership is the concept of teacher leadership (Hulpia, Devos, & Rosseel, 2009). Teacher leadership may be seen as one important demonstration of distributed leadership as teachers are likely to be the individuals to whom leadership is distributed (Bush, 2015). Organizational benefits are recognized when the principal realizes the strengths of teacher leaders. Teachers taking on leadership roles in schools have certain competencies and their expertise as Moller and Pankake (2013) note:

> Teacher leaders are those teachers who look for resources to help them survive in the complex world of teaching, and credible teacher leaders often become those resources. Within schools, there may be a silent acknowledgement that these teachers know how best to work with students. Casually glancing into these teacher leaders' classrooms, listening to their comments in meetings, and actually talking to students of these teachers are strategies other teachers employ to learn about their teaching (pp. 25-26).

Principals who distribute leadership to teacher leaders heighten opportunities for the learning organization so that it can benefit from the capabilities of more of its members. This repeated action permits members to capitalize on the range of their distinct strengths, and to foster in organizational members a broader appreciation of interdependence and show how one's

behavior effects the organization as a whole (Leithwood, Day, Sammons, Harris, & Hopkins, 2006). The research findings of Devos, Tuytens, and Hulpia (2013), attest that "leadership in schools is no longer solely performed by the school principal; instead leadership is an aggregated function, and other [teacher leaders] of the leadership team with formally designated leadership roles take part in leading the school" (p. 212).

     Teacher leader roles. The roles that teachers take on can be perceived as formal or informal as Devos, Tuytens, and Hulpia (2013) reported in a study on leadership. In the study, they considered the involvement of teachers, teacher teams, and students in school wide decision-making. "The study perceived distributed leadership as a collective form of decision making in which mainly teachers but also other stakeholders (e.g., students or parents) take part" (p. 214). In this study, the spotlight was not on formal positions of leadership but rather informal leadership. This study supports that leadership positions are often assumed without formal obligation or authority as echoed by Sentocnick (2012), and resolutions about who leads and who follows are commanded by the task, rather than by the position in the hierarchy (Sentocnick, 2012). Teachers take on leadership positions that are voluntarily assumed or are delegated by formal leaders.

     It is important for visionary leaders to identify the goals of their school and to link them with teachers' professional development and to utilize the skills of teacher leaders within the building to lead some professional development. Devos, Tuytens, and Hulpia (2013) support that the efficacy of schools not only depends on the principal, but also on cooperative and collective efforts of the teachers, which help them to grasp opportunities and gain leadership skills, and then build the leadership capacity of the school while working together as a team. Some teachers who have assumed leadership roles and have been delegated responsibilities by building

administrators, have assumed the responsibility for commissioning the progression of the school. They have taken ownership for making their part of the system work. "In the real life of schools and school systems, teacher leadership emerges in a multitude of roles, each of which can provide valuable service" (Moller & Pankake, 2013, p. 27). Teachers who emerge in these roles are the teachers who are visible in the media center, they are the teachers who others go to for guidance, they are approachable and they also have the ability to influence others and their leadership shows up in formal and informal roles (Moller & Pankake, 2013, p. 26).Moller and Pankake (2013) believe,

…. informal teacher leader roles are the most powerful influence for improved teaching and learning outcomes. In fact when teachers are asked to identify teacher leaders based on who is competent, credible, and approachable, they frequently name those teachers in the school who do not have formal roles or titles. Informal teacher leaders fulfill such a variety of roles that it is difficult to group them into categories. The driving force behind these individuals is that they have a passion for whatever issue they are addressing (p. 28).

Formal and informal roles. Thompson (2003) provided a list of concrete examples of the informal and formal roles of teacher leaders as they have been distributed by the principal or assumed based on needs of the organization. The list includes:

Mentoring new and current teachers (formal and/or informal),

Designing and implementing teacher professional development to increase teacher effectiveness (formal), Serving as department chairs (formal), Serving as union representatives (formal), Serving as site committee members (formal), Serving as staff

developers (formal), Serving as curriculum specialists (formal), Leading professional

learning communities (informal), Assisting or guiding colleagues in accessing or

selecting appropriate research-based strategies (informal), and Engaging in reflective

dialogue with colleagues to improve instruction and student results (informal)

(Thompson, 2010, p. 13).

It is apparent that there is a need for leadership to be distributed to include teacher leaders

or to develop teacher leaders. Undoubtedly, principals can no longer do it alone as the role of the

principal in today's schools is progressively multifarious and time- intense. Principals have many

varied responsibilities (e.g., discipline, facility maintenance, community relations, instructional

leader, teacher evaluator, teacher mentor, reform leader, etc.) and need the help of their teacher

leaders to facilitate change and reform to expand school and student performance (Thompson,

2010). Figure 5 provides an illustration of the research thus far on the formal and informal roles
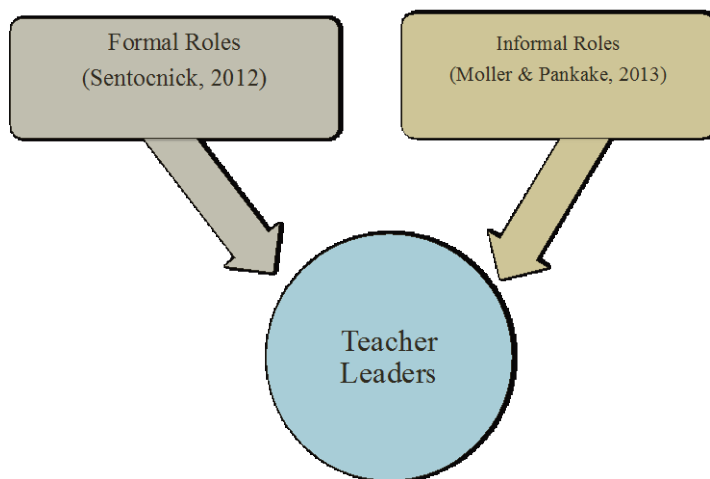
of teacher leaders.

Figure 5. Formal and Informal Roles of Teacher Leaders

Leadership Accountability

In the United States today, there is the pressure of accountability in every school system. Superintendents are placed in position to implement state policy and curriculum. In response to this, principals have to deal with local school policies as they relate to district and state obligations. Educational policies and daily demands of operating a school can cause dilemmas that require input from several people. Principals have to decide within their buildings that will be responsible for what and to what extent. "It's about unlocking staff potential. It is an important part of staff welfare. If you give people the chance to try things, they will feel better about the place they work" (Hammans, 2008, p. 20). No one person should try to single handedly run a school, no matter the size.

Distributed leadership. Distributing the leadership makes for much more successful secondary environments when leaders share the load of duties and responsibilities. "Many, rather than few, have a share of responsibility for the shared purpose— a view of leadership requiring the redistribution of power and authority toward those who hold expertise and not necessarily privileging those with formal titles" (Copland & Boatright, 2006, p. 14). The principal does have the title, which by definition means leader, chief, first in command, head teacher, head of school, or headmaster. However, the title alone does not dictate that leadership cannot be shared and that the principal has to be alone trying to make school work. With distributed leadership, decisions about who leads and who follows are dictated by the task or problem situation, not necessarily by where one sits in the hierarchy (Copland & Boatright, 2006).

Taking into account the stresses of the leadership challenges distinctive to the problem of making high school work for all students, it is not always apparent what leaders should do to

contribute. Trying to determine who will do what on the team can even be just as much of a challenge. Klar (2012) noted:

> To meet accountability demands, principals are being encouraged to enhance schools organizational capacities by distributing leadership and initiating professional communities. Yet, relatively little attention has focused on how to develop the capabilities of potential co-leaders, and professional communities can be difficult to initiate and sustain. (p. 365)

Develop leadership. Building capacity for leading is a job that is too big for the principal and it is a far more attainable feat if it is a team effort. Robert Hill, the former Downing Street adviser and author of several books about school management argued: "There's a recognition that you have to develop leadership qualities at different levels, for strategy, for the curriculum and for support services. All these jobs need to operate in a coordinated way" (Hill, 2008, p. 2) . It is true that in order for leadership structures to be maintained they must be coordinated just as Hill (2008) contends. In relation to what Hill (2008) argues, Copland and Boatwright (2006) concur that, "Leadership built from expertise broadly exercised in service of consensual goals offers, at least in theory, a more promising chance for lasting innovation to take root in schools than does a chain of command approach to implementing change" (Copland & Boatright, 2006, p. 14).

Recognizing strengths. Recognizing strengths of constituents is a must for building and developing people. Strengths must not only be realized among leaders for curriculum purposes, but also for support services. "The presence of multiple leaders steering the transformation of high schools is confounded by public expectations about what high school should be, including expectations for expansive, diverse course and program offerings" (Copland & Boatright, 2006, p. 9).

Alabama Continuum. To fulfill the need of enriching school leadership among

principals and administrators, the Alabama State Department of Education (2005) developed the

Alabama Continuum for Instructional Leaders. The continuum was developed to authenticate

high levels of leadership in areas that would most straightforwardly affect student and teacher

learning and performance in schools throughout Alabama. "The Alabama Continuum for

Instructional Leaders is a tool to make the Alabama Standards for Instructional Leaders more

accessible and understandable to instructional leaders throughout their careers: from pre-service

through induction and beyond" (Alabama Continuum for Instructional Leader Development,

2005, p. 5).

> The Continuum serves as a framework for the collaborative work of mentors and
>
> beginning leaders; as each reflects on observations and job demands, the Continuum can
>
> guide discussions and professional development. Experienced instructional leaders can
>
> also use the Continuum to inform their own performance and growth (e.g., by reflecting
>
> on practice, asking colleagues for feedback, and gathering data to document growth)
>
> (2005, p. 7).

Principals and assistant principals in Alabama use this continuum as a means of self-

reflection. "The Governor's Congress on School Leadership identified eight standards for

instructional leaders with the understanding that their work is demanding and complex. Whether

a leader serves in a small rural school or in a large urban school, the job is rigorous and never

simple" (Alabama Continuum for Instructional Leader Development, 2005, p. 14). There are

eight job performance standards for instructional leaders in Alabama and they are as follows:

planning for continuous improvement, teaching and learning, human resource development,

diversity, community and stakeholder relationships, technology, management of the learning

organization, and ethics (Alabama Continuum for Instructional Leader Development, 2005).

These eight standards are relative as leadership is distributed through roles and responsibilities to

assistant principals and teacher leaders. Assistant principal job descriptions and responsibilities

are expected to reflect the instructional leadership standards. With many states focusing on

college and career readiness standards, there is pressure for not only the principal to be the

instructional leader but in accordance with the Alabama Instructional Leader (2005) Standard 2,

it is also necessary for the assistant principal to lead instruction for the school.

Standard 2: Teaching and Learning**. The instructional leader promotes and monitors the

success of all students in the learning environment by collaboratively aligning the

curriculum; by aligning the instruction and the assessment process to ensure effective

student achievement; and by using a variety of benchmarks, learning expectations, and

feedback measures to ensure accountability.

Pipeline of expectations. There is a pipeline of expectations for instructional leaders in

Alabama. In light of Alabama Instructional Leader (2005) Standard 2, assistant principals are

responsible for ensuring that decisions about curriculum, instructional strategies (including

instructional technology), assessment, and professional development for teachers are based on

comprehensive research, best practices, school and district statistics, and other relative

information and that reflection and collaboration are used to design significant and applicable

experiences that improve student achievement.

To meet the demands of improved student achievement, the Common Core was

developed. "The Common Core focuses on developing the critical-thinking, problem-solving,

and analytical skills students will need to be successful" (Common Core State Standards

Initiative Preparing America's students for College ad Career, 2015). Clough and Montgomery

(2015) reported the following about Common Core and the College and Career Readiness

Standards:

> Since 2001, ESEA has required each state to submit to a federal peer-review process
>
> under which they must demonstrate to the US Department of Education that its standards
>
> and assessments are aligned. States began rigorously revising or replacing their state
>
> standards and assessment systems to reflect the knowledge and skills students need to be
>
> prepared for college and career by the time they graduate from high school. A majority of
>
> states have adopted the Common Core State Standards and will be using new assessments
>
> assess progress toward those standards" (p. 2).

> The superintendent of Education for the state of Alabama, Bice (2015) shared:

> The Alabama State Board of Education approved the adoption of the internationally
>
> benchmarked Common Core State Standards along with selected Alabama standards in
>
> November 2010. By combining both Common Core and Alabama's standards, our state
>
> has adopted one of the most comprehensive sets of standards in the nation, ensuring
>
> students are prepared for a successful future in the ever-expanding global environment
>
> (Alabama College and Career Ready Standards CCRS, 2015).

Once the Alabama State Board of Education approved the adoption of the Common Core

State Standards (2010) along with selected Alabama standards, a task force was enforced. The task

force became responsible for providing the following:

> Adequate professional development for teachers and administrators, curriculum and
>
> teaching guides developed and provided to teachers and administrators, inclusion of the
>
> Common Core Standards into all university pre-service teacher preparation programs,
>
> and selected Alabama content added and adequate textbooks and other resources

provided (2015, p. 8).

Professional development. As a result of principals, assistant principals, and teacher leaders receiving meaningful and ongoing professional development and then sharing in leading school improvement, students are expected to be prepared for college or to begin a career upon graduating high school. Through utilization of distributed leadership, an active and effective leadership team can become an independent part of a well-run school. This can come to pass when the principal allows strengths to be shared.

> Shared leadership occurs when all members of a team are fully engaged in the leadership
> of the team: Shared leadership entails a simultaneous, ongoing, mutual influence process
> within a team that involves the serial emergence of official as well as unofficial leaders.
> In other words, shared leadership could be considered a case of fully developed
> empowerment in teams (Pearce & Manz, 2005, pp. 133 - 134).

When leadership is shared or distributed between principals and assistant principals for the purpose of building capacity a stronger more stable educational structure is established. "The complex demands of the principal and the pictured image of him or her carrying the school on their shoulders all alone to improve a school come in part from orthodox coherent organizational frames" (Grubb & Flessa, 2006, p. 520).

As leadership is distributed, assistant principals and teacher leaders are becoming more representative of their schools in building and constructing a professional learning organization. According to Senge (2005) "organizations are where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning to see the whole together" (p.102).

Fostering productive relationships. Assistant principals in secondary schools today are serving as leaders at curriculum meetings, they perform teacher evaluations, and they hold powerful conversations that lead to garnering lasting relationships. Goodman and Berry (2013) wrote,

Most colleagues would agree that the challenge of becoming an effective assistant principal isn't related to data training, understanding the nuances of student rights, or the technical knowledge of how to build a master schedule. Instead the real challenge is in effectively fostering productive relationships with a myriad of stakeholders (p. xvi).

Through systems thinking that centers on distributing leadership, assistant principals can be instrumental resources or forces in creating effective learning organizations.

Summary

Leithwood (2006) holds that dispersing or sharing leadership is more than just distribution of roles. He proposed that dispersing leadership throughout the learning environment allows people to share in the decision-making and fosters a greater level of importance individually. If distributed leadership is to become a practice or a daily application to the school organization, then the school leader must know his people so that the strengths of assistant principals and teacher leaders can be utilized. Figure 6 provides a visual illustration of leadership accountability as reported by researchers.
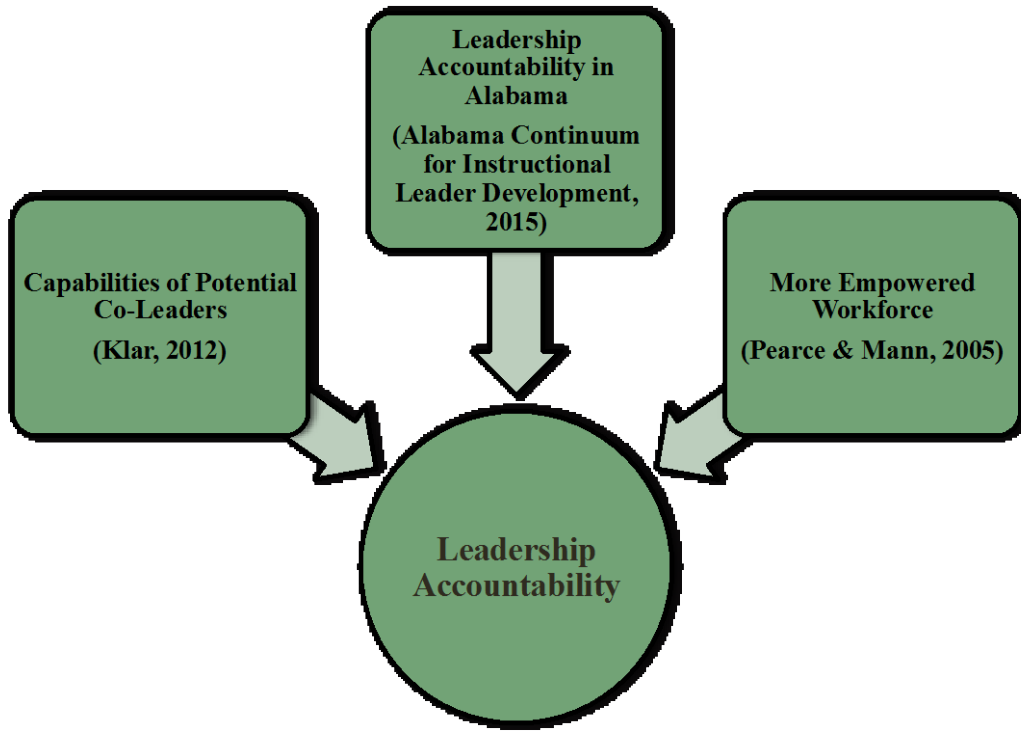
Figure 6. Leadership Accountability
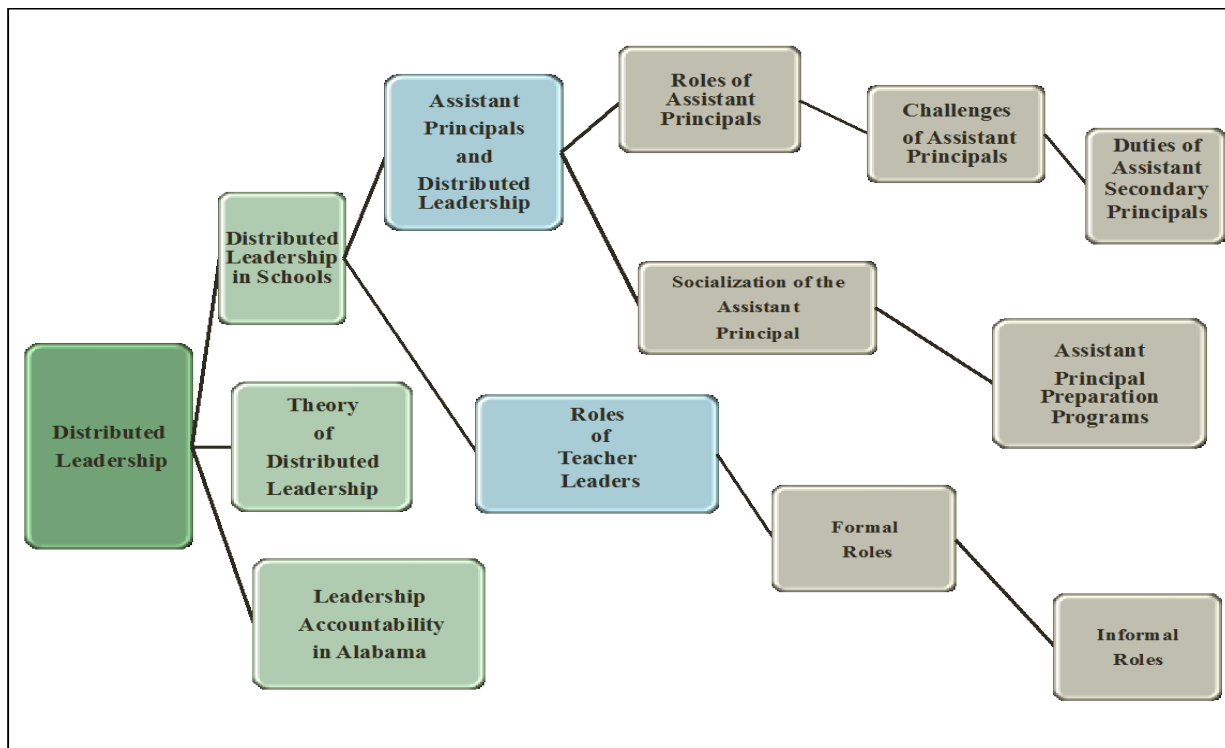
Figure 7. Literature Map of Distributed Leadership

Chapter III: Research Methods

The purpose of this multiple case study was to understand how the theory of distributed leadership is translated into practice at the secondary school level as perceived by principals, assistant principals and teacher leaders. The central research question that guided this study was, "In what ways is leadership distributed in secondary schools to assistant principals and teacher leaders? There were five sub questions which were:

1. In ways does the principal perceive that he/she distributes leadership in school?

2. In what ways do assistant principals perceive that leadership is distributed to them in the school?

3. In what ways do teacher leaders perceive that leadership is distributed to them in the school?

4. What benefits result when leadership is distributed?

5. What challenges exist when distributed leadership is the practiced in the school?

Qualitative Research and Tradition of Inquiry

The researcher utilized the qualitative research approach with the intention of understanding how principals distributed leadership to assistant principals and teacher leaders at the high school level. Qualitative methodology was appropriate to use for this study because the researcher needed to recognize the practices of those principals who distributed leadership to people in formal and informal leadership positions for participation in the study. "Qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret,

phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them." (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 3)

Thus, the practices of qualitative research were employed.

The case study design was chosen from the different methods of qualitative research available. "Case study research is a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) … through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information" (Cresswell, 2007, p. 73). This study was a multiple-case study because the researcher looked at distributed leadership practices in three suburban high schools of similar sizes and investigated how both the formal and informal leaders in the schools perceived their leadership roles and responsibilities. The researcher examined the individual phenomena by assessing the principal's distributed leadership practices. She also examined the organizational phenomena in regard to how distributed leadership was enacted in each school and the benefits and challenges associated with the enactment of distributed leadership.

The researcher sought to explore different perspectives of how leadership was distributed in selected secondary schools, and to whom. This information was gleaned from interviews with the head principals of the three high schools. Then, the researcher assessed the roles and responsibilities of assistant principals and teacher leaders in the high schools, and conducted face-to-face interviews with them, asking for their perceptions of how they had assumed their leadership roles. With all participants, the researcher inquired about their perceptions of the benefits and challenges of distributed leadership. In addition, triangulation of data was established by looking for artifacts from the school that identified how distributed leadership was articulated or described in any written documents.

Creswell (2007) described case study in this manner: "research involves the study of an issue explored through one or more cases within a bounded system (i.e., a setting, a context)" (p. 73). The case studies were bounded by location and school size, which are limitations to the study. The location for the study was one southeastern state, and three cases of suburban high schools of different sizes were purposefully chosen. Table 4 illustrates the population/sample for this qualitative study.

Table 3

Population/Sample

Qualitative	
Sampling Procedures	Purposive Sampling • Assistant principals and teacher leaders of schools based on student enrollment (1978 to 377 students), location, number of assistant principals, ethnicity of administrators, level of experience, and gender • Face-to-face interviews • Triangulation of interview, observations, and physical artifacts
Primary Unit of Analysis	• Individual • Research questions will focus on principals, assistant principals and teacher leaders and their perception of their distributed roles of leadership.

Participants

Permission to interview principals, assistant principals, and teacher leaders was sought from three superintendents of suburban school districts within the state. Once permission was granted to communicate with the principals, assistant principals, and designated teacher leaders, an IRB proposal was submitted to the Auburn University Institutional Review Board. When it was approved, discussion took place through email and telephone conversations to arrange for site visits. During the initial site visits, more detailed information about the study was provided to the principal. The principal was asked to permit the researcher to draw on multiple sources of information that included observations, semi-structured interviews, documents, and audiovisual

material. Assistant principals were sought with regards to their level of experience, formal

leadership preparation, ethnicity, and gender. The factors were considered to provide the most

diverse population of applicants. The study was also bound by time. The observations and

interviews all occurred during May through September 2016.

The researcher used several aspects of qualitative research to add insight into the results:

cooperation with respondents as the researcher and participants interacted, the nature of the

interview process which engaged respondents, the opportunity to probe (i.e. "help me understand

why you feel that way") enabling the researcher to reach beyond initial responses and rationales,

the opportunity to observe, record, and interpret non-verbal communication (body language,

voice inflection) as part of a participant feedback, and the opportunity to engage participants

using interview skills to help overcome the self-consciousness that can impede instinctive

reactions and comments. To demonstrate qualitative research integrity, the researcher disclosed

her own professional roles and how those might influence the study. During conversational

interviews, interview guidelines taken from Patton (2002) were used.

Creswell (2007) suggested that in a multiple case study, "the one issue or concern is

again selected, but the inquirer selects multiple case studies to illustrate the issue" (p. 74). The

practices of distributed leadership in each school were described as a "case." The researcher not

only looked at the themes presented within each case, but also the themes that transcended across

cases. Observations of the physical elements of each school's environment, principal interactions

with assistant principals and teacher leaders, copies of memos, emails, copies of minutes from

leadership team meetings, assistant principal professional learning plans, teacher leaders

professional learning plans, and lists of leader responsibilities were given to the researcher as

additional resources of school leadership practices. These tools afforded the researcher the

opportunity to see how the principal communicated leadership. Yin (2003), recommends six types of information be collected: documents, archival records, interviews, direct observations, participant-observations, and physical artifacts. This triangulation provided additional insights into the participants and their experiences. "Any case study finding or conclusion is likely to be more convincing and accurate if it is based on several difference sources of information, following a corroboratory mode" (Yin, 2008, p. 116) To protect the identity of the participants, each principal, assistant principal, and teacher leader was given a pseudonym designated as Principal #1, Principal #2, Principal #3, Assistant Principal #1, Assistant Principal #2, Assistant Principal #3, Assistant Principal #4, Assistant Principal #5, Teacher Leader #1, Teacher Leader #2, Teacher Leader #3, and so on.

The researcher sought to discover the distributed leadership practices of the principals based on the roles and responsibilities that had been assigned to, or assumed by assistant principals and teacher leaders. By collecting data from multiple sources: examining school documents, interviewing principals, assistant principals and teacher leaders in their natural settings, the researcher was able to gain multiple perspectives for investigating distributed leadership practices at the high school level.

Evidence for this study derives from a purposeful sample of 3 principals, 7 assistant principals, and 3 teacher leaders in 3 suburban schools within Alabama. The researcher selected the 3 high schools based on student population/Class designation in the state, location, number of assistant principals, diversity of administrators, and number of teachers. The high schools ranged in size from 2,892 students to 1,645 students. Assistant principals and teacher leaders of diverse backgrounds were sought to interview to provide a different lens to the study. Table 4 illustrates the suburban high school size description.

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Table 4

Suburban high school size description

Class	Student Enrollment	Average Number of Assistant Principals	Teacher Leaders
7A	2960-1003	3-4	2
6A	1002-570	2-4	2
5A	569-378	1-2	2
4A	377-285	1	2

The researcher will select the 3 high schools based on student population/Class designation in the state, location, number of assistant principals, diversity of administrators, and number of teachers.

Researcher's Role

Creswell (2008) stated that qualitative researchers should position themselves in their writing and make their "position" explicit. The researcher's role in this study was to understand how principals distribute leadership to assistant principals and teacher leaders at the secondary school level. At the time the study was conducted, the researcher served as a special education teacher in a suburban school district located in a southeastern state, which served approximately 2,960 students. Additionally, the researcher was housed in a high school, which served approximately 659 students. The researcher also served as a school district accreditation specialist across the United Stated. Before the researcher matriculated into the role of a resource teacher, she served as an assistant principal for three years at a large rural high school located in a southeastern state which served approximately 1400 students. She worked as a speech therapist for four years and served students in pre-k through grade 12. The researcher was cognizant of the biases and experiences that she had pertaining to the study; therefore, she made a conscious effort to bracket her experiences in order to understand the position of the participants.

Components of Research Design

Yin (2008) stated that there are five components to a research design that are specifically important for a case study:

1. Study question;

2. propositions, if any;

3. unit(s) of analysis;

4. logic linking the data to the propositions; and

5. criteria for interpreting the findings (p. 27).

The questions for the interviews with the principals, assistant principals and teacher leaders for this study follow this general pattern, making adjustments in wording/perspective for each role:

1. In what ways do you think you distributed leadership to assistant principals within your school?

2. How do you determine what leadership roles you share with your assistant principal(s); same question for teacher leaders?

3. To what extent do personal attributes determine roles and responsibilities of assistant principals in this school?

4. In what ways do you think distributed leadership is a benefit to your school?

5. In what ways is distributed leadership a challenge to enact in your school?

The units of analysis for this study were the principals, assistant principals, and teacher leaders as designated to by the school principals. Often cases are individuals, a group, or a specific type of leader. The research questions defined the unit of analysis as the principals, assistant principals and teacher leaders.

Protocols and Interviews

The researcher developed five questions based on presumed role responsibilities and functions as distributed by principals and assistant principals. These questions were selected

because they were based on the literature, which indicated distributed leadership involves the sharing of influence by the principal of the school with team members who step forward when situations warrant, providing the leadership necessary, and then stepping back to allow others to lead.

Data Analysis

Interviews with participants were audiotaped with prior consent provided by participants. Responses were transcribed and quotes that were relative to the participant roles were coded and then themed. Main themes were sought that would add deep description to the distributed forms of leadership to assistant principals. A Within Case Analysis then a Cross Case Analysis was done to analyze the data. The researcher relied on Bernard and Ryan (2010) methodology for guidance with analyzing collected data.

Validation strategies. The researcher utilized different strategies to ensure validity of the data. According to Pyett (2003), "a good researcher cannot avoid...returning again and again to the data to check whether the interpretation is true to the data and the features identified are corroborated by other interviews" (p. 1170). The first validation strategy was implemented when the interview protocol was designed. Interview questions were aligned with the research literature on teacher leadership, instructional coaching, and professional development that was accessed as a background to this study. The second validation strategy was the field-testing of the interview protocol with practicing assistant principals and seeking their feedback, which resulted in refining the interview questions.

The third set of validation strategies pertained to achieving accurate information from the participants. After the interviews of the participants were complete, the researcher returned the transcribed interviews to each participant for their reading, to ensure accuracy. This component

of qualitative research is described as member checking. It is an important procedure for establishing credibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Schwandt, 2007). During this process, the researcher afforded each participant an opportunity to ensure that the information that was received during the interview process was accurately recorded and represented the views of the participants. Each participant received the transcript in its entirety.

The fourth validation strategy is called triangulation. The researcher utilized multiple data sources to collect information on the perceived and enacted practices of principals, assistant principals, and teacher leaders who serve in suburban high schools.

The last validation strategy pertained to the accuracy of coding and theming the findings of the study. The researcher returned to the data multiple times with at least a day passing between re-visits to the transcripts, to ensure that no element of importance was missed as the coding and theming took place.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to understand how the theory of distributed leadership is translated into practice at the secondary school level as perceived by principals, assistant principals and teacher leaders. The researcher conducted this multiple case study by utilizing a qualitative research design. The researcher purposefully selected participants in this study who worked in one southeastern state in the United States and only in public school systems. The researcher implemented validation strategies throughout the study to insure accuracy of the findings.

Chapter IV: Findings

The purpose of this study was to understand how principals distribute leadership to assistant principals and teacher leaders at the secondary school level. The researcher utilized the qualitative research approach. Qualitative methodology was appropriate to use for this study because the researcher needed to recognize the practices of those principals who distributed leadership to people in formal and informal leadership positions for participation in the study.

This study was a multiple-case study because the researcher looked at distributed leadership practices in three suburban high schools with three different groups (or cases) of individuals (principals, assistant principals, and teacher leaders) and investigated how these formal and informal leaders in the schools perceived their leadership roles and responsibilities. The researcher examined the individual phenomena by assessing the principal's distributed leadership practices, from the principal's perspective, the assistant principal's perspective, and teacher leader perspectives. The researcher also examined the organizational phenomena, investigating how distributed leadership was enacted in each school and the benefits and challenges associated with the enactment of distributed leadership.

The three types of leaders in each school were described as a "case." The researcher not only looked at the themes presented within each case, but also the themes that transcended across cases. The researcher chose to use interviews and artifacts to gather the data needed for this study. Observations of the physical elements of each school's environment, principal interactions with assistant principals and teacher leaders, copies of memos, assistant principal professional learning plans, teacher leaders' professional learning plans, and lists of leader

responsibilities were given to the researcher as additional document sources of school leadership practices. The central research question that guided this study was, "In what ways is leadership distributed in secondary schools to assistant principals and teacher leaders? There were five sub questions:

1. In what ways does the principal perceive that he/she distributes leadership in the school? (Case #1)

2. In what ways do assistant principals perceive that leadership is distributed to them in the school? (Case #2)

3. In what ways do teacher leaders perceive that leadership is distributed to them in the school? (Case #3)

4. What benefits result when leadership is distributed?

5. What challenges exist when distributed leadership is practiced in the school?

Evidence for this study was derived from a purposeful sample of three principals, seven assistant principals, and three teacher leaders (consisting of one formal teacher and one informal teacher leader as designated by the principal in each of the four schools) in 4 suburban high schools in one southeastern state. The researcher utilized a purposeful sampling method in order to select participants from specific locations because it would "purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in the study" (Creswell, 2008, p. 156). The high schools ranged in size from 2,892 students to 1,645 students. The researcher selected the three high schools based on the following criteria: 1) Student population/Class designation in the state; 2) Location; 3) Number of assistant principals/diversity of administrators; and 4) number of teachers. Assistant principals and teacher leaders of diverse backgrounds were sought to interview to provide a broad lens to the study.

Permission to interview principals, assistant principals, and teacher leaders was sought from four superintendents of suburban school districts within the state. Once permission was granted to communicate with the principals, assistant principals and designated teacher leaders, an IRB proposal was submitted to the university's Institutional Review Board for Research Involving Human Subjects. When it was approved, the researcher contacted potential participants through email and telephone conversations to arrange for site visits and interviews. During the initial site visits, more detailed information about the study was provided to the principal, assistant principals, and teacher leaders, and their written consent were obtained. The study was also bound by time. The observations and interviews all occurred May through August of 2016.

Study Setting (School #1)

Respect High School (pseudonym) is an urban school located in the northeastern part of the state, which serves over 2,892 students in grades nine through twelve. The diverse population of the students includes 59% White, 27% African-America, 7% Asian or Asian/pacific Islander, 5% Hispanic, and 2% other. Twenty-five percent of the students are economically disadvantaged. There is one school principal, six assistant principals, 230 certified teachers, one instructional aide, and 56 support staff members employed at Respect High School. The administrative team is inclusive of the principal and the six assistant principals. Respect has two campuses – Respect High and Respect Hall that houses two academies. Both schools are located within walking distance of the other and are centrally located on one campus. There is an assistant principal at the Respect Hall campus to administrate it and the other five assistant principals are housed at the main building on the administrative wing.

At Respect High School the principal utilizes the assistant principal to help improve effective functioning of the school in different ways including: developing the master schedule, teacher grade level assignments, mentoring new teachers, observing/evaluating teachers, special education building administrator, advanced placement administrator, building operations manager, career academies/technology coordinator, providing professional development, analyzing students' data, and finding resources to improve classroom instruction. Principals and assistant principals at Respect High School utilize teacher leaders to serve as curriculum leaders, yearbook advisors, professional development leaders, intervention/remediation specialist, school social media gurus, coaches, department heads, mentors, and technology specialist.

The principal of Respect High School has implemented what he describes as a formal organizational command structure in his school. The principal informed the researcher that this type of leadership should come from the bottom up. An artifact showing the balance of leadership at Respect High School was provided to the researcher.

Respect High School (pseudonym) is the larger of the two high schools in their district. The school day consists of eight periods with zero period beginning promptly at 7:20 am. The researcher had the opportunity to tour Respect at the beginning of the school day and observe some of the early morning operational procedures. Car riders were dropped off adjacent to the main building at the athletic wing and bus riders unloaded at the north end of the main building. There were teachers and an administrator on duty to oversee the drop off process for both areas. Tenth through twelfth grade students were allowed to drive to school.

The building principal got the day started with a moment of silence, the pledge of allegiance, and morning announcements. The principal also ends each day with afternoon announcements. Once announcements were finished, the researcher went on a tour of the

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administrative wing with the building principal. As the researcher listened and observed, it was evident that routines and procedures were in place (which was the norm of the school). It was clear who was leading and the strand of communication that was inherently in place. Students who were late checked in at two separate check-in points. This was done according to grade level.

The front office staff welcomed the researcher and was accommodating with scheduling dates and times for interviews with assistant principals and teacher leaders. The building principal gave the researcher a walkthrough of the administrative wing of the main building. The researcher noticed how positively administrators, faculty, and staff responded to the building principal when he entered their offices. The environment of the school was open and positive, as was the communication between the principal and his constituents. Once the walkthrough was completed, the interview between the principal and the researcher took place. At the end of the interview, the researcher met with the principal's secretary and interviews with assistant principals were scheduled. Once the interviews with the assistant principals were completed, the secretary scheduled times and dates for the researcher to meet with teacher leaders as recommended by the principal.

Study Setting (School #2)

Perseverance High School (pseudonym) is a suburban school located in the southeastern part of the state, which serves over 1,650 students which includes 70% White, 22% African-America, 4% Asian or Asian/pacific Islander, 3% Hispanic, and 1% other. Seventeen percent of the students qualify for free or reduced lunch, which serves ninth through twelfth grade. Perseverance High is part of a city school system and is the smaller of the two high school schools located in the suburban district. There is one school principal, four assistant principals, a

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college and career specialist, and 133 certified teachers employed at Perseverance High School. The administrative team is inclusive of the principal and the four assistant principals. Seventy-five percent of the faculty have a master's degree or higher.

Perseverance High School is a prestigious school located in a suburban district. The researcher visited this school on a day when students were not present. The principal was welcoming and provided the researcher with tour of the administrative building. The culture of Perseverance conveyed a strong presence of parental involvement and emphasis on their advanced placement, international baccalaureate, and academy programs. The researcher observed that awards of academic excellence were hung along the entry foyer of the school. At Perseverance High School, there were twelve extracurricular sports for girls and thirteen for boys. This school displayed a noticeable interest in the arts; band, choir, and foreign languages. The academic status of Perseverance is reflected in the 95% graduation rate, 1300 average SAT score, and 27 average ACT score. Administrators and teachers shared that their school is a safe and secure environment. No students were present.

Study Setting (School #3)

Nobility High School (pseudonym) is a large suburban school located in the southeastern part of the state. Nobility serves students in ninth through twelfth grade and the school is highly regarded by the community that it serves. The student enrollment is over 1,645 students that includes 82% White, 9% African-America, 5% Asian or Asian/pacific Islander, and 4% Hispanic. Ten percent of the students qualify for free or reduced lunch. Nobility High is part of a county school system and is the largest of the seven high schools located in the district. The student population is 49% female and 51% male. There is a school principal, four assistant principals, and 92 certified teachers employed at Nobility High School. The administrative team

is inclusive of the principal, four assistant principals, and an athletic director. Seventy-five present of the faculty have a master's degree or higher.

Students at Nobility High have the opportunity to take advanced placement coursework and exams. Their average participation rate is 59% with 54% of students passing the exams given. The school was reported having a college readiness index of 39% and was once rated as one of the top high schools in America. It was also named a National Blue Ribbon School by the US Department of Education. The average ACT score for students at Nobility High is 25 and the graduation rate is 95%. Over 90% of the students meet or exceed proficiency standards in mathematics and English. The students of Nobility are offered dual enrollment with a nearby community college. This school is renowned for academics and extracurricular offerings. They have won record championships for academics, band, and athletics.

The researcher visited Nobility on three separate occasions to complete interviews and each time the office staff was even more welcoming. The grounds of this school were well manicured and exuded a broad presence of pride and care. The secured entrance to the school resembled a grand office building with a foyer and waiting area for safety purposes. The principal of Nobility High School spoke freely and possessed a plethora of leadership awards. At the entrance to her office door was a National Board Certified plaque. She spoke of the process and elaborated on receiving the accolade. She disclosed that there were several principals in the school district who had served as assistant principals or administrative assistants under her leadership. Table5 illustrates the demographics of participating schools.

Table 5

Demographics of Participating Schools

School	Black	White	Hispanic	Asian	Other	Total
Respect	781	1706	145	202	58	2,892
Perseverance	363	1155	66	50	17	1,650
Nobility	148	1348	66	83		1645

Participants' Descriptions

Principals. Principal #1 at Respect High School (pseudonym) had served in this capacity for eight years. He stated how passionate he had been about leadership since he had been in the military. He served as a coach and a classroom teacher for ten years, then as an assistant principal. Afterwards, he became the principal at Respect High School. Principal #1 had 26 years in education and had a specialist degree in Education Leadership.

Principal #2 had served as the principal at Perseverance High School (pseudonym) for three years. Before that, he served as an assistant principal at a smaller high school for six years. He also coached varsity baseball, junior varsity and freshman basketball and freshman football and was a varsity football assistant coach at the university level for sixteen years. He had been in the educational field for fifteen years with the majority of experiences as an English and physical education teacher. Principal #2 reported that he has gained a lot of wisdom in his 40 years of experience in education. Principal #2 had a specialist degree in Educational Leadership.

Principal #3 had served as the principal at Nobility High School for eight years. She has over 25 years of experience in education. Principal #3 served as an assistant principal at a nearby high school before becoming the high school program area specialist for that school district. She is currently the professional development supervisor for the school system that she now serves.

Principal #3 had earned a PhD in Instructional Leadership and reported to the researcher that being a principal is her dream job

Assistant principals. Assistant Principal #1 had served for five years as ninth grade English teacher and then went on to teach twelfth grade English for six years while working as a peer helping teacher. Assistant principal #1 started her administrative career the tenth grade assistant principal and served in that position for one year. The next school year she was assigned the twelfth grade assistant principal responsibilities and has functioned in that capacity for the last two years. Assistant principal #1 was named Assistant Principal of the Year for the state in the school year 2015-2016. She held a master's in Educational Administration and her entire career in education has been at Perseverance High School.

Assistant Principal #2 had been a teacher and a coach for 27 years and has served as an assistant principal for ten years. As a coach, Assistant Principal #2 had winning athletic team records in football and baseball. His current principal at Perseverance High School sought him out because of his coaching abilities. Assistant principal #2 reported to the researcher that he takes pride in making and keeping Perseverance High School a safe learning environment for teachers and students. Assistant Principal #2 held a master's in Educational Administration.

Assistant Principal #3 was the principal of a K-12 school in a rural county school in the northeastern part of the state for fourteen years. During the later part of year fourteen while still serving as a principal, Assistant Principal #3 noticed that Perseverance High School had an opening for an assistant principal. She interviewed for the job and scored the position. Assistant Principal #3 notified the researcher that she was also a physical education teacher and girls basketball coach for eight years before becoming a principal. She believed that her coaching background helped her to secure the ninth grade assistant principal position at Perseverance High

School. Principal #3 had a specialist degree in Educational Leadership and had served as assistant principal for five years. She had a total of twenty-seven years in education.

Assistant Principal #4 became assistant principal for the academies at Perseverance High School because he had a desire to do something different. He previously worked at IBM for sixteen years but wanted to take the skills that he acquired to teach. Assistant Principal #4 wanted to do something where he could make a difference in the lives of people. Before serving as an assistant principal he was a career tech teacher at another high school in a neighboring suburban district for seven years. Assistant Principal #4 had a specialist degree in Educational Leadership, served seven years as an assistant principal at Perseverance and had a total of fourteen years in education.

Assistant Principal #5 had worked as a history teacher and football coach for sixteen years in nearby district before becoming a high school assistant principal at Respect. His previous experiences also included him being the bus driver to and from football games. Assistant Principal #5 had a specialist degree in education and had served as an administrator at Respect High School for four years.

Assistant Principal #6 worked at Nobility High School for twelve years as a French teacher. Then she transitioned from being a French teacher into the position of assistant principal at the same school. Assistant Principal #6 reported that she was by herself and in her own little world because she was the only teacher in subject area. She also reported to the researcher that she did a good job in her area because she did what she was supposed to do to be a star teacher. Assistant Principal #6 had served as assistant principal at Nobility High for three years. She had an Education Specialist degree and was enrolled in an education leadership doctoral program at a nearby university. Assistant Principal #6 had a total of 15 years of experience in education.

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Assistant Principal #7 taught nine years before becoming an assistant principal. At the beginning of her tenth year at Nobility High School she moved into the role of Administrative Assistant. As a teacher she taught honors ninth and tenth grade history, then moved into teaching advanced placement twelfth grade government and politics. Assistant Principal #7 had a master's degree in education and had a total of 12 years of experience in education that included the two years that she had served as an administrator.

Teacher leaders. Teacher Leader #1 was a tenth grade English teacher/ curriculum specialist. She was the person who provided her grade level with resources from vertical team meetings. She worked closely with her principal and district liaisons to support the curriculum. Teacher #1 had a total of twenty-seven years teaching secondary English.

Teacher Leader #2 was a special education teacher who worked as an inclusion and resource teacher for grades ten through twelve. This was his second time around being a high school special education teacher. He worked collaboratively with teachers in other departments to develop strategies, techniques, and tools that engaged reluctant learners. Teacher #2 had a total of eighteen years in education with a master's degree in special education, an add-on in history, and masters in administration.

Teacher Leader #3 was a special education inclusion/resource teacher who served as department chair and transition specialist. Before teaching she worked as a vocational rehabilitation counselor. She reported to the researcher that she believed that just being in the role as the lead teacher probably stemmed from experience and having more in depth knowledge and hands on experience with not only students but with paperwork and procedural type issues since that's really big in the area of special education. Teacher Leader #3 had worked as a special

education teacher at various schools for a total of sixteen years. Table 6 illustrated the

participants' profile.

Table 6

Participants' Profile

Participant	Gender	Race	Years	Educational Experience
Principal #1	Male	White	26	Educ. Specialist
Principal #2	Male	White	40	Educ. Specialist
Principal #3	Female	White	25	Doctorate
Assistant Principal #1	Female	White	14	Master's
Assistant Principal #2	Female	White	37	Master's
Assistant Principal #3	Female	White	27	Educ. Specialist
Assistant Principal #4	Male	Black	14	Educ. Specialist
Assistant Principal #5	Male	Black	20	Educ. Specialist
Assistant Principal #6	Female	White	15	Educ. Specialist
Assistant Principal #7	Female	White	12	Master's
Teacher Leader #1	Female	Black	27	Master's
Teacher Leader #2	Male	Black	17	Master's
Teacher Leader #3	Female	White	18	Bachelor's

Data Analysis Methods

A multiple case study was designed in order to answer the following central research

question: In what ways is leadership distributed in secondary schools to assistant principals and

teacher leaders?

Sub-questions.

1. In what ways does the principal perceive that he/she distributes leadership in the school?

2. In what ways do assistant principals perceive that leadership is distributed to them in the

   school?

3. In what ways do teacher leaders perceive that leadership is distributed to them in the

   school?

4. What benefits result when leadership is distributed?

5. What challenges exist when distributed leadership is practiced in the school?

The three cases in this study were principals, assistant principals, and teacher leaders. After conducting the interviews, the recordings were professionally transcribed by Rev.com. The data was analyzed by utilizing a method called coding and theming (see detailed description in the next paragraph). This process included analyzing data for similarities of the information reported in the interview and compiling them into manageable segments (Schwandt, 2007). The researcher then grouped the codes into common themes within each case, and afterwards themes were analyzed across cases to identify similarities. However, when conducting the cross case analysis, the researcher also looked for outliers that were reported and seemed significant (Creswell, 2013; Stake, 2006).

In hand-coding the data, the researcher implemented a five-step process created by Roberts (2010) for analyzing the interview transcripts. First, the researcher thoroughly read all transcribed interviews twice before noting themes and patterns and assigning codes. Creswell (2013) stated, "themes in qualitative research are broad units of information that consists of several codes aggregated to form a common idea" (p. 185). Next, the researcher grouped the interview responses according to similarities and differences, and tagged the most significant information by developing a master-coding list of the responses. During the third step, the researcher reviewed all transcripts, documented when references were repeated, and finalized the coding. From the codes, themes, patterns, and categories were identified and aligned with the research questions in the fourth step. Themes were organized under each research question in order for the researcher to create a "conceptual schema" that could be compared to the theoretical framework chosen for the study (Schreier, 2012). The researcher analyzed themes within each case and across the three cases. In the final step, the researcher reviewed all

transcripts again to ensure that primary themes and patterns indeed corroborated with the data obtained from the interviews. This was done to establish validity of the data.

The researcher reported the findings under each research question explaining how each case responded to the research questions. Emergent themes for each research question and each case were presented with supporting quotes to provide a rich description of the findings and to improve this study's credibility. Then, the themes from each case were compared for each research question, resulting in summary matrices for each. The findings will be reported for each research question.

Perceptions of How Leadership is Distributed

The first three research questions pertained to how each group perceived that leadership was distributed. The findings are presented for the three cases in the following order: principals, assistant principals, and teacher leaders.

Principals' perceptions of how they distribute leadership. Five themes emerged from the principals' responses to the interview question #1: In what ways does the principal perceive that he/she distributes leadership in the school? The themes are displayed in Table 5. The findings revealed that all three principals perceived that they implemented the concept of distributed leadership to assistant principals and teacher leaders in their schools in the following ways. 1. Promotes a broad versus narrow perspective of leadership among the assistant principals, 2. Fosters an interdependent versus isolated culture decision-making by sharing influence with others, 3. Coordinates sustained versus sporadic communication throughout the school, 4. Provides clarification of flexible versus rigid leadership roles, 5. Assigns roles based on strengths-based versus traditional roles.

Theme #1 – Principal promotes a broad versus narrow perspective. The principals stated how assistant principals, as leaders, promote a broad perspective of leadership as opposed to a narrow perspective of leadership. The assistant principal promotes a broad versus narrow perspective of leadership by working with counselors, teacher leaders, and support staff to set and accomplish goals. Principals stated that assistant principals also run a school within a school. Particularly, assistants work with the counselors to plan graduation, create student schedules, and to create the master schedule for the school. This is all done in an effort to support the principal and distribute leadership through the school. Principal #1 stated, "The assistant principal possesses a broad perspective of leadership, which is demonstrated by meeting with counselors and teachers, the leadership team, and the positive behavior support team."

Principal #1 further stated: It can't be just one person leading and he can't afford to be the person leading the work in all of the areas. Just as assistant principals are assigned specific roles, so are counselors. Counselors are assigned by grade level and a counselor is housed with them.

The researcher asked Principal #1: In what ways do you think you distribute leadership to assistant principals and teacher leaders within your school?, and he stated the following:

> Our eleventh grade assistant principal is known as the eleventh grade administrator or the eleventh grade level principal. He is responsible for 11th grade student discipline and tardies, building operations, school safety, event scheduling, bell schedules, eleventh grade professional learning communities, credit recovery/advancement, eleventh grade teacher evaluations, Saturday school, alternative school/in-school suspension, Cross Roads/ New Beginnings Oversight, parking/traffic management enforcement, grounds management, and summer school. The other assistant principals are also over grade levels

and their responsibilities are also laid out in the same manner. Now the assistant principal at Respect Hall is regarded as the principal of that school even though it's a part of Respect High. As for the teacher leaders, that would include the technology team and curriculum leaders. They all report to me instead of the grade level principal.

The researcher asked Principal #1: Why do you distribute leadership this way? His response, "It also allows me not be so overburdened and buried by work. I like to connect and interface." Principal #2 stated the following when asked about the assistant principal's roles and responsibilities:

Actually, I'll begin with assistant principals, because I really do it in terms of assistant principals, department heads, and then just people who have exhibited teacher leadership qualities. In terms of our assistant principals, their roles are divided among different tasks. What I try to do with that is to give each assistant principal the opportunity to have experiences that one day will contribute to their being a principal himself or herself, because that's my goal. That's really the 'why' I do that with my assistant principals. For example, I make sure that they have experiences with budgeting and buses. So often assistant principals know little about school budgets and if it is a female assistant principal she may know little about building operations or buses. I make sure to delegate responsibilities so that assistants will have these experiences.

The researcher asked Principal #2: Why do you distribute leadership this way? His response was:

We try to develop our own leaders, and I think that if you go from an assistant principal position without ever having done any type of budgeting or any type of dealing with very

difficult situations in terms of parents, then it's a very overwhelming experience. When I

was an assistant principal, I only dealt with curriculum. Therefore, I didn't deal with

discipline. I didn't deal with busses. Those are things that you have to have a background

in, in order to be able to run a building.

Principal #3 stated the following pertaining to the roles and responsibilities of assistant

principals: "I think one of the keys in leadership is to find out and build a team where everybody

is in their strength, they have a chance to do what they're good at." Principal #3 stated the

following when asked why he distributes leadership the way he does: "I want people's input so

that we can make valid decisions. I think that we should start with people whose boots are on the

ground. What we try to do is develop people who have a voice." Principal #3 referenced how

assistant principals help by being mentors for students. Teachers have to deliver respect and

leadership has to deliver it to teachers and students. He stated that he looks for people who care –

persons who can stop what they are doing to help someone else. Mentoring is helping someone

and showing him or her the way. This is what he looks for in his assistant principals.

Theme #2 – Fosters a culture of interdependent versus isolated culture of shared

decision-making. The principals of these large high schools where the principal participants

were interviewed all mentioned that they seek to foster a culture of shared decision-making

versus a fostering a culture of isolation. In this type of culture, the responsibilities expand from

principals to assistant principals and to teacher leaders. The purpose of expanding these

responsibilities is to foster a culture where the principal is not the sole leader in the day-to-day

operations of the school. Principals stated that there is a need for interdependent decision-making

relative to student management, curriculum monitoring, supervision, community relationships,

resource allocation, and other administrative responsibilities.

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Principal #1 described his assistant principals as leaders who foster interaction among leaders and followers to comprehend situations and reach solutions. He believes assistant principals should encourage everyone to contribute knowledge to the decision-making process. Principal #2 stated how he wanted his leaders to be building up other teachers, as is indicated by this quote: "You don't want them to be questioning whether one teacher is doing her job better than someone else, so we look at it as a whole school approach." Principal #2 provided the following as an example of principals and assistant principals fostering shared accountability in her school.

> I knew how I always thought things should be done, from a teacher perspective, because I truly believe that if your teachers are not really running the building or running their areas, then it's not going to be a good school. I think you have to. That's the 'why' I do that. Teachers, first of all, I do think they're professionals. I think they want to be treated as professionals. That means giving them responsibility, having them make some decisions.

Principal #3 stated: "I didn't want it to be an autonomy with leadership of this one person. I wanted it to be a group, because I think there's a lot of great people in this building."

Principals stated how they share their leadership responsibilities with assistant principals and teacher leaders. They work with leaders to promote and create a collaborative culture instead of one where there is one heroic leader. They do this because all the work is done to enhance the overall organization and running a school building can be a complicated task. Principal #1 shared the following explanation of how and why he shares influence with his assistants and teacher leaders: "I'm always looking for input. We are all in this together."

Principal #2 added the following example of budgeting for a proposed project to describe how she shares influence with assistant principals:

They present it, and then I'm over it. I do look at it, but I do give them a chance to bring it and say, 'This is what I think we need to do with it. This is where we're going with it. This is how much money we have. I need some ideas of how to get some more money.'

Principal # 3 had the following to say when asked about fostering a culture of shared decision making by sharing influence with others. Principal #3 stated, "I always like to get the input, that way I can make a valid decision. Eventually, it's going to come to this desk, but I want to say that I have done my homework." The principals shared scenarios with the researcher mirroring how they solicit help from one another. The building principal knows that ultimately the final decision will be his responsibility but once assistant principals have gained his confidence then they are free to run the areas which they have been distributed. All three of the principals agreed that they share influence because they want results and when it is a joint decision making process, there is less of a hierarchical structure.

Theme #3 – Intentionally assigns roles/responsibilities based on the strengths-based versus traditional roles. Principals shared that some roles are delegated to specific leaders as determined by their experiences and level of skill with handling certain situations. Now and again, principals shared with the researcher that they intentionally assign some roles to assistant principals that are strengths -based versus traditional assistant principal roles. Principal #1 acknowledged:

I look at people when I'm hiring them and during the interviewing process. I look at assistant principals who have previously worked with facilities or who have been a coach. I take prior skill and personal attributes into accounts when distributing responsibilities.

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Principal #2 additionally explained:

> I can give you an example. We had a parent come in today and talk about an exam. It
> started with me because she wanted to meet with me but I asked her if she had talked
> with Mrs. SoHo (assistant principal pseudonym). I said if you would like to meet with
> her, you can, because she is the one who handles and approves exams. It was more
> efficient for her to meet with Mrs. SoHo because she has been distributed the
> administrative curriculum and academic responsibilities.

Principal #3 further agreed, noting:

> APs have certain strengths and people enjoy doing things that they are good at. I have
> given one AP the task of redesigning the entire teacher work workroom. She is creative
> so therefore she has been given that responsibility. One assistant principal is good at
> analyzing data. There are times when assistant principals are given assignments with
> which they don't have experience. One goal of this principal is to grow assistants. Part of
> being an assistant principal is learning all of the aspects. Duties are rotated.

   Theme #4 – Provides for flexible versus rigid roles. Principals perceived that another
way they implemented the concept of distributed leadership in their schools is to provide
clarification of roles for assistant principals and teacher leaders which are flexible versus the
traditional roles these individuals might have played in the past. The leader provides clarification
of roles/tasks but allows flexibility. Therefore the roles are flexible versus rigid. The high school
principals shared the following on how or why they provide clarification of roles. Principal #1
explained:

If roles/duties are not assigned or clarified then the organization cannot carry out its mission and the school will fail to function at optimum performance. Therefore just as platoon sergeants in the army have been made aware of their duties, it is strange to assume that the school would excel without leaders who know their responsibilities.

Principal #3 furthered that thought:

That's really how I try to distribute leadership among them. We do have one of those four who work solely with 504s, but in terms of that, that one person, he or she doesn't stay with 504s for six years. No matter the day or situation, every assistant is clear on their responsibilities and who is over what particular area.

Theme # 5 – Coordinates sustained versus sporadic communication throughout the school. During the face to face interviews with principals, it was revealed that they also distribute leadership and coordinate sustained communication throughout the school versus having sporadic communication. They are proactive versus reactive in communicating, always anticipating the needs. Principals utilized assistant principals and teacher leaders to keep the lines of communication open and consistent between the administrative staff and teachers. One principal stated that he had an open door policy and his door was always open because he wanted communication to be at a much higher level. Principal #1 said:

If I have a traditional faculty meeting then I would have to do it in three meetings. Instead I flip the faculty meeting. They login and watch and give feedback. There will be a big one at the beginning of school and one at the end of school. All of the administrators are assigned a little over 20 teachers. They are responsible for always keeping their teachers in "the know."

Principal #3 shared: "When there are questions that need to be posed to the entire

department, then I go to that department head." This principal says that she cannot do it all by

herself, and the best way to lead is to share the leadership. Principals were forthcoming and

showed enthusiasm when sharing with the researcher concerning the ways that leadership was

distributed in their schools. During the interviews, they provided examples and shared evidence

on the roles and responsibilities that assistant principals and teacher leaders assume as shown in

Table 7.

Table 7

Principals' Perceptions of How They Distribute Leadership

Theme: Promotes a broad vs. narrow perspective of leadership among assistant principals	
Principal #1	*"It's not something I'm working on by myself, counselors; another administrator has a large hand of responsibility in it."*
Principal #2	*"Assistants run a school within a school."*
Principal #3	*"I want to develop leaders within the school at all levels."*
Theme: Fosters an interdependent vs. isolated culture of shared decision making	
Principal #1	*"Believe in teachers running the building."*
Principal #2	*"Assistant principals look at it as a whole school approach."*
Principal #3	*"They view the school as one big classroom."*
Principal #1	*"Assistant principals are assigned content areas."*
Principal #2	*"Assistants are over particular grade levels, curriculum, budgets, buses, and teacher evaluations."*
Principal #3	*"One assistant is responsible for creating the master schedule."*
Theme: Fosters interdependent vs. isolated culture of shared decision making	
Principal #1	*"Believe in teachers running the building."*
Principal #2	*"Assistant principals look at it as a whole school approach."*
Principal #3	*"They view the school as one big classroom."*
Theme: Coordinates sustained vs. sporadic communication throughout the school	
Principal #1	*"Assistant principals promote an open door policy, open personalities."*
Principal #2	
Principal #3	*"Assistant principals have to create a positive environment."*
Theme: Clarifies roles as flexible vs. rigid	
Principal #1	*"If roles/duties are not assigned or clarified then the organization cannot carry out its mission."*
Principal #2	
Principal #3	*"Those four who works solely with 504s, but in terms of that, that one person, he or she doesn't stay with 504s for six years. It's done on a rotating basis every two years."*
Theme: Assigns strengths-based vs. traditional roles	
Principal #1	*"One AP is responsible for buildings, textbooks, counseling."*
Principal #2	*"There are times when assistant principals are given assignments with which they don't have experience."*
Principal #3	

Assistant principals' perceptions of how they are distributed leadership. The second research question related to the perceptions of assistant principals and how they are distributed leadership by their principals. The findings are presented from seven assistant principals in high schools studied. Four themes emerged from the assistant principals' responses to the interview questions that were analyzed to answer research question # 2: In what ways do assistant principals perceive that leadership is distributed to them in the school? The findings revealed that seven assistant principals believed that leadership was distributed to them in the following ways by their principals: promotes a broad versus narrow perspective of leadership among the assistant principals, fosters an interdependent versus isolated culture of shared decision-making by sharing influence with others, provides for flexible versus rigid leadership roles, and assigns roles/responsibilities based on strengths versus traditional roles.

Theme #1 – Promotes a broad versus narrow perspective of leadership among the assistant principals. Seven assistant principals stated the different ways that they perceived their principal had distributed leadership to them. The principal promotes a broad perspective of leadership among assistant principals by allowing change in areas that need attention, allowing an assistant principal to build the master schedule, implement new and fresh ideas, and to be in charge of departments.

Assistant Principal #1 stated the following pertaining to the ways that her principal distributed leadership to her: "Maybe it's me feeling more comfortable in the role as assistant principal, but I'm very comfortable to say to my principal, now this is something that I see needs attention and I'd like to give that attention to it." Assistant Principal #2 had the following to say: "He took me under his wing for about three years and taught me how to understand how he has built a schedule." Assistant Principal #3 said: "We split the responsibility

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that is shared. Our principle does it, and two other administrators to help with the load and sitting in on meetings." Assistant Principal #4 stated: "I am also in charge of our counseling department. If there are issues that they have, they come and see me and I take them to our principal, as well."

Theme #2 – Fosters an interdependent versus isolated culture of shared decision-making. Four assistant principals interviewed perceived that their principal distributed leadership to them in order to foster a culture of shared decision-making or an interdependent culture versus an isolated culture of leadership. Assistants communicated that their principals encouraged them to have conversations to make things happen, be in the center of the decision making process, and split the responsibility to solicit the help of others. Assistant Principal # 2 stated:

> I'll start the interview process, get a statement, do those kinds of things and then when that grade level principal becomes available, I'll present that person with what I've found out so far. Then they'll take it from there. We do a lot of that, sharing students.

Assistant Principal #3 stated: "All the different tasks that go into running the school are divided amongst the different assistant principals." Assistant Principal #5 said: "We split the responsibility that is shared. Our principal does it, and two other administrators to help with the load and sit in on meetings." Assistant Principal #6 shared:

> I'm in the center of it all because I just know everything that's going on, pretty much. If there's an event here that happens, I'm probably in the middle of planning it. If there's a change that's being made, I'm probably having conversations and making changes.

Assistant principals perceived that they were distributed leadership that allowed them to share their influence with others. When principals utilized an extensive scope of leadership

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within the school it combated a top down or hero/manager leadership style. The assistant principals perceived that they were provided opportunities to share influence with others rather than having one heroic influence in the school. The assistant principals shared examples of how they and other assistant principals collaborated with others to meet the demands of more complex issues. They also discussed how their principal shared influence by giving them various areas of the school to supervise.

Assistant Principal # 1 shared: "It's not something I'm working on by myself, counselors, and another administrator have a large hand of responsibility in it." This assistant principal provided this example as she referenced how her principal encouraged them to collaborate with others to promote and interdependent instead of an isolated culture. Assistant Principal #3 stated:

Like I said she's technology and curriculum, but I need to collaborate with her because it involves my freshman students, so we're going to look our intervention classes, look at how we can move these students from our intervention classes.

Assistant Principal #5 added: "We are able to all work together and rely on our strengths of going to somebody who has the wisdom." Assistant Principal #6 mentioned: "I am also in charge of our counseling department. If there are issues that they have, they come and see me and I take them to our principal, as well." Assistant Principal #7 said:

I like it because I feel like we here have a wide variety of experience. In my tenure here, I've supervised the custodians. I've supervised the CNP workers at one time or another.

Theme #3 – Provides clarification of leadership roles that are flexible versus rigid. The leader provides clarification of roles/tasks but allows flexibility versus rigidity in leadership practice. Assistant Principal #2 said the following:

> Again, we all have a list of duties that we do. It's my job to make sure we're up to date on what we're doing and that we're working through Virtual Alabama to have all of our school safety information there for first responders.

> Assistant Principal #3 added: "We're not over worked. It does take all of us but he sends out a calendar, and puts our name on it. If we need to adjust anything, we can." Assistant Principal # 5 mentioned:

> Now that I'm starting my third year, I feel comfortable here and I feel comfortable in my role and my abilities, I think, to be a leader. I feel comfortable to say, "I feel like this could go a different way. How would you feel if I try this or that?"

Assistant Principal # 6 additionally acknowledged:

> Our duties are distributed to us by her, but I think the more time that passes, the more that we all get to know each other, the more comfortable I would feel to ask for responsibilities or to say, "This is something that I'd like to change. This is something that I'd like to see happen differently." She's very open to that.

Assistant Principal # 7 agreed, saying:

> It may not be at the beginning of the school year. Something might transpire in the middle of the school year that might change direction. You might say, "Oh, we need to

make some shifts because this person is more skilled at doing this or this is a better fit for that person and I think they're more interested in doing this."

Theme #4 – Intentionally assigns roles/responsibilities based on the strengths versus traditional roles. Assistant principals reported that discharging the responsibilities effectively encompasses responsibilities that are reflective of individual leader strengths, and are tailored to support the leadership demands. Assistant Principal #1 stated: "Our head principal establishes our responsibilities, generally according to our strengths and what his needs are." Assistant Principal #2 noted:

> We're all tasked with other things like, in my case; I'm the operations person. I'm over the operations of the whole building. I work closely with the maintenance people to make sure things are taken care of. I was over operations at my other school and he knew that when he hired me.

Assistant Principal #3 added: "You have goals for your school. You know what you want to achieve, so you look for those people that can bring stuff to the table that will help you achieve those goals." Assistant Principal #5 agreed: "My principal distributed leadership to me by using the strengths that I offer to our administrative team in a way that we can provide the most safe and conducive learning environment to our students." Assistant Principal #5 also added that he was a football coach before becoming an assistant principal and that is why he has been over discipline for the past four years. The assistant principals in the schools studied shared their perceptions of how leadership had been distributed to them by their principals as shown in Table 8.

Table 8

Assistant principals' perceptions of ways leadership is distributed to them

	Theme: Promotes a broad vs. narrow perspective of leadership among the assistant principals
Principal #1	*"Maybe it's me feeling more comfortable in the role as assistant principal, but I'm very comfortable to say to my principal, now this is something that I see needs attention and I'd like to give that attention to it."*
Principal #2	*"He took me under his wing for about three years and taught me how to understand how he has built a schedule."*
Principal #3	*"We split the responsibility that is shared. Our principal does it, and two other administrators to help with the load and sitting in on meetings."*
Principal #4	*I'm also in charge of our counseling department. If there are issues that they have, they come and see me and I take them to our principal as well."*
	Theme: Fosters a culture of interdependent vs. isolated decision making
Principal #1	*"It's not something I'm working on by myself, counselors; another administrator has a large hand of responsibility in it."*
Principal #3	*"All the different tasks that go into running the school are divided amongst the different assistant principals."*
Principal #5	*"We split the responsibility that is shared. Our principal does it, and two other administrators to help with the load and sit in on meetings."*
Principal #6	*"If there's a change that's being made, I'm probably having conversations and making changes."*
Principal #7	*"I like it because I feel like we here have a wide variety of experience. In my tenure here, I've supervised the custodians."*
	Theme: Provides clarification of roles that are flexible vs. rigid
Principal #1	*"Again, we all have a list of duties that we do."*
Principal #3	*"We're not over worked. It does take all of us but it sends out a calendar, and puts our name on it. If we need to adjust anything, we can.*
Principal #5	*"Now that I'm starting my third year, I feel comfortable here and I feel comfortable in my role and my abilities."*
Principal #7	*"You might say, 'Oh, we need to make some shifts because this person is more skilled at doing this or this is a better fit for that person and I think they're more interested in doing this."*
	Theme: Assigns roles/responsibilities based on strengths-based vs traditional roles
Principal #1	*"Our head principal establishes our responsibilities, generally according to our strengths and what his needs are."*
Principal #2	*"We're all tasked with other things like, in my case; I'm the operations person."*
Principal #3	*"You know what you want to achieve, so you look for those people that can bring stuff to the table that will help you achieve those goals."*
Principal #5	*"My principal distributed leadership to me by using the strengths that I offer to our administrative team."*

Teacher leaders' perceptions of how they are distributed leadership. The third

research question relates to the teacher leaders' perception of how they are distributed leadership

by their principals and assistant principals. The findings are presented from three teacher leaders

in the schools studied. There were four themes that emerged from the teacher leaders' responses

to research question #3: In what ways do teacher leaders perceive that leadership is distributed to them in the school?

The findings revealed that all three of the teacher leaders perceived that they were distributed leadership by the principal and assistant principals in the following ways: 1) promotes a broad versus narrow perspective of leadership; 2) fosters a culture of interdependent versus isolated decision-making by sharing influence with others; 3) intentionally assigns roles/responsibilities based on the strengths of others versus traditional roles; and 4) Coordinates sustained versus sporadic communication throughout the school.

Theme #1 – Promotes a broad versus narrow perspective of leadership. All three of the teacher leaders perceived that they were distributed duties and responsibilities that promoted a broad perspective of leadership versus a narrow perspective. They shared their perceptions of how leadership had been distributed to them. Teacher leader #1 had the following to say:

> I am the person who provides, who comes to the meeting with resources of materials that I use in my classroom and I disseminate to the people in my department, like copies. Or either I email websites or links to different things that I put in my Google classroom to use to support the curriculum. My principal charged me with being the curriculum specialist for my department and we meet weekly.

Teacher leader #2 said the following when he talked about how his principal listens to new ideas and looks for his input, "He definitely is very receptive to ideas and suggestions." Teacher leader #3 provided the following examples: "When we get new students, I'm pretty much the go to person. Helping them enroll, making sure we've secured paperwork from previous school systems." She also added, "We've kind of taken on our own way of doing things so we have our own procedures." Teacher leader #1 talked about how their school system was

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relatively new and how she had been a prime factor in helping to orchestrate processes and procedures.

   Theme #2 – Fosters a culture of interdependent versus isolated decision-making by sharing influence with others. All three of the teacher leaders perceived that they were distributed duties and responsibility that fosters a culture of shared decision-making versus fostering a culture of isolation. They shared their perceptions of how leadership had been distributed to them in that regard. Teacher leader #1 stated: "I design the curriculum. I design the classes." Teacher leader #2 stated: "The way that it works, sometimes in our small group leadership, there may be an issue or concern that I have and then I'll bring it up to our leader who then takes it back to the leadership. Teacher #2 also added an example of how they distribute leadership among themselves: "With that, we created ... The participants at the training, we then got together and established various roles for each of them." Teacher leader #3 stated: "We pursue and implement what we know to implement as far as working with the teachers." She said that they are encouraged to work together and find solutions to problems, thereby sharing influence with others and creating a collaborative versus an isolated culture.

   Theme #3 – Provides clarification of leadership roles that are flexible versus rigid roles. Two of the teacher leaders perceived that they were intentionally distributed duties and responsibility based on their personal strengths versus traditional roles they might have as teachers. They discussed how their principal or assistant principal intentionally assigned roles to them that were traditionally only distributed to administrators. Teacher Leader #1 who was the curriculum specialist for her department stated: "Yes. I solely prepare the information, the graphic organizers, and media, and everything that I'm going to use, I design the curriculum. I design the classes. My principal has entrusted me with those responsibilities." She elaborated

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further on her additional responsibilities and duties at her school that are outside of her departmental content area:

> I'm responsible for collecting information, getting pictures, photos, making sure every student and every teacher is photographed, and that news or highlights of information, things, I have a certain theme, and so those things, events that happen in our school based on the theme go in the yearbook.

Teacher Leader #3 shared her perception on why she believed that she was intentionally assigned the roles she has assumed: "So I feel like just being in the lead role as the lead teacher probably stems from experience and having more in depth knowledge and hands on experience." The teacher leaders shared how they had been picked by their administrators to carry out the noted roles and responsibilities.

Theme #4 – Coordinates sustained versus sporadic communication throughout the school. Each of the three teacher leaders perceived that they were distributed leadership by their principal and assistant principals that helped sustained communication throughout the school versus sporadic communication. Teacher Leader #1 said the following about her responsibilities and the frequency of communication through meetings: "My principal charged me with being the curriculum specialist for my department and we meet weekly."

Teacher leader #2 shared the following concerning the orchestration of leadership teams and meeting to sustain ongoing communication:

> We then have leadership teams which basically is, they have a meeting with the leaders and the leaders then come back and have a small group leadership chain where they go and talk about the things that they discussed.

Teacher Leader #3 shared the modes of communication that she used to get information to and from with teachers:

We pursue and implement what we know to implement as far as working with the teachers, letting them know that certain students in their classrooms have IEPs. We use email, we use face-to-face, we use google docs, and Remind 101 via text messaging.

Each of the teacher leaders was enthusiastic about interviewing with the researcher when they were called upon by their principals. They were passionate in their discussions and wanted to share their experiences. Table 9 provides an overview of the information that they shared with the researcher.

Table 9

Teacher leaders' perceptions of how they are distributed leadership

Theme: Principal promotes a broad vs. narrow perspective of leadership among the teacher leaders	
Teacher Leader #1	*"I am the person who provide, who come to the meeting with resources of materials that I use in my classroom and I disseminate to them, like copies. Or either I email websites or links to different things that I put in my Google classroom to use to support the curriculum. My principal charged me with being the curriculum specialist for my department and we meet weekly."*
Teacher Leader #2	*"He definitely is very receptive to ideas and suggestions."*
Teacher Leader #3	*"When we get new students, I'm pretty much the go to person. Helping them enroll, making sure we've secured paperwork from previous school systems."*
Theme: Principal fosters a culture of interdependent vs. isolated decision making	
Teacher Leader #1	*"I design the curriculum. I design the classes."*
Teacher Leader #2	*"The way that it works, sometimes in our small group leadership, there may be an issue or concern that I have and then I'll bring it up to our leader who then takes it back to the leadership."* *"With that, we created ... The participants at the training, we then got together and established various roles for each of them."*
Teacher Leader #3	*"We pursue and implement what we know to implement as far as working with the teachers".*
Theme: Principal intentionally assigns roles/responsibilities based on strengths-based vs. traditional roles	
Teacher Leader #1	*"Yes. I solely prepare the information, the graphic organizers, and media, and everything that I'm going to use, I design the curriculum. I design the classes. My principal has entrusted me with those responsibilities."*
Teacher Leader #2	
Teacher Leader #3	*"So I feel like just being in the lead role as the lead teacher probably stems from experience and having more in depth knowledge and hands on experience."*
Theme: The principal coordinates sustained vs. sporadic communication throughout the school	
Teacher Leader #1	*"My principal charged me with being the curriculum specialist for my department and we meet weekly."*
Teacher Leader #2	*"We then have leadership teams which basically is, they have a meeting with the leaders and the leaders then come back and have a small group leadership chain where they go and talk about the things that they discussed."*
Teacher Leader #3	*"We pursue and implement what we know to implement as far as working with the teachers, letting them know that certain students in their classrooms have IEPs. We use email, we use face to face, we use google docs, and remind 101 via text messaging."*

Benefits of Leadership Distributed in Schools

All participants were asked for their responses on research question #4: What benefits

result when leadership is distributed? The principals reported their perceived benefits first,

followed by the assistant principals and teacher leaders.

Principals' perceptions of the benefits of distributed leadership.

Theme #1 – Collective activities that promote a cohesive environment. All of the principals perceived that collective activities that included formal versus informal activities were a benefit when leadership was distributed in schools. Many examples of this were given, and this was the only theme, and supported strongly with evidence. Each principal gave examples of the activities that occurred among both formal and informal leaders. Principal #1 stated: "I meet with the administrative team and we include the counselors and the entire office staff to join in. In this meeting, we will share a meal together and sometimes we will have an extended working lunch." Principal #2 described collective activities at his school:

> I know that if we have a faculty meeting, I may do a small piece in it. But others run the faculty meeting such as the attendance clerk. When we do walk-throughs, that's a collective activity. A lot of times at the morning faculty meetings, PTO will have breakfast for us. Another example of a collective activity is us working as a group on the calendar for next year.

Principal #2 also provided an example of a collective activity outside of the school building:

> When we're here, say a Friday night football game or something we have a dinner before. There are also times when we go to lunch, and go to those type of things where I think you learn. As we work together we find out more about each other.

And Principal #3 shared the magnitude of just one of their larger collective activities: "That's our faculty retreat. We're going to Shocco Springs. It's actually a Baptist retreat, but different groups go there. The team here, they put this in line for us." She talked about how it took the cooperation of both the informal and formal leaders coming together to make it happen.

Each principal gave examples of the activities that occurred among both formal and informal leaders that helped build a cohesive environment. Principal #1 stated: "We sit in all our interviews together as a team. Our administrative team, we sit. Sometimes we'll even invite the department chair or other teachers from the department on certain occasions. We meet as a team." Principal #2 shared how he included several people to get things done and have a working lunch: "I meet with the administrative team and we include the counselors and the entire office staff to join in. In this meeting we will share a meal together and sometimes there are working lunches." These principals perceived that sometimes inviting informal and formal leaders to eat together with the administrators served as the foundation for a comfortable and cohesive environment.

Each of the principals interviewed perceived that another benefit that surfaced when leadership was distributed is that it offered opportunities to refuel and refocus as a team in schools among principals, assistant principals and teachers. These activities thereby created camaraderie. Principal #1 shared the following activity that supported refueling and refocusing in a fun activity:

We also have a refuel lunch hour. This is where people get to eat wherever they want. Students can eat in the hallway, media center or wherever they like.

Principal #2 provided the following: "The PTO is sponsoring a dodge ball game. The teachers will play the students. Everybody who wants to play will have the opportunity to take part." And Principal #3 stated:

We do a Christmas dinner. Now it is at school. Once the kids leave at 1:00, and they typically get out on a Friday at 1:00, we have a faculty luncheon. It's potluck. Actually,

our custodial staff provides. They cook the meats for us. Then everyone brings a side,

from the math department and our custodial staff.

The principals perceived that there were benefits when leadership was distributed as summarized

in Table 10.

Table 10

Principals' perceptions of the benefits of leadership distributed

Theme: Collective activities that promote a cohesive environment	
Principal #1	*"I meet with the administrative team and we include the counselors and the entire office staff to join in. In this meeting we will share a meal together and sometimes we will have an extended working lunch."*
	"We also have a refuel lunch hour. This is where people get to eat wherever they want. Students can eat in the hallway, they can eat in the hallway, media center or wherever they like."
Principal #2	*"A lot of times at the morning faculty meetings, PTO will have breakfast for us."*
	"When we're here, say a Friday night football game or something we have a dinner before. There are also times when we go to lunch, and go to those type of things where I think you learn. As we work together we find out more about each other."
	"The PTO is sponsoring a dodge ball game. The teachers will play the students. Everybody who wants to play will have the opportunity to take part."
Principal #3	*"That's our faculty retreat. We're going to Shocco Springs."*
	"We do a Christmas dinner. Now it is at school. Once the kids leave at 1:00, and they typically get out on a Friday at 1:00, we have a faculty luncheon."

Assistant principals' perceptions of the benefits of distributed leadership. The

assistant principals described additional benefits that surface when leadership is distributed in

schools. The following themes emerged when the assistant principals discussed their perceptions

of the benefits: constant flow of communication for collaboration that encompassed proactive

versus reaction collaboration; coordinated improvement that was surrounded by structured versus

unstructured professional learning communities; and promotes camaraderie where there is an

Esprit de Corps versus an "every man for himself" mentality.

Theme #1 – Constant flow of communication for collaboration. Some of the assistant principals reported that one of the benefits was the constant flow of communication for collaboration that encompassed proactive versus reactive collaboration. Assistant Principal #1 stated the following that supported the constant flow of communication based on regularly scheduled professional development meetings: "That is definitely another way that we can meet the needs of our school in terms of technology professional development while also giving teachers the opportunity to become leaders and cultivating that skill." Assistant Principal #2 said: "Here, we overcome a lot of that just like all the grade level principals will sit down this summer and we will develop a common agenda for meeting with the faculty. We will have four separate faculty meetings." Assistant Principal #4 shared the following showing that their meetings are proactive in setting agendas: "Our meeting's usually pretty quick, productive, and we have an agenda. We go over the agenda." And Assistant Principal #6 shared: "Power hour, teachers collaborating within their departments or they have an opportunity to do cross-curriculum things."

Theme #2 – Coordinated school improvement. Several of the assistant principals perceived that coordinated school improvement that was implemented through professional learning communities was a benefit when leadership is distributed. Assistant Principal #1 stated this about the professional learning communities: "Well, all of our teachers are part of what they call PLC. Professional learning community." Assistant Principal #2 shared: "Well, all of our teachers are part of what they call PLC, professional learning community and regular administrative meetings." Assistant Principal #5 stated: "We have PLC's within the department." Assistant Principal #6 talked about the various ways that PLCs can exist in his school: "You can have a PLC with your department. You can have a PLC with a teacher. You

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can have a PLC with other people who teach the same course." And Assistant Principal #7 said the following about the structured PLCs:

Because we have time here. You have time set aside for PLC meetings once a month. Well we have weekly PLC meetings, but for each of those, you can have four different types. We usually have four meetings in a month.

One of the assistant principals commented that they encouraged the constant flow of communication based on regularly scheduled meetings instead of impromptu meetings and saw this as coordinated efforts for improvement.

Theme #3 – Collective activities that promote a cohesive environment. Some of the assistant principals perceived that when leadership was enacted in school it promoted camaraderie where there is an Esprit de Corps versus an "every man for himself" mentality. Several of the assistant principals shed light on events at their schools in which all building personnel participated in physical/extra-curricular activities. Assistant Principal #2 stated: "We're going to look over the calendar, see what we're doing, try to have common ground and try to do some fun things together." Assistant Principal #3 shared the following about an informal activity that supports camaraderie: "We have Zumba class. We have boot camp. Me and the principals, we play tennis." Assistant Principal #6 shared:

We are going to do a faculty tailgate prior to the game, where we encourage all of our teachers to bring their spouses, their family, their kids and we will cook out before the football game, and then encourage them, of course, to stay for the football game.

Assistant Principal #7 provided this example:

We are looking at, this year, encouraging as many teachers as we can get, in fact we're

trying to encourage our students to do the same thing, to run the Mercedes Marathon

Relay. We're trying to get different teachers signed up to do that as teams, so that we can

do it as a school event.

Table 11 summarizes assistant principals' perception of the benefits that surface when

leadership is distributed in schools.

Table 11

Assistant principals' perception of the benefits of leadership distributed in schools

	Theme: Constant flow of communication for collaboration
Assistant Principal #1	*"That is definitely another way that we can meet the needs of our school in terms of technology professional development while also giving teachers the opportunity to become leaders and cultivating that skill."*
Assistant Principal #2	*"Here, we overcome a lot of that just like all the grade level principals will sit down this summer and we will develop a common agenda for meeting with the faculty. We will have four separate faculty meetings."*
Assistant Principal #3	
Assistant Principal #4	*"Our meeting's usually pretty quick, productive, and we have an agenda. We go over the agenda."*
Assistant Principal #5	
Assistant Principal #6	*"Power hour, teachers collaborating within their departments or they have an opportunity to do cross-curriculum things."*
Assistant Principal #7	
	Theme: Coordinated School Improvement
Assistant Principal #1	*"Well, all of our teachers are part of what they call PLC. Professional learning community."*
Assistant Principal #2	*"Well, all of our teachers are part of what they call PLC, Professional learning community and regular administrative meetings."*
Assistant Principal #3	
Assistant Principal #4	
Assistant Principal #5	*"We have PLC's within the department."*
Assistant Principal #6	*"You can have a PLC with your department. You can have a PLC with a teacher. You can have a PLC with other people who teach the same course."*
Assistant Principal #7	*"You can have a PLC with your department. You can have a PLC with a teacher. You can have a PLC with other people who teach the same course."*
	Theme: Collective activities that promote a cohesive environment
Assistant Principal #1	
Assistant Principal #2	*"We're going to look over the calendar, see what we're doing, try to have common ground and try to do some fun things together."*
Assistant Principal #3	*"We have Zumba class. We have boot camp. Me and the principals, we play tennis."*
Assistant Principal #4	
Assistant Principal #5	
Assistant Principal #6	*"We are going to do a faculty tailgate prior to the game, where we encourage all of our teachers to bring their spouses, their family, their kids and we will cook out before the football game, and then encourage them, of course, to stay for the football game."*
Assistant Principal #7	*"We are looking at, this year, encouraging as many teachers as we can get, in fact we're trying to encourage our students to do the same thing, to run the Mercedes Marathon Relay. We're trying to get different teachers signed up to do that as teams, so that we can do it as a school event."*

Teacher leaders' perceptions of the benefits of distributed leadership. Two common themes emerged from interviewing teacher leaders and ascertaining their perceptions of the benefits when leadership was distributed in the schools. The themes were: Collective Activities that Promote a Cohesive Environment and Constant Flow of Communication and Collaboration.

Theme #1 – Collective Activities that Promote a Cohesive Environment. All of the teacher leaders interviewed perceived that stronger interpersonal relationships surfaced as a benefit when leadership was distributed in schools in both informal versus formal settings. Teacher Leader #1 shared a bonding activity via informal settings versus formal settings: "Minute to Win It, the teachers against other teachers. We do those types of bonding activities. We go out to do some type of activity." Teacher Leader #2 shared: "We go out and eat together. It's just an opportunity for people to get to know each other on a different level." And Teacher Leader #3 said this about an informal setting: "We always have a meal where the PTO is involved and we sometimes meet with leadership outside of school."

Theme #2 – Constant flow of communication for collaboration. The teacher leaders perceived that one of the benefits was the constant flow of communication for collaboration that encompassed proactive versus reactive collaboration. Teacher Leader #1 shared an example of scheduled collaboration and what they do with that time: "As collaborative teams, we may take a day to leave the school. We have a professional development day where we may go out and grade common assessments." Teacher Leader #2 stated: "We meet monthly with PD's." And Teacher Leader #3 provided the following to support a constant flow of communication for collaboration: "Instructional rounds: You meet as a team, get a brief before you begin, you're basically debriefed on the teachers that you will be visiting and what they teach." The teacher leaders ascertained that stronger interpersonal relationships and a constant flow of

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communication for collaboration were both benefits when leadership was distributed in schools

as summarized in Table 12.

Table 12

Teacher leaders' perceptions of the benefits of distributed leadership

Theme: Collective activities that promote a cohesive environment	
Teacher Leader #1	"Minute to Win It, the teachers against other teachers. We do those types of bonding activities. We go out to do some type of activity."
Teacher Leader #2	"We go out to eat before a football game and we go to a football game."
	"We go out and eat together. It's just an opportunity for people to get to know each other on a different level."
Teacher Leader #3	"We always have a meal where the PTO is involved and we sometimes meet with leadership outside of the school."
Theme: Constant flow of communication for collaboration	
Teacher Leader #1	"As collaborative teams, we may take a day to leave the school."
	"We have a professional development day where we may go out and grade common assessments."
Teacher Leader #2	"We meet monthly with PD's."
Teacher Leader #3	"Instructional rounds: You meet as a team, get a brief before you begin, you're basically debriefed on the teachers that you will be visiting and what they teach."

Challenges that Exist When Leadership is Distributed in Schools

There were challenges that existed when leadership was distributed in schools. The three

principals were asked their responses on research question #5: What challenges exist when

distributed leadership is practiced in the school? The two themes that emerged were: obstacles to

developing and mentoring others and lack of buy-in/ownership from others.

Principals' perception of challenges.

Theme #1 – Obstacles to developing and mentoring others. The principals interviewed

perceived that one of the challenges that existed when distributed leadership was practiced in

school was: there were obstacles to developing and mentoring others. Principal #1 stated that he

saw the following challenge as an obstacle to developing and mentoring others: "The size of the

school is a major challenge." Principal shared that his school was so large until it was difficult to get to see the people as often as he liked. Principal #2 stated:

"I sometimes don't believe we're building, and mentoring, and developing leaders. I think everybody wants to take the backseat because they don't want that pressure, they don't want that decision. They don't want everybody mad at them for leading and guiding when they don't want to be led and guided."

Principal #3 stated the following as a challenge:

"We are trying to in our district grow assistant principals into principals, so you can't always just play to a person's strength. You have to make them responsible for things that they're not really that comfortable with, and we work on that, too."

Theme #2 – Lack of buy-in/ownership. The principals interviewed perceived that another challenge that existed when distributed leadership was practiced in school was: lack of buy-in/ownership from others for various reasons. Principal #1 stated:

You have to have some ownership. Now, I can't ask you to have ownership unless I give you some ownership. I mean I've got to let you in the game. I've got to get you in there. But even after I give you the opportunity for ownership you have to buy-in to it.

Principal #2 stated: "I would say that if that ownership is not created, then those others do not fall in there, because the teachers really need to have that." And Principal #3 stated:

We talk about buy-in a lot, and I think that can be a loose term that we really don't ever get, but I really think in terms of creating this true distributive leadership that teachers have to know that what they are telling you is valued.

Each of the principals shared challenges that exist when distributed leadership is practiced in schools is summarized in Table 13.

Table 13

Principals' perceptions of the challenges that exist when distributed leadership is practiced in schools

Theme: Obstacles exist in developing and mentoring others	
Principal #1	*"The size of the school is a major challenge."*
Principal #2	*"I sometimes don't believe we're building, and mentoring, and developing leaders. I think everybody wants to take the backseat because they don't want that pressure, they don't want that decision. They don't want everybody mad at them for leading and guiding when they don't want to be lead and guided."*
Principal #3	*"We are trying to in our district grow assistant principals into principals, so you can't always just play to a person's strength. You have to make them responsible for things that they're not really that comfortable with, and we work on that, too."*
Theme: May be a lack of buy-in/ownership from others	
Principal #1	"You have to have some ownership. Now, I can't ask you to have ownership unless I give you some ownership. I mean I've got to let you in the game. I've got to get you in there. But even after I give you the opportunity for ownership you have to buy-in to it."
Principal #2	"I would say that if that ownership is not created, then those others do not fall in there, because the teachers really need to have that."
Principal #3	"We talk about buy-in a lot, and I think that can be a loose term that we really don't ever get, but I really think in terms of creating this true distributive leadership that teachers have to know that what they are telling you is valued."

Assistant principals' perceptions of challenges. The assistant principals described additional challenges that surfaced when distributed leadership was practiced in school. The following two themes emerged when the assistant principals discussed their perceptions of the challenges: obstacles to developing and mentoring others and there are limiting aspects to distributing leadership.

Theme #1 – Obstacles to developing and mentoring others. The assistant principals

interviewed perceived that one of the challenges that existed when distributed leadership was

practiced in school was: there were obstacles to developing and mentoring others. Assistant

Principal #2 stated: "It's a real challenge to make sure that we're communicating across the grade

levels and developing leaders." Assistant Principal #4 stated the following about challenges with

developing leaders:

> Because what happens is this pile of teachers over here is ... They're strong leaders.
>
> They're going to end up doing too much and these teachers aren't really contributing as
>
> much. And you must find those people something to do to help develop them.

Assistant Principal #6 stated:

> The teachers who don't have clubs or haven't volunteered to do something during Soar 60
>
> on days when we have club days or other days like that. They're going to be supervised.
>
> We've given them a job. They haven't come up with something new.

Assistant Principal #7 stated: "The downside, of course, is the time commitment, and the

commitment to place people in roles that you think they will be good at and do it." Assistant

Principal #7 also stated: "There is so much to deal with when you're dealing with the distributed

leadership in that if there's not defined areas, like you're in charge and you're responsible for X,

Y, and Z."

    Theme #2 – Limiting aspects to distributive leadership. Assistant Principal #1 had

worked with grade levels nine through twelve and she had been responsible for assigning

teachers to content areas and she stated the following as a challenge: "Working in a grade level

that you don't love." Assistant Principal #2 who worked mostly with discipline stated: "When

we're extremely busy, we won't realize that maybe we're both working on the same thing. The challenge is you've got four different people doing discipline, not just one, but you still want it to be the same."

Assistant Principal #3 stated:

> Love to go in biology labs and things but that would be probably the biggest challenge not just here but even at the smaller schools. Having that time to go in and just see what the kids are doing without a clipboard and without marking something, just going in and out.

Assistant Principal #4 stated: "The paperwork that's involved." This assistant principal said that he was required to document the activities that he completed with others and that it included a degree of paperwork. Assistant Principal #5 worked with discipline but desired to also work in other areas of administrative leadership.

Assistant Principal #5 stated his challenges with distributed leadership:

> I think that's where that distributive leadership can be a little bit of a crippling aspect where in a school our size and in a school where we get into our own little worlds and we're constantly working, where does that opportunity for us to grow as administrators come in?

Assistant Principal #5 also stated: "I.E., if all I do is discipline all the time, naturally I can't get into classrooms to observe teachers and help them be better educators when all I'm doing is discipline." Assistant Principal #6 shared the following challenge: If you're given your responsibility distributed to you and you're only working on those things, how am I going to learn to other aspects of running a school?" Assistant Principal #7 stated:

The way ours is that there's so much to do all the time that it's almost overwhelming,

whereas if you had those specific areas and you were confined to those things, you must

check a box and be like, "Okay, I'm done for today."

Assistant Principal #7 had many responsibilities as noted on the Assistant Principals Duties and

Responsibilities Chart at Nobility High School. Table 14 summarizes the challenges that

surfaced when distributed leadership was practiced in schools.

Table 14

Assistant Principals' Perceptions of the challenges that exist when leadership is practiced in the schools

Theme: Obstacles to developing and mentoring others	
Assistant Principal #1	
Assistant Principal #2	"It's a real challenge to make sure that we're communicating across the grade levels and develop leaders."
Assistant Principal #3	
Assistant Principal #4	"Because what happens is this pile of teachers over here is ... They're strong leaders. They're going to end up doing too much and these teachers aren't really contributing as much. And you must find those people something to do to help develop them."
Assistant Principal #5	
Assistant Principal #6	"The teachers who don't have clubs or haven't volunteered to do something during soar 60 on days when we have club days or other days like that. They're going to be supervised. We've given them a job. They haven't come up with something new."
Assistant Principal #7	"There is so much to deal with when you're dealing with the distributed leadership in that if there's not defined areas, like you're in charge and you're responsible for X, Y, and Z."
Theme: Limiting Aspects	
Assistant Principal #1	"Working in a grade level that you don't love."
Assistant Principal #2	"When we're extremely busy, we won't realize that maybe we're both working on the same thing. The challenge is you've got four different people doing discipline, not just one, but you still want it to be the same."
Assistant Principal #3	Love to go in biology labs and things but that would be probably the biggest challenge not just here but even at the smaller schools. Having that time to go in and just see what the kids are doing without a clipboard and without marking something, just going in and out.
Assistant Principal #4	"The paperwork that's involved."
Assistant Principal #5	"I.E., if all I do is discipline all the time, naturally I can't get into classrooms to observe teachers and help them be better educators when all I'm doing is discipline."
Assistant Principal #6	"If you're given your responsibility to distribute to you and you're only working on those things, how am I going to learn to other aspects of running a school?"
Assistant Principal #7	"The way ours is that there's so much to do all the time that it's almost overwhelming, whereas if you had those specific areas and you were confined to those things, you must check a box and be like, Okay, I'm done for today."

Teacher leaders' perceptions of challenges. Two collective themes emerged from interviewing the teacher leaders and discovering their perceptions of the challenges when distributed leadership was practiced in schools. These included: popularity contest and lack of buy-in/ownership.

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Theme #1 – Popularity contest. Each of the teacher leaders perceived popularity contest as a challenge when distributed leadership was practiced in schools. Teacher Leader #1 stated: "there is a small amount of people who really put in the work." She added that most of the time it was because these were the people who had close relationships with administrators. Teacher Leader #2 stated: "It becomes more of a popularity contest as opposed to it being the best person for the job." Teacher Leader #2 added that he had seen this repeatedly. And Teacher Leader #3 concluded: "A popularity contest, same people are being asked to do the same thing. A pattern is it's a lot of times the same people and it's the people who have been at the school the longest."

Theme #2 – Lack of buy-in/ownership. Teacher Leader #1 described the challenges that she experienced and stated:

> Small amount of people who buy into things. Some people don't buy into it, to the distributive leadership and they just want to be in their rooms, doing their own thing, and you have to assess that because you really can't force people- people who are afraid of change.

Teacher Leader #2 shared the extent of the problems that lack of buy-in/ownership caused. "Makes that team or group very ineffective." And Teacher Leader #3 concluded: "Puts pressure on the administration and this is a challenge for them." Table 15 summarizes the perceptions of the challenges that teacher leaders experience when distributed leadership is practiced in the school.

Table 15

Teacher leaders' perceptions of challenges

Theme: Popularity Contest	
Principal #1	*"Small amount of people who really put in the work."*
Principal #2	*"Becomes more of a popularity contest as opposed to it being the best person for the job."*
Principal #3	*"A popularity contest, same people are being asked to do the same thing."* *"A pattern is it's a lot of times the same people and it's the people who have been at the school the longest."*

Theme: Lack of Buy-in/Ownership	
Principal #1	*"Small amount of people who buy into things."* *"Some people don't buy into it, to the distributive leadership and they just want to be in their rooms, doing their own thing, and you have to assess that because you really can't force people-* *People who are afraid of change."*
Principal #2	*"Makes that team or group very ineffective"*
Principal #3	*"Puts pressure on the administration and this is a challenge for them."*

Cross Case Analysis

The previous within-case analyses described distributed leadership from the perceptions of principals, assistant principals, and teacher leaders from suburban schools for each research question. In addition, the responses of each case to the questions about distributed leadership and the challenges that existed when distributed leadership was practiced were analyzed. The researcher returned to the research questions, to take the broad view of the cases in comparison across each of the research questions.

Central research question. In what ways is leadership distributed in secondary schools to assistant principals and teacher leaders?

Sub questions.

1. In what ways does the principal perceive that he/she distributes leadership in the school?

   (Case #1)

2. In what ways do assistant principals perceive that leadership is distributed to them in the school? (Case #2)

3. In what ways do teacher leaders perceive that leadership is distributed to them in the school? (Case #3)

4. What benefits result when leadership is distributed?

5. What challenges exist when distributed leadership is practiced in the school?

The emerging themes from the three cases depict the practices of distributed leadership in schools and the challenges that exist. The themes varied between the cases.

Cross-case themes from research question 1-3: Distributed leadership in schools.

Research questions one, two, and three all deal with distributed leadership. In conducting the cross-case analysis, three common themes emerged from across the three different cases which described how principals, assistant principals, and teacher leaders perceive the practices of distributed leadership in schools. A summary of the cross-case common themes for research questions one, two, and three is presented in Table 16.

Table 16

Perceptions of principals, assistant principals, and teacher leaders on the practices of distributed leadership in schools

Cross-Case Themes	Research Question 1-3: Leaders who practice distributed leadership in schools…
Theme 1	Promote a broad vs. narrow perspective of leadership.
Theme 2	Foster a culture of interdependence vs. isolated decision making.
Theme 3	Intentionally Assign roles/Responsibilities Based on Strengths vs. Traditional Roles

Description of cross-case theme 1: Promote a broad perspective of leadership. All three groups perceived that leaders who promote a broad perspective of leadership practiced distributed leadership in the school. Principals promoted a broad perspective of leadership to assistant principals by

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distributing them roles that allow them to run a school within a school. The principals utilized assistant principals to develop leaders within the school at all levels. Principal #1 explained "It's not something I'm working on by myself, counselors; another administrator has a large hand of responsibility in it." The principals ascertained that they wanted to develop leadership at all levels.

One assistant principal had started out as the assistant principal over ninth grade. She was later promoted to handling the responsibilities that went along with being the tenth-grade administrator. During her years of tenure as an assistant principal she had the same principal. She described the comfortability of the extent to which her principal had promoted a broad perspective of leadership. Assistant Principal #1 stated: "Maybe it's me feeling more comfortable in the role as assistant principal, but I'm very comfortable to say to my principal, now this is something that I see needs attention and I'd like to give that attention to it." One of the assistant principals shed light on the principal taking him under his wings for about three years and taught him how to understand how he had built a master schedule. Another assistant principal elaborated on the principal promoting a broad perspective of leadership by distributing roles and spreading them out among assistant principals. Assistant Principal #3 stated "We split the responsibility that is shared. Our principal does it, and two other administrators to help with the load and sitting in on meetings." These assistant principals experienced their leader promoting a broad rather than narrow perspective of leadership among them.

All three of the teacher leaders perceived that they were distributed duties and responsibilities that promoted a broad perspective of leadership versus a narrow perspective. They shared their perceptions of how leadership had been distributed to them. Teacher Leader #1 had the following to say:

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I am the person who provides, who comes to the meeting with resources of materials that

I use in my classroom and I disseminate to the people in my department, like copies. Or

either I email websites or links to different things that I put in my Google classroom to

use to support the curriculum. My principal charged me with being the curriculum

specialist for my department and we meet weekly.

Table 17 illustrates the common theme 'Promotes a broad versus narrow perspective of

leadership.'

Table 17

Description of cross-case theme for research questions 1-3. Leader promotes a broad
perspective of leadership

Theme: Promotes a broad perspective of leadership	
Principals	*"He took me under his wing for about three years and taught me how to understand how he has built a schedule."*
Assistant Principals	*"We split the responsibility that is shared. Our principle does it, and two other administrators to help with the load and sitting in on meetings"*
Teacher Leaders	*"I am the person who provides, who come to the meeting with resources of materials that I use in my classroom and I disseminate to them, like copies. Or either I email websites or links to different things that I put in my Google classroom to use to support the curriculum. My principal charged me with being the curriculum specialist for my department and we meet weekly."*

Description of cross-case theme 2: Fosters a culture of interdependent vs. isolated

decision making by sharing influence with others. Eleven of the thirteen participants perceived

that fostering a culture of shared decision making was a way that distributed leadership was practiced in

schools. The principals of these large high schools all mentioned that they seek to foster a culture of

shared decision-making versus a fostering a culture of isolation. Principal #3 provided the following as an

example of principals and assistant principals fostering shared decision making in her school. She stated:

"Teachers, first of all, I do think they're professionals. I think they want to be treated as professionals.

That means giving them responsibility, having them make some decisions." Principals stated how they

share their leadership responsibilities with assistant principals and teacher leaders. They work with

leaders to promote and create a collaborative influence instead of having just one heroic leader.

Four of the assistant principals perceived that leaders fostered a culture of shared decision

making versus a culture of isolation. In this culture, they also created a culture where they shared

influence with others. The leaders split the responsibilities among assistant principals and

supported them with decision-making authority. Assistant Principal #3 shared how her principal

went about fostering shared-decision making. She stated: "All the different tasks that go into

running the school are divided amongst the different assistant principals." Leaders fostered a

culture of decision making by also allowing assistant principals the decision to share their

responsibilities with each other. Assistant Principal #5 stated: "We split the responsibility that is

shared. Our principal does it, and two other administrators to help with the load and sitting in on

meetings."

All three of the teacher leaders perceived that they were distributed duties and

responsibility that fosters a culture of shared decision-making by sharing influence with others

versus a fostering a culture of isolation. They shared their perceptions of how leadership had

been distributed to them in that regard. Teacher Leader #1 stated: "I design the curriculum. I

design the classes." Teacher Leader #2 stated: "The way that it works, sometimes in our small

group leadership, there may be an issue or concern that I have and then I'll bring it up to our

leader who then takes it back to the leadership. Teacher Leader #2 also added an example of

how they distribute leadership among themselves: "With that, we created ... The participants at

the training, we then got together and established various roles for each of them." Table 18

illustrates the common theme 'Leader Promotes a Broad vs. Narrow Perspective of Leadership.'

Table 18

Description of cross-case theme for research questions 1-3. Leader fosters a culture of shared decision making

Theme: Fosters a Culture of Shared Decision Making	
Principals	"Teachers, first of all, I do think they're professionals. I think they want to be treated as professionals. That means giving them responsibility, having them make some decisions."
Assistant Principals	"All the different tasks that go into running the school are divided amongst the different assistant principals." "We split the responsibility that is shared. Our principle does it, and two other administrators to help with the load and sitting in on meetings."
Teacher Leaders	"I design the curriculum. I design the classes." "With that, we created ... The participants at the training, we then got together and established various roles for each of them."

Description of cross-case theme 3: Intentionally assigns roles based on the strengths-based vs. traditional roles. Eight of the thirteen participants ascertained that leaders intentionally assign roles/responsibilities based on the strengths of others versus assigning roles traditionally.

All the principals acknowledged that some roles are delegated to specific leaders as determined by their experiences and level of skill with handling certain situations. Principals shared with the researcher that they intentionally assign some roles to assistant principals that are strengths based versus traditional assistant principal roles. Principal #1 acknowledged:

I look at people when I'm hiring them and during the interviewing process. I look at assistant principals who have previously worked with facilities or who have been a coach. I take prior skill and personal attributes into accounts when distributing responsibilities.

The principals established that they do take into account the personal attributes when assigning roles and responsibilities.

Assistant principals reported that the leaders intentionally assigned roles and responsibilities based on individual leader strengths. Assistant Principal #1 stated: "Our head

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principal establishes our responsibilities, generally according to our strengths and what his needs are." Assistant Principal #2 added:

> We're all tasked with other things like, in my case; I'm the operations person. I'm over the operations of the whole building. I work closely with the maintenance people to make sure things are taken care of. I was over operations at my other school and he knew that when he hired me.

Two of the teacher leaders perceived that they were intentionally distributed duties and responsibility based on their personal strengths versus traditional roles. They discussed how their principals or assistant principal intentionally assigned roles to them that were traditionally only distributed to administrators. Teacher Leader #1 who was the curriculum specialist for her department stated: "Yes. I solely prepare the information, the graphic organizers, and media, and everything that I'm going to use, I design the curriculum. I design the classes. My principal has entrusted me with those responsibilities." Table 19 summarizes the revealed theme: Intentionally assigns roles/responsibilities based on the strengths vs. traditional roles.

Table 19

Description of cross-case theme for research questions 1-3. Leader intentionally assigns roles based on the strengths vs. traditional roles

Theme: Intentionally assigns roles that are based on the strengths of individuals	
Principals	*"I look at people when I'm hiring them and during the interviewing process. I look at assistant principals who have previously worked with facilities or who have been a coach. I take prior skill and personal attributes into accounts when distributing responsibilities."*
Assistant Principals	*"Our head principal establishes our responsibilities, generally according to our strengths and what his needs are."* *"We're all tasked with other things like, in my case; I'm the operations person. I'm over the operations of the whole building. I work closely with the maintenance people to make sure things are taken care of. I was over operations at my other school and he knew that when he hired me."*
Teacher Leaders	*"Yes. I solely prepare the information, the graphic organizers, and media, and everything that I'm going to use, I design the curriculum. I design the classes. My principal has entrusted me with those responsibilities."*

Table 20 is a summary table which illustrates the revealed common cross-case themes for research questions one, two and three, relating to the ways that distributed leadership is practiced in schools from the principals' perspectives, assistant principals' perspectives, and teacher leaders' perspectives.

Table 20

Summary of cross-case themes for research questions 1-3: Principals,' assistant principals,' and teacher leaders' perceptions

Theme: Promotes a Broad Perspective of Leadership	
Principals	*"He took me under his wing for about three years and taught me how to understand how he has built a schedule."*
Assistant Principals	*"We split the responsibility that is shared. Our principle does it, and two other administrators to help with the load and sitting in on meetings."*
Teacher Leaders	*"I am the person who provides, who come to the meeting with resources of materials that I use in my classroom and I disseminate to them, like copies. Or either I email websites or links to different things that I put in my Google classroom to use to support the curriculum. My principal charged me with being the curriculum specialist for my department and we meet weekly."*
Theme: Foster a Culture of Shared Decision Making	
Principals	*"Teachers, first of all, I do think they're professionals. I think they want to be treated as professionals. That means giving them responsibility, having them make some decisions."*
Assistant Principals	*"We split the responsibility that is shared. Our principle does it, and two other administrators to help with the load and sitting in on meetings."*
Teacher Leaders	*"I design the curriculum. I design the classes."* *"With that, we created ... The participants at the training, we then got together and established various roles for each of them."*
Theme: Intentionally Assign Roles that are Based on the Strengths of Others	
Principals	"I look at people when I'm hiring them and during the interviewing process. I look at assistant principals who have previously worked with facilities or who have been a coach. I take prior skill and personal attributes into accounts when distributing responsibilities."
Assistant Principals	"Our head principal establishes our responsibilities, generally according to our strengths and what his needs are."
Teacher Leaders	"Yes. I solely prepare the information, the graphic organizers, and media, and everything that I'm going to use, I design the curriculum. I design the classes. My principal has entrusted me with those responsibilities."

Description of cross-case theme for research question 4: Benefits when leadership is distributed in schools. The researcher next utilized a cross-case analysis to describe the common revealed benefits when distributed leadership is practiced in the suburban high schools studied. The research question was as follows: What benefits result when leadership is distributed? Two common themes were revealed from across the three cases which describe the

benefits that surface when leadership is practiced in schools. The common themes are collective activities that promote cohesive environment and constant flow of communication and collaboration. Table 21 illustrates the cross-case theme for research question #4.

Table 21

Description of cross-case theme for research question #4: Benefits when leadership is distributed in schools

Cross-Case Themes	Research Question 4: Revealed benefits when leadership is distributed in schools…
Theme 1	Collective activities that promote cohesive environment
Theme 2	Constant flow of communication

Description of cross-case theme 1: collective activities that promote cohesive environment. Some of the assistant principals perceived that when leadership was enacted in school it promoted camaraderie where there is an Esprit de Corps versus an "every man for himself" mentality. Several of the assistant principals shed light on events at their schools in which all building personnel participated in physical/extra-curricular activities. Assistant Principal #2 stated: "We're going to look over the calendar, see what we're doing, try to have common ground and try to do some fun things together." Assistant Principal #3 shared the following about an informal activity that supports camaraderie: "We have Zumba class. We have boot camp. Me and the principals, we play tennis."

All of the teacher leaders interviewed perceived that stronger interpersonal relationships surfaced as a benefit when leadership was distributed in schools in both informal versus formal settings. Teacher Leader #1 shared a bonding activity via informal settings versus formal settings: "Minute to Win It, the teachers against other teachers. We do those types of bonding activities. We go out to do some type of activity." Teacher Leader #2 shared: "We go out and eat together.**"**

Description of cross-case theme 2: constant flow of communication and collaboration.
Four of the assistant principals and all the teacher leaders established that a constant flow of communication and collaboration were benefits that surfaced when leadership was distributed in schools. However, this was the only common theme across the three cases. Some of the assistant principals reported that one of the benefits was the constant flow of communication for collaboration that was proactive rather than reactive. Assistant Principal #1 stated the following that supported the constant flow of communication based on regularly scheduled professional development meetings: "That is definitely another way that we can meet the needs of our school in terms of technology professional development while also giving teachers the opportunity to become leaders and cultivating that skill." Assistant Principal #2 said: "Here, we overcome a lot of that just like all the grade level principals will sit down this summer and we will develop a common agenda for meeting with the faculty. We will have four separate faculty meetings."

The teacher leaders perceived that one of the benefits was the constant flow of communication and collaboration, as well. Teacher #1 shared an example of scheduled collaboration and what they do with that time: "As collaborative teams, we may take a day to leave the school. We have a professional development day where we may go out and grade common assessments." Teacher Leader #2 stated: "We meet monthly with PD's."

Table 22 illustrates the common cross-case themes for research question #4: Constant Flow of Communication and Collaboration, with illustrative comments on the benefits that were revealed when leadership was distributed in schools.

Table 22

Benefits when leadership is distributed in schools

Theme: Collective Activities that Promote Cohesive Environment	
Assistant Principals	"We're going to look over the calendar, see what we're doing, try to have common ground and try to do some fun things together." "We have zumba class. We have boot camp. Me and the principals, we play tennis."
Teacher Leaders	"Minute to Win It, the teachers against other teachers. We do those types of bonding activities. We go out to do some type of activity." "We go out and eat together.
Theme: Constant Flow of Communication and Collaboration	
Assistant Principals	"That is definitely another way that we can meet the needs of our school in terms of technology professional development while also giving teachers the opportunity to become leaders and cultivating that skill." "Here, we overcome a lot of that just like all the grade level principals will sit down this summer and we will develop a common agenda for meeting with the faculty. We will have four separate faculty meetings."
Teacher Leaders	"As collaborative teams, we may take a day to leave the school. We have a professional development day where we may go out and grade common assessments." "We meet monthly with PD's."

Description of cross-case theme for research question 5: Revealed common challenges when leadership is distributed in schools. The principals interviewed perceived that another challenge that existed when distributed leadership was practiced in school was: lack of buy-in/ownership from others for various reasons. Principal #1 stated:

> You have to have some ownership. Now, I can't ask you to have ownership unless I give you some ownership. I mean I've got to let you in the game. I've got to get you in there. But even after I give you the opportunity for ownership you have to buy-in to it.

Principal #2 stated: "I would say that if that ownership is not created, then those others do not fall in there, because the teachers really need to have that." And principal #3 stated:

We talk about buy-in a lot, and I think that can be a loose term that we really don't ever

get, but I really think in terms of creating this true distributive leadership that teachers

have to know that what they are telling you is valued.

Additionally, the teacher leaders ascertained that a lack of buy-in/ownership was a

challenge that existed when distributed leadership was practiced in schools. Teacher Leader #1

described the challenges that she experienced and stated:

Small amount of people who buy into things. Some people don't buy into it, to the

distributive leadership and they just want to be in their rooms, doing their own thing, and

you have to assess that because you really can't force people- People who are afraid of

change.

Teacher Leader #2 shared the extent of the problems that lack of buy-in/ownership

caused, saying: "Makes that team or group very ineffective." And Teacher Leader #3 concluded:

"Puts pressure on the administration and this is a challenge for them." Table 23 illustrates the

challenges that existed when distributed leadership was practiced in the school.

Table 23

*Description of cross-case theme for research question #5: Revealed common challenges when
leadership is distributed in schools*

Theme: Lack of Buy-In/Ownership	
Principals and Assistant Principals	*"We're going to look over the calendar, see what we're doing, try to have common ground and try to do some fun things together."* *"We have zumba class. We have boot camp. Me and the principals, we play tennis."*
Teacher Leaders	*"Minute to Win It, the teachers against other teachers. We do those types of bonding activities. We go out to do some type of activity."* *"We go out and eat together.*

Summary

Chapter 4 reported a detailed description of the findings for this study on the ways that distributed leadership is practiced in schools, from the perspectives of principals, assistant principals, and teacher leaders. The researcher provided rich-detailed descriptions and direct quotations were utilized to summarize the findings based on the perceptions of principals, assistant principals, and teacher leaders in three large suburban high schools in Alabama. Additionally, the researcher used school visits, face-to-face interviews and artifacts to provide a more accurate account of each case presented. Sub-questions were answered and illustrative quotes were provided to describe the "within-case" findings. A cross-case analysis of themes was presented to address the five research questions on the ways that leadership was distributed and the benefits and challenges that existed.

Chapter V: Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to understand the ways in which the theory of distributed leadership is translated into everyday practice in secondary schools through the roles and responsibilities senior principals distribute to assistant principals and teacher leaders, from each of their perspectives. The study examined the overall manner in which leadership was distributed and whether differences exist between group perceptions.

Problem Statement

There has been expanding research and literature about the role of the principal over the last 50 years. The primary professionals in the school with whom the principal tends to share leadership are the assistant principal(s) and the teachers. However, we know little about how leadership is distributed in secondary schools, both to assistant principals and teacher leaders. This study will contribute to the knowledge base in school leadership, and help leadership preparation programs know how to better prepare future school leaders for a shared leadership role. This study will bring to light the ways in which the theory of distributed leadership is translated into everyday practice in secondary schools.

Overview of the Study

The researcher sought to determine how distributed leadership was enacted in each school and to ascertain the benefits and challenges associated with the practice of distributed leadership. The central research question that guided this study was: In what ways is leadership distributed in secondary schools to assistant principals and teacher leaders? To assistant principals and teacher leaders? There were 5 sub questions:

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1. In ways does the principal perceive that he/she distributes leadership in school?

2. In what ways do assistant principals perceive that leadership is distributed to them in the school?

3. In what ways do teacher leaders perceive that leadership is distributed to them in the school?

4. What benefits result when leadership is distributed?

5. What challenges exist when distributed leadership is the practiced in the school?

The researcher utilized the qualitative research approach. Qualitative methodology was appropriate to use for this study because the researcher needed to recognize the practices of those principals who distributed leadership to people in formal and informal leadership positions.

This study was a multiple-case study conducted in three suburban high schools with three different groups (or cases) of individuals (principals, assistant principals, and teacher leaders) and the researcher investigated how these formal and informal leaders in the schools perceived their leadership roles and responsibilities. The researcher examined the individual phenomena by assessing the principal's distributed leadership practices, from the principal's perspective, the assistant principal's perspective, and teacher leader perspectives. The findings of this study were reported in Chapter 4. In Chapter 5, the following information will be included: a short review of the research on distributed leadership, the study's findings as reported by the cross-case themes for each research question, the interpretation of the findings, limitations, implications and recommendations, the overall significance, recommendations for future research, and the summary.

Background Literature Framing the Study

Distribute leadership is the concept that served as the foundation for this study. Many researchers reference distributed leadership when discussing leadership relating to school reform, organizational leadership, leadership theory, educational outcomes, and theory and practice. As stated by Menon (2015), "A review of the educational administration literature suggests that the concept of distributed leadership has been embraced with enthusiasm by educational researchers and scholars" (p. 2). For example, Diamond and Spillane (2007) explore how a distributed perspective is different from other frameworks for thinking about leadership in schools.

Spillane (2005) wrote, "The traditional notion of leadership is the vision of one person at the head of a group, directing, teaching, and encouraging others. This notion of 'heroic' leadership, however, is rapidly changing, and 'post-heroic,' also known as distributive leadership, is taking hold" (p. 143). To get a full glimpse of distributed leadership and the impact that it has on leadership practices at the secondary level, the roles and tasks of multiple leaders must be addressed along with investigating other terms that are sometimes used to denote a similar concept to distributed leadership.

Distributed leadership involves the principal sharing influence with team members who step forward when situations warrant, providing the leadership necessary, and then stepping back to allow others to lead. Such shared leadership has become more and more important in today's organizations to allow faster responses to more complex issues (Pearce, Manz, & Sims, 2009). Some propose that distributed leadership is an attitude rather than a management technique. "It means seeing all members of the faculty and staff as experts in their own right – as uniquely important sources of knowledge, experience, and wisdom" (University, 2013, p.1). As Spillane (2005) has denoted:

From a distributed perspective, leadership is a system of practice comprised of a

collection of interacting components: leaders, followers, and the situation. These

interacting components must be understood together because the system is more than the

sum of the component parts or practices. (p. 150)

Some roles are delegated to specific leaders as determined by their level of skill with handling

certain situations.

Principals utilizing a more extensive scope of leadership within the school tend to combat

a top down or hero/manager leadership style. "Distributed leadership acknowledges a broader

perspective of leadership activities than just the leadership of school principals. A distributed

perspective in school frames leadership practice as a product of interaction among leaders,

followers and the situations" (Salahuddin, 2010, p. 22). Administrative teams must assume

responsibilities in many different areas, which include the school principal relinquishing some of

his many duties or calling upon the expertise of others (Natsiopoulou & Giouroukakis, 2010).

Today, assistant principals assume an array of instructional as well as administrative duties as

distributed to them by the principal. Glanz (1994) gives an overview of some of the roles and

duties in Table 24. He expressed that, "the assistant principalship has changed very little in

practice since its inception" (Glanz, 1994, p. 285).

Table 24

Actual Duties of Assistant Principals: Degree of Importance

Rank	Duty	Rank	Duty
1	Staff development (in-service)	14	Instructional Media Services
2	Teacher Training	15	Counseling Pupils
3	Curriculum Development	16	Faculty Meetings
4	Evaluation of Teachers	17	Ordering Textbooks
5	Instructional Leadership	18	School Clubs etc.
6	Formulating Goals	19	Assisting PTA
7	Innovations and Research	20	Student Attendance
8	Parental Conferences	21	Student Discipline
9	Articulation	22	Lunch Duty
10	Courage	23	Public Relations
11	Emergency Arrangements	24	School Budgeting
12	Assemblies	25	Teacher Selection
13	Administrative Duties (paperwork)		

Coverage refers to scheduling substitute teachers.
Articulation refers to the administrative and logistical duties required to prepare students for graduation (e.g. preparing and sending cumulative records graduating fifth graders to middle school). Glanz, 1994, p. 285.

For this study, the researcher focused on the duties that are distributed to assistant principals. "Coupled with their unclear and challenging work demands, the roles of assistant principals must be understood within the changing policy context of public schools" (Barnett, Shoho, & Oleszewski, 2012, p. 7).

The researcher also focused on another approach that is associated with distributed leadership and that is the concept of teacher leadership (Hulpia, Devos, & Rosseel, 2009). Teacher leadership may be one important demonstration of distributed leadership as teachers are likely to be the individuals to whom leadership is distributed (Bush, 2015). Organizational benefits are recognized when the principal realizes the strengths of teacher leaders.

The literature highlighted above provided the backdrop for the study which was conducted for this dissertation. It helped frame the problem addressed in this research, which was the need to understand how principals distribute leadership, from multiple perspectives.

Research Design, Data Collection, and Data Analysis

To conduct this research, a multiple case study approach was employed. The three cases were principals, assistant principals, and teacher leaders, and all were interviewed to ascertain their perspectives on the practices of distributed leadership in schools. The researcher sent emails to principals of purposefully selected large suburban high schools requesting their participation in the study. The suburban schools were chosen so the researcher could investigate how the theory of distributed leadership was translated into everyday practice in secondary schools through the roles and responsibilities senior principals distributed to assistant principals and teacher leaders, from each of their perspectives.

A total of four principals were contacted, but only three principals accepted the invitation. Eight assistant principals received invitations, but only seven agreed to participate. Three teacher leaders were sent an invitation and each of them agreed to participate in the study. Interview protocols were created based on literature on the concept of distributed leadership and how the theory is translated into practice in secondary schools. Interviews were conducted in three suburban high schools. The interviews lasted approximately one hour and they were audio taped and professionally transcribed for accuracy by Rev.com. The researcher visited each school and took field notes before interviewing the participants.

After conducting the interviews, the researcher transcribed the audiotapes precisely, and analyzed the data by utilizing a method called coding. This process included analyzing data for similarities of the information reported in the interview and compiling them into manageable segments (Schwandt, 2007). However, when conducting a cross case analysis, the researcher also looked for opposing views that were reported (Creswell, 2013; Stake, 2006). Themes were organized for the researcher to create a "conceptual schema" instead of having only a list of

themes (Schreier, 2012). The researcher analyzed themes within and across each case. In the final step, the researcher reviewed all transcripts to ensure that primary themes and patterns corroborated with the data obtained from the interviews. This was done to establish validity of the data. A total of thirteen participants were interviewed for this study.

The researcher interviewed individuals in each case (the cases being principals, assistant principals, and teacher leaders). The researcher identified themes for each case to answer each sub-question. Finally, a cross-case analysis was conducted to compare the themes across all three cases and to note the common ones. The findings will now be discussed.

Discussion of Findings

In this section, the findings from the central question and sub questions will be discussed. The central research question for this study was: In what ways is leadership distributed in secondary schools to assistant principals and teacher leaders?

Sub-questions.

1. In what ways does the principal perceive that he/she distributes leadership in the school?

2. In what ways do assistant principals perceive that leadership is distributed to them in the school?

3. In what ways do teacher leaders perceive that leadership is distributed to them in the school?

4. What benefits result when leadership is distributed?

5. What challenges exist when distributed leadership is practiced in the school?

The findings which address the central research question are chiefly gleaned from sub-questions one through three, in which the perceptions of the ways distributed leadership is practiced in schools are gathered from principals, assistant principals, and the teacher leaders

themselves. Therefore, the findings of the first three sub-questions across the three cases will be discussed first. The last two sub-questions were created to delve deeper into factors that benefit or challenge the practices of distributed leadership in school. Sub-questions four and five will be discussed separately, again across the three cases. Any similarities and differences that were found will be noted.

Principals,' Assistant Principals,' and Teacher Leaders' Perceptions of the Practices of Distributed Leadership in Schools

The sub-questions (one through three) were similar, inquiring of the perceptions of each of the "cases" (principals, assistant principals, and teacher leaders) about the practices of distributed leadership in their schools. Therefore, the cross-case findings for these three questions were addressed as a unit. The analysis from the findings from the sub-questions 1–3 combined, answering "In what ways is leadership distributed in secondary schools to assistant principals and teacher leaders?" resulted in the following cross-case themes: promotes a broad versus narrow perspective of leadership, fosters an interdependent versus isolated culture of decision making, and intentionally assign roles from strengths-based versus traditional roles.

Leaders who practiced distributed leadership in schools promoted a broad perspective of leadership. Participants in this study stated that leaders who promote a broad perspective of leadership practiced distributed leadership in the school in different ways including: utilizing assistant principals to develop leaders within the school at all levels, distributing roles and spreading them out among assistant principals and curriculum specialists. Such shared leadership has become more and more important in today's organizations to allow faster responses to more complex issues (Pearce, Manz, & Sims, 2009). One assistant principal elaborated on the principal promoting a broad perspective of leadership. Principal #1 explained: "It's not something I'm working on by myself. Counselors, another administrator have a large hand of responsibility in it." Assistant principal #3 stated:

"We split the responsibility that is shared. Our principal does it, and two other administrators to help with the load and sitting in on meetings." These assistant principals experienced their leader promoting a broad rather than narrow perspective of leadership among them.

All three of the teacher leaders perceived that they were distributed duties and responsibilities that promoted a broad perspective of leadership versus a narrow perspective. They shared their perceptions of how leadership had been distributed to them. Teacher Leader #1 had the following to say: "My principal charged me with being the curriculum specialist for my department and we meet weekly." This aligns with what Kelly (2010) found: if principals are to apply a practice of distributed leadership, then they should know their building constituents and the skill set of those individuals. The findings of this study confirm that a common value that leaders (both principals and assistant principals) who distribute leadership hold is that they believe it is important to have a broad versus narrow perspective of leadership. This means that leadership is shared broadly with others, not held in one formal position (i.e., the principal).

Leaders who practiced distributed leadership in schools fostered a culture of interdependence versus a culture of isolated decision making. Participants in this study stated that leaders who practice distributed leadership foster a culture of interdependent versus isolated decision making in different ways including: giving assistant principals responsibility to make decisions, assigning them different tasks that are necessary for running the school, letting others make decisions, including teachers, and empowering others. Principal #3 provided the following as an example of principals and assistant principals fostering shared decision making in her school. She stated: "Teachers, first of all, I do think they're professionals. I think they want to be treated as professionals. That means giving them responsibility, having them make some decisions." Assistant Principal ##3 shared how her principal went about fostering shared-decision making. She stated: "All the different tasks that go into running the school are divided amongst the different assistant principals." Additionally, Teacher Leader #1 stated: "I design the curriculum. I design the classes." This is consistent with findings from other researchers, who

state that administrative teams must assume responsibilities in many different areas, which include the school principal relinquishing some of his many duties or calling upon the expertise of others (Natsiopoulou & Giouroukakis, 2010). Principals stated how they share their leadership responsibilities with assistant principals and teacher leaders. They work with others to promote and create a collaborative culture instead of one where there is a single heroic leader.

Leaders who practiced distributed leadership in schools intentionally assigned roles/responsibilities based on strengths versus traditional roles. Participants in this study stated that leaders who practiced distributed leadership by intentionally assigning roles/responsibilities based on the strengths of others versus assigning roles traditionally did so in the following ways: took prior skills and personal attributes into account when distributing responsibilities, established responsibilities, generally according to individual strengths and what the principal's needs are, and empowered teachers in areas of designing curriculum. All the principals acknowledged that some roles are delegated to specific leaders as determined by their experiences and level of skill with handling certain situations. Principals shared with the researcher that they intentionally assign some roles to assistant principals that are strengths based versus traditional assistant principal roles. Principal #1 acknowledged:

I look at people when I'm hiring them and during the interviewing process. I look at assistant principals who have previously worked with facilities or who have been a coach. I take prior skill and personal attributes into account when distributing responsibilities.

This type of practice aligns with the research of scholars who ascertain that "The principal needs to know the talents, skills and knowledge that the assistant principal possesses and utilize those skills and knowledge in a meaningful manner to help improve the quality of the school" (Hilliard & Newsome, 2013, p. 154). Assistant principals reported that the leaders intentionally assigned roles and responsibilities based on individual strengths. Assistant Principal

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#1 stated: "Our head principal establishes our responsibilities, generally according to our strengths and what his needs are." Two of the teacher leaders perceived that they were intentionally distributed duties and responsibility based on their personal strengths versus traditional roles. They discussed how their principal or assistant principal intentionally assigned roles to them that were traditionally only performed by administrators. Teacher Leader #1 who was the curriculum specialist for her department stated: "Yes. I solely prepare the information, the graphic organizers, and media, and everything that I'm going to use, I design the curriculum. I design the classes. My principal has entrusted me with those responsibilities." Teacher leadership may be seen as one important demonstration of distributed leadership as teachers are likely to be the individuals to whom leadership is distributed (Bush, 2015). The findings of this study confirm that leaders who intentionally assign roles/responsibilities based on the strengths of others versus assigning roles traditionally were practicing distributed leadership in the school. Table 25 illustrates the themes that were consistent across all cases in answering the question, "What are the perceptions of how principals distribute leadership in a high school?"

Table 25

Summary of cross-case themes for research questions 1-3: Principals,' assistant principals,' and teacher leaders' perceptions

Theme: Leader Promotes a Broad versus a Narrow Perspective of Leadership	
Principals	*"He took me under his wing for about three years and taught me how to understand how he has built a schedule."*
Assistant Principals	*"We split the responsibility that is shared. Our principle does it, and two other administrators to help with the load and sitting in on meetings"*
Teacher Leaders	*"I am the person who provides, who come to the meeting with resources of materials that I use in my classroom and I disseminate to them, like copies. Or either I email websites or links to different things that I put in my Google classroom to use to support the curriculum. My principal charged me with being the curriculum specialist for my department and we meet weekly."*
Theme: Leaders Foster a Culture of Interdependent versus Isolated Decision Making	
Principals	"Teachers, first of all, I do think they're professionals. I think they want to be treated as professionals. That means giving them responsibility, having them make some decisions." "All the different tasks that go into running the school are divided amongst the different assistant principals"
Assistant Principals	"We split the responsibility that is shared. Our principle does it, and two other administrators to help with the load and sitting in on meetings"
Teacher Leaders	"I design the curriculum. I design the classes." "With that, we created ... The participants at the training, we then got together and established various roles for each of them."
Theme: Leaders Intentionally Assign Roles/Responsibilities Based on the Strengths Versus Traditional Roles	
Principals	"I look at people when I'm hiring them and during the interviewing process. I look at assistant principals who have previously worked with facilities or who have been a coach. I take prior skill and personal attributes into accounts when distributing responsibilities." "Our head principal establishes our responsibilities, generally according to our strengths and what his needs are."
Assistant Principals	We're all tasked with other things like, in my case; I'm the operations person. I'm over the operations of the whole building. I work closely with the maintenance people to make sure things are taken care of. I was over operations at my other school and he knew that when he hired me."
Teacher Leaders	"Yes. I solely prepare the information, the graphic organizers, and media, and everything that I'm going to use, I design the curriculum. I design the classes. My principal has entrusted me with those responsibilities."

Principals', Assistant Principals', and Teacher Leaders' Perceptions of the Benefits of Distributed Leadership in Schools

The fourth research sub-question was: What benefits result when leadership is distributed? Two themes emerged from this cross-case analysis. The findings revealed that when leadership is distributed in schools, collective activities that promote a cohesive environment take place and there is a coordinated flow of communication.

Collective activities that promoted a cohesive environment. The principals and assistant principals shed light on events at their schools in which all building personnel participated in physical/extra-curricular activities. Assistant Principal #2 stated: "We're going to look over the calendar, see what we're doing, try to have common ground and try to do some fun things together." Assistant Principal #3 shared the following about an informal activity that supports camaraderie: "We have zumba class. We have boot camp. Me and the principals, we play tennis." Teacher leaders also provided examples of collective activities at their schools. Teacher #1 shared an example of scheduled collaboration and what they do with that time: "As collaborative teams, we may take a day to leave the school. We have a professional development day where we may go out and grade common assessments." In the research literature, Devos, Tuytens, and Hulpia (2013) attest that "leadership in schools is no longer solely performed by the school principal; instead leadership is an aggregated function, and other [teacher leaders] of the leadership team with formally designated leadership roles take part in leading the school" (p. 212). In light of Alabama Instructional Leader (2005) Standard 2, assistant principals are responsible for ensuring that decisions about curriculum, instructional strategies (including instructional technology), assessment, and professional development for teachers are based on comprehensive research, best practices, school and district statistics, and other relative

information and that reflection and collaboration are used to design significant and applicable experiences that improve student achievement.

Constant Flow of Communication and Collaboration. The findings of this study also revealed that a constant flow of communication and collaboration was a benefit that surfaced when leadership was distributed in schools. Some of the assistant principals reported that one of the benefits was the constant flow of communication for collaboration that was proactive rather than reactive. Assistant Principal #1 stated the following that supported the constant flow of communication based on regularly scheduled professional development meetings: "That is definitely another way that we can meet the needs of our school in terms of technology professional development while also giving teachers the opportunity to become leaders and cultivating that skill." Assistant Principal #2 said: "Here, we overcome a lot of that just like all the grade level principals will sit down this summer and we will develop a common agenda for meeting with the faculty. We will have four separate faculty meetings."

According to Hilliard and Newsome (2013), favorable outcomes would be demonstrated for the learning organization if the designated leader, mainly the principal, sustained communication strategies akin to those of a transformational leader in distributing leadership. Teacher #1 shared an example of scheduled collaboration and what they do with that time: "As collaborative teams, we may take a day to leave the school. We have a professional development day where we may go out and grade common assessments." Teacher Leader #2 stated: "We meet monthly with PD's." When leadership is shared, or distributed between principals, assistant principals, and teachers for the purpose of building capacity, a stronger more stable educational structure is established. "The complex demands of the principal and the pictured image of him or her carrying the school on their shoulders all alone to improve a school come in part from

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orthodox coherent organizational frames" (Grubb & Flessa, 2006, p. 520). Table 26 illustrates

the benefits when leadership is distributed in schools.

Table 26

Summary of cross-case themes for research question #4: Benefits when leadership is distributed in schools

Theme: Collective Activities that Promote Cohesive Environment	
Assistant Principals	"We're going to look over the calendar, see what we're doing, try to have common ground and try to do some fun things together." "We have Zumba class. We have boot camp. Me and the principals, we play tennis."
Teacher Leaders	"Minute to Win It, the teachers against other teachers. We do those types of bonding activities. We go out to do some type of activity." "We go out and eat together.
Theme: Constant Flow of Communication and Collaboration	
Assistant Principals	"That is definitely another way that we can meet the needs of our school in terms of technology professional development while also giving teachers the opportunity to become leaders and cultivating that skill." "Here, we overcome a lot of that just like all the grade level principals will sit down this summer and we will develop a common agenda for meeting with the faculty. We will have four separate faculty meetings."
Teacher Leaders	"As collaborative teams, we may take a day to leave the school. We have a professional development day where we may go out and grade common assessments." "We meet monthly with PD's."

Principals', Assistant Principals,' and Teacher Leaders Perceptions of the Common

Challenges of Distributed Leadership Practiced in Schools

The fifth sub-question of this study was: "What challenges exist when distributed

leadership is practiced in the school?" The principals and teacher leaders ascertained that a lack

of buy-in/ownership was a challenge that existed when distributed leadership was practiced in

schools. This was the only common theme across all three cases.

Lack of ownership/buy-in was a challenge. The one theme that emerged was that there

is sometimes a lack of buy-in/ownership when the concept of distributed leadership is practiced

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in school. The principals, assistant principals, and teacher leaders had the same perception relating to the challenges that are sometimes present. Principal #1 from Respect High School stated:

You have to have some ownership. Now, I can't ask you to have ownership unless I give you some ownership. I mean I've got to let you in the game. I've got to get you in there. But even after I give you the opportunity for ownership you have to buy-in to it.

Principal #1 had a military background and was accustomed to a command structure where constituents bought into the structure and worked together for a common cause. Principal #2 from Perseverance High School stated: "I would say that if that ownership is not created, then those others do not fall in there, because the teachers really need to have that." And Principal #3 from Respect High School stated:

We talk about buy-in a lot, and I think that can be a loose term that we really don't ever get, but I really think in terms of creating this true distributive leadership that teachers have to know that what they are telling you is valued.

This principal was a decisive and prized leader in her district who had trained and mentored assistant principals who later became principals. She had also trained and mentored teachers who later moved into the role of administrative assistant and or assistant principals. The principal of Respect High School was adamant when stating that without buy-in, true distributed leadership cannot be practiced in schools. The importance of buy-in for distributed leadership is supported in the literature. According to the Silkwood School Management Structure, change is most likely to be effective and lasting when those who implement it feel a sense of ownership and responsibility for the process. (Silkwood School Management Structure, 2015)

It should be mentioned that the teachers all noted that another challenge when leadership is distributed is the danger of there being an appearance that the principal/ assistant principal are playing favorites when selecting teachers for leadership. They observed that often the same teachers are chosen for multiple leadership roles. The principals and assistant principals did not mention this as a challenge, so it was not a common theme across cases. The researcher feels it is important to note this outlier, however. Table 27 illustrates the Revealed Common Challenges when Leadership is Distributed in Schools.

Table 27

Cross-case analysis for sub question #5: Revealed common challenges when leadership is distributed in schools

Theme: Lack of Buy-In/Ownership	
Principals	"You have to have some ownership. Now, I can't ask you to have ownership unless I give you some ownership. I mean I've got to let you in the game. I've got to get you in there. But even after I give you the opportunity for ownership you have to buy-in to it." "I would say that if that ownership is not created, then those others do not fall in there, because the teachers really need to have that." "We talk about buy-in a lot, and I think that can be a loose term that we really don't ever get, but I really think in terms of creating this true distributive leadership that teachers have to know that what they are telling you is valued."
Teacher Leaders	"Small amount of people who buy into things. Some people don't buy into it, to the distributive leadership and they just want to be in their rooms, doing their own thing, and you have to assess that because you really can't force people- People who are afraid of change." "Makes that team or group very ineffective." "Puts pressure on the administration and this is a challenge for them." Table 11 summarizes the perceptions of the challenges that teacher leaders experience when distributed leadership is practiced in the school.

Interpretations of Findings

The researcher began conducting this study with first-hand knowledge of the roles of principals, assistant principals, and teacher leaders because she has had the opportunity to serve

as a high school assistant principal for almost three years. There is a thin body of research that has been reported on distributed leadership in large high schools; therefore, the researcher was interested in learning how principals, assistant principals, and teacher leaders perceived the practices of distributed leadership in three large suburban high schools. She could relate to how the participants felt when they discussed the practices, benefits, and challenges because she has either experienced them personally, and/or the research literature supported the findings.

The researcher believes that principals, assistant principals, and teacher leaders play a vital role in translating the theory of distributed leadership into practice. However, she was also cognizant that principals, assistant principals, and teacher leaders were more successful under certain conditions, which included the following: leaders promoting a broad perspective of leadership versus narrow perspective, leaders fostering a culture of interdependence versus isolated decision making, and leaders intentionally assigning roles based on the strengths of others versus assigning roles traditionally, leaders orchestrating collective activities for a cohesive environment and leaders coordinating a constant flow of communication. The findings of this study of principals,' assistant principals,' and teachers leaders' perceptions of the practices and the benefits and challenges of the distributed leadership theory confirmed her beliefs and assumptions in a clear and strong manner.

The researcher reflected throughout the study to gain an in-depth understanding of the concept of distributed leadership and how it translated into practice in suburban schools, and what factors enhanced or impeded its success. One of the "a-ha" moments was that it appeared that very few of the participants were familiar with the formal theory and/or concept of distributed leadership. Although the principals practice this type of leadership, participants had not identified their practices with the concept or term of distributed leadership. Spillane (2005)

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explained that the term distributed leadership often is used interchangeably with 'shared leadership,' 'team leadership,' and 'democratic leadership.' Some use distributed leadership to indicate that school leadership involves multiple leaders; others argue that leadership is an organizational quality, rather than an individual attribute. Still others use distributed leadership to define a way of thinking about the practice of school leadership.

Considering the purpose of the study, the researcher was amazed to learn the breadth of the roles of assistant principals in such large high schools. The principal of Respect High School considered grade level administrators to be the principals for each entire grade level. The Principal of Perseverance High School noted that assistant principals run a school within a school. These principals all knew that sharing leadership ultimately made their jobs easier, so they were willing to relinquish control of everything. This type of distribution of leadership is contrary to the findings of Wright (2008) in her literature on the limitations of distributed leadership. Wright (2008) reported that, "Subsequently, principals can be barriers to distributing leadership by: (a) holding tightly to power and control, (b) refraining from nurturing alternate leaders, and (c) choosing to involve only those who support their agenda" (p. 1). The principal of Respect High School conveyed that when he distributes leadership to assistant principals, it takes some of the burden off of him. It is then that he is allowed and enabled to connect with the community outside of the school.

The researcher had another "a-ha" moment when she interviewed the principal at Nobility High School. She learned that teacher leaders had been distributed the responsibility of being curriculum specialists. The principal made the researcher aware the he had done away with department heads and had implemented the roles of curriculum specialist and technology specialist in his school. Each academic department had their own curriculum and technology

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specialist. He sustained a constant flow of communication with these individuals by meeting with them weekly. This principal did not consider himself to be an instructional leader but instead a manager. He trusted his teachers to be the instructional experts.

It appeared that the principal of Nobility High School had understood the concept of teacher leadership (Hulpia, Devos, & Rosseel, 2009). Teacher leadership may be seen as one important demonstration of distributed leadership; teachers are likely to be the individuals to whom leadership is distributed (Bush, 2015). Organizational benefits are recognized when the principal realizes the strengths of teacher leaders. Teachers taking on leadership roles in schools have certain competencies and their expertise is warranted for school success and is an organizational benefit. Moller and Pankake (2013) noted, "Teacher leaders are those teachers who look for resources to help them survive in the complex world of teaching, and credible teacher leaders often become those resources. Within schools, there may be a silent acknowledgement that these teachers know how best to work with students" (pp. 25-26).

To summarize, each of the principals in the study distributed and shared leadership with their assistant principals as well as with teacher leaders. Each principal had his or her particular way of doing that, but in each case, it was an organized, planned, and structured approach. Roles were clear, and communication was continual. In addition, in all cases, there was a recognition of the importance of spending time together informally, outside of school, and inside of school participating in fun and relaxing activities that promoted bonding. What the researcher observed were three thriving school cultures because of the effective practices of distributed leadership enacted in these schools.

Returning to the Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study was distributed leadership. There are benefits and challenges associated with the practices of distributed leadership. Originally, the researcher was expecting to discover the following issues pertaining to the enactment of distributed leadership in schools, based on the literature: maintaining the norms of school culture, playing the role of mediator, encountering the fundamental dilemmas of the school system, job satisfaction, discharging responsibilities effectively, finding time for professional development, personal achievement in their jobs, and school policies and practices (Yu-kwong & Walker, 2010).

Although none of the previously listed issues were confirmed as issues or barriers through investigation of the practices of distributed leadership in the three suburban high schools, the researcher did observe other challenges through interviews. Although some of them did not appear in cross-case themes, they were perceived by some of the principals, assistant principals and teacher leaders in their schools. Principals stated that obstacles sometimes existed in developing and mentoring others. Assistant principals stated that there were sometimes limiting aspects to distributed leadership. The limiting aspects included: more than one assistant principal could be working on the same discipline case, not enough time to get out into the classrooms, paperwork, staff members withdraw into their rooms, and limited opportunities for career growth. Teacher leaders experienced the following challenges that did not appear in the cross-case themes. The challenges included: teachers viewing the concept of distributed leadership as a popularity contest and that distributed leadership practices sometimes made the team ineffective.

The revised framework created in Figure 8 provides a visual representation of the findings from this study which align with the research literature. The benefits and challenges to the practice of distributed leadership in schools are indicated by their headings. The characteristics that emerged in the cross-case analysis of this study are also listed in the figured along with the newly emerged benefits and challenges of the concept of distributed leadership.

Characteristics of Distriuted Leadership

- Principal Sharing Influence (Pearce, Manz, & Sims, 2009)
- Acknowledges a broader perspective of leadership (Salahuddin, 2010)
- Teacher leadership (Hulpia, Devos, & Rosseel, 2009)
- Shared functions among individuals (Pankake, 2013)
- Non-traditional assistant principal (Jacobson & Cypress, 2012)
- Creating or Developing Teams (Quinn, 2008)
- Roles determined by level of skill (Salahuddin, 2010)
- Individual talents and experiences (Hilliard & Newsome, 2013)
- Instructional Leaders (Glanz, 1994, p. 286)
- Knowledgeable school leaders throughout the campus (Klar, 2012)
- Leaders foster an interdependent vs. an isolated culture of decision making (Holloway, 2017)
- Leaders intentionally assign roles that are based on the strengths of others (Holloway, 2017)
- Leaders promote a broad vs. narrow perspective of leadership (Holloway, 2017)

Benefits of Distributed Leadership

- Responsibilities that are reflective of individual leader strengths (Kelly, 2002)
- Hieghtened opportunities for the learning organization (Leithwood, Day, Sammons, Harris, & Hopkins, 2006)
- An aggregated function (Devos, Tuytens, & Hulpia (2013)
- Maintain the school culture (Yu-kwong & Walker, 2010)
- Collective Activities that Promote Cohesive Environment (Holloway, 2017)
- Constant Flow of Communication and Collaboration (Holloway, 2017)

Challenges of Distributed Leadership

- Challenging work demands (Barnett, Shoho, & Oleszewski, 2012)
- Clarity of roles and expectations (Barnett, Shoho, & Oleszewski, 2012)
- Lack of Buy-in/Ownership (Holloway, 2017)

Figure 8. Distributed Leadership Characteristics

Limitations of the Study

The researcher attempted to make contributions to an area of educational leadership that only has a thin body of research, that is, the practices of distributed leadership in secondary schools as perceived by principals, assistant principals, and teacher leaders. However, there were limitations to the study. The researcher only obtained perceptions of a select group of participants who agreed to participate in the study. Therefore, the data relating to this study cannot be used to generalize the perspectives of principals, assistant principals, and teacher leaders because it only represents the perceptions of the ones who participated in the interviews. The researcher only included three principals and seven assistant principals, and three teacher leaders in three suburban schools within two separate school districts. A much larger sample would be needed in replicating this study to make more sweeping generalizations on the concept of distributed leadership, beneficial factors, and challenges in secondary schools.

Implications and Recommendations for Practice

As the researcher analyzed the data from this study, several implications on how others could use this research came to mind. There are implications for the educational leadership field in general on how the theory of distributed leadership is translated into practice in secondary schools as perceived by senior principals, assistant principals, and teacher leaders. There are also implications for practicing and aspiring formal and informal school leaders on how and why leadership is distributed in secondary schools, and the benefits and challenges of sharing leadership.

Implications for Educational Leadership Literature

Educational literature on the theory of distributed leadership is minimal. It is important to locate valid information on the subject when performing research for educational leadership purposes. It is equally as important to be able to diversify the subject matter so that it is not

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confused with other leadership styles such as transformational or shared leadership. Is the term distributed leadership just 'new wine in old bottles?' This study shed light on school leaders in action who, though they did not seem to be aware that what they were doing was called distributed leadership, they did know that they were sharing leadership, and several of the leaders were trying to transform their schools through these practices.

Implications for Leadership Practice

There are implications of this research for practicing and aspiring formal and informal school leaders pertaining to how and why leadership is distributed in secondary schools, and the benefits and challenges of sharing leadership. In the last twenty years, distributed leadership has gained notoriety as a justifiable style of leadership. Gronn, in 2006, referred to this concept as the "new kid on the block" (p. 1). Historically speaking, the emergence of the theory is relatively new. This supports the researchers' position that there is a need for this study which will add information on the theory.

While interviewing, the researcher was provided with a response from a principal that emphasized the importance of the role the principal plays in obtaining buy-in for distributed leadership. The principal used a sports analogy to clarify or sharpen the meaning of the point that he was making. The point was that everyone can be a leader but will everyone be allowed or even given the opportunity to lead? In the literature review for this study, there was a snippet of information that showed that "network patterns of control" is a characteristic of distributed leadership. It could be assumed that "network patterns of control" is synonymous with "allowable opportunities for buy-in." Principals, assistant principals, and teacher leaders who read this dissertation will more fully understand that there are specific behaviors that leaders demonstrate, and attitudes they possess, that make the enactment of distributed leadership

possible in schools. They will more fully understand the rationale for distributing leadership, the

benefits that come from practicing it, and the potential challenges that accompany it. Raising

awareness and acquiring knowledge on these factors will help school leaders at all levels enact

the concept with greater confidence. School practitioners can utilize the Distributed Leadership

Characteristic Figure when looking for ways to distributed leadership in their schools.

Characteristics from the figure can also be used to help determine if the concept is being

evidenced among school leadership.

Overall Significance of the Study

The researcher in this study made visible some common characteristics of the way that

distributed leadership is enacted in three large suburban high schools. She also unearthed some

benefits and challenges which are associated with the theory and the practice of distributed

leadership in secondary schools. The principals, assistant principals, and teacher leaders in this

study perceived ways in which principals practiced distributed leadership. First, leaders

intentionally assign roles/responsibilities based on the strengths of others versus assigning roles

traditionally. Former research literature supports these findings. Secondly and thirdly,

principals orchestrate collective activities that promote a cohesive environment and there is a

coordinated flow of communication. These two factors were not specifically mentioned in the

research literature. Thus, this is new ground that was plowed, showing additional strategies for

principals enacting distributed leadership in schools.

When exploring the challenges of practicing distributed leadership, the finding of 'a lack

of buy-in or ownership' was a challenge that is already noted in research literature. The teacher

leaders' perceptions of the principal playing favorites as being a challenge was also a finding that

was new and can contribute to the literature. This, however was not a perception of the principals or assistant principals.

Recommendations for Further Research

The researcher shed light on the roles of practice of distributed leadership in high schools, as well as the beneficial factors and challenges that are encountered in translating the theory into practice in this multiple case study. The perspectives of principals, assistant principals, and teacher leaders were gathered in three suburban schools. Limitations of the study were acknowledged above, which infer that further research needs to be conducted. This research could be replicated and include many more high schools to see if the findings would be consistent with the findings in this study. This would help researchers identify whether the context of the school (number of assistant principals and teacher leaders of schools based on student enrollment, location, ethnicity of administrators, level of experience, and gender) was a major or minor influence over translation of the theory into practice.

It is suggested, therefore, that further research be conducted with suburban high schools of the same size or larger to gain deeper insight into the specific ways that leadership is distributed to whom and how. Another interesting study would be to survey the leaders of every 7A high school in this southeastern state to identify the various ways that leadership is being distributed and to whom. One additional interesting study suggestion would be to survey leaders to determine the number of principals who distribute leadership to people whom they view as friends, to test the teachers' assumptions that distributed leadership may look like "playing favorites." A final recommendation for further study would be to suggest fifteen tips to move your school toward distributed leadership based on the findings of this study.

Summary

The theory of distributed leadership is a relatively new concept; thus, it has been under-researched. It is important to understand distributed leadership because there is a need to acknowledge an even broader perspective of leadership. The principals, assistant principals, and teacher leaders are all key players in translating distributed leadership theory into practice.

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Appendix A

Auburn University Institutional Review Board (IRB) Approval

AUBURN UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD for RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS
RESEARCH PROTOCOL REVIEW FORM
FULL BOARD or EXPEDITED

For Information or help contact **THE OFFICE OF RESEARCH COMPLIANCE (ORC)**, 115 Ramsay Hall, Auburn University
Phone: 334-844-5966   e-mail: IRBAdmin@auburn.edu   **Web Address:** http://www.auburn.edu/research/vpr/ohs/index.htm

Revised 2.1.2014   Submit completed form to **IRBsubmit@auburn.edu** or 115 Ramsay Hall, Auburn University 36849.

Form must be populated using Adobe Acrobat / Pro 9 or greater standalone program (do not fill out in browser). Hand written forms will not be accepted.

1. PROPOSED START DATE of STUDY: February 15, 2016

PROPOSED REVIEW CATEGORY (Check one):   ☐ FULL BOARD   ☑ EXPEDITED

SUBMISSION STATUS (Check one):   ☐ NEW   ☐ REVISIONS (to address IRB Review Comments)

2. PROJECT TITLE: Understanding Distributed Leadership through the Perceptions of Principals, Assistant Principals and Teacher Leaders in Secondary Schools

3.

Mary Holloway	Student	EFLT/Education	myh0001@auburn.edu
PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR	**TITLE**	**DEPT**	**AU E-MAIL**
3539 Mary Taylor Rd Apt 1006A B'ham, AL 35235	(334)663-4389		mych123@me.com
MAILING ADDRESS	**PHONE**		**ALTERNATE E-MAIL**

4. FUNDING SUPPORT: ☑ N/A ☐ Internal ☐ External Agency: _____   ☐ Pending ☐ Received

For federal funding, list agency and grant number (if available). _____

5a. List any contractors, sub-contractors, other entities associated with this project:

None

b. List any other IRBs associated with this project (including Reviewed, Deferred, Determination, etc.):

None

PROTOCOL PACKET CHECKLIST

All protocols must include the following items:

☑ **Research Protocol Review Form** (All signatures included and all sections completed)
(Examples of appended documents are found on the OHSR website: http://www.auburn.edu/research/vpr/ohs/sample.htm)

☑ **CITI Training Certificates** for all Key Personnel.

☑ **Consent Form or Information Letter** and any Releases (audio, video or photo) that the participant will sign.

☑ **Appendix A**, "Reference List"

☑ **Appendix B** if e-mails, flyers, advertisements, generalized announcements or scripts, etc., are used to recruit participants.

☑ **Appendix C** if data collection sheets, surveys, tests, other recording instruments, interview scripts, etc. will be used for data collection. Be sure to attach them in the order in which they are listed in # 13c.

☐ **Appendix D** if you will be using a debriefing form or include emergency plans/procedures and medical referral lists
(A referral list may be attached to the consent document).

☑ **Appendix E** if research is being conducted at sites other than Auburn University or in cooperation with other entities. A **permission letter** from the site / program director must be included indicating their cooperation or involvement in the project. NOTE: If the proposed research is a multi-site project, involving investigators or participants at other academic institutions, hospitals or private research organizations, a letter of **IRB approval** from each entity is required prior to initiating the project.

☐ **Appendix F** - Written evidence of acceptance by the host country if research is conducted outside the United States.

FOR ORC OFFICE USE ONLY

DATE RECEIVED IN ORC: _____ by _____	PROTOCOL #	
DATE OF IRB REVIEW: _____ by _____	APPROVAL	
DATE OF IRB APPROVAL: _____ by _____	INTERVAL FO	
COMMENTS:		

The Auburn University Institutional Review Board has approved this Document for use from
3/18/16 to 3/17/17
Protocol # 16-078 EP 1603

GENERAL RESEARCH PROJECT CHARACTERISTICS

6A. Research Methodology

Please check all descriptors that best apply to the research methodology.

Data Source(s): ☑ New Data ☐ Existing Data

Will recorded data directly or indirectly identify participants?
☑ Yes ☐ No

Data collection will involve the use of:

Educational Tests (cognitive diagnostic, aptitude, etc.)
✓ Interview
✓ Observation
Location or Tracking Measures
Physical / Physiological Measures or Specimens (see Section 6E.)
Surveys / Questionnaires
Other: _____

Internet / Electronic
✓ Audio
Video
Photos
Digital images
Private records or files

6B. Participant Information	**6C. Risks to Participants**

6B. Participant Information

Please check all descriptors that apply to the target population.
☑ Males ☑ Females ☐ AU students

Vulnerable Populations
☐ Pregnant Women/Fetuses ☐ Prisoners ☐ Institutionalized
☐ Children and/or Adolescents (under age 19 in AL)

Persons with:
☐ Economic Disadvantages ☐ Physical Disabilities
☐ Educational Disadvantages ☐ Intellectual Disabilities

Do you plan to compensate your participants? ☐ Yes ☑ No

6C. Risks to Participants

Please identify all risks that participants might encounter in this research.

☑ Breach of Confidentiality* ☐ Coercion
☐ Deception ☐ Physical
☐ Psychological ☐ Social
☐ None
☐ Other:

*Note that if the investigator is using or accessing confidential or identifiable data, breach of confidentiality is always a risk.

6D. Corresponding Approval/Oversight

- Do you need IBC Approval for this study?
  ☐ Yes ☑ No

  If yes, BUA #_____ Expiration date _____

- Do you need IACUC Approval for this study?
  ☐ Yes ☑ No

  If yes, PRN #_____ Expiration date _____

- Does this study involve the Auburn University MRI Center?
  ☐ Yes ☑ No

  Which MRI(s) will be used for this project? (Check all that apply)
  ☐ 3T ☐ 7T

  Does any portion of this project require review by the MRI Safety Advisory Council?
  ☐ Yes ☑ No

  Signature of MRI Center Representative: _____
  Required for all projects involving the AU MRI Center

  Appropriate MRI Center Representatives:
  Dr. Thomas S. Denney, Director AU MRI Center
  Dr. Ron Beyers, MR Safety Officer

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7. **PROJECT ASSURANCES** Understanding Distributed Leadership through the Perceptions of Principals, Assistant Principals and Teacher Leaders in Secondary Schools

A. PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR'S ASSURANCES

1. I certify that all information provided in this application is complete and correct.
2. I understand that, as Principal Investigator, I have ultimate responsibility for the conduct of this study, the ethical performance this project, the protection of the rights and welfare of human subjects, and strict adherence to any stipulations imposed by the Auburn University IRB.
3. I certify that all individuals involved with the conduct of this project are qualified to carry out their specified roles and responsibilities and are in compliance with Auburn University policies regarding the collection and analysis of the research data.
4. I agree to comply with all Auburn policies and procedures, as well as with all applicable federal, state, and local laws regarding the protection of human subjects, including, but not limited to the following:
   a. Conducting the project by qualified personnel according to the approved protocol
   b. Implementing no changes in the approved protocol or consent form without prior approval from the Office of Research Compliance
   c. Obtaining the legally effective informed consent from each participant or their legally responsible representative prior to their participation in this project using only the currently approved, stamped consent form
   d. Promptly reporting significant adverse events and/or effects to the Office of Research Compliance in writing within 5 working days of the occurrence.
5. If I will be unavailable to direct this research personally, I will arrange for a co-investigator to assume direct responsibility in my absence. This person has been named as co-investigator in this application, or I will advise ORC, by letter, in advance of such arrangements.
6. I agree to conduct this study only during the period approved by the Auburn University IRB.
7. I will prepare and submit a renewal request and supply all supporting documents to the Office of Research Compliance before the approval period has expired if it is necessary to continue the research project beyond the time period approved by the Auburn University IRB.
8. I will prepare and submit a final report upon completion of this research project.

My signature indicates that I have read, understand and agree to conduct this research project in accordance with the assurances listed above.

Mary Holloway	Mary Holloway Digitally signed by Mary Holloway Date: 2015.12.12 19.00.36 -06'00'	
Printed name of Principal Investigator	**Principal Investigator's Signature**	**Date**

B. FACULTY ADVISOR/SPONSOR'S ASSURANCES

1. I have read the protocol submitted for this project for content, clarity, and methodology.
2. By my signature as faculty advisor/sponsor on this research application, I certify that the student or guest investigator is knowledgeable about the regulations and policies governing research with human subjects and has sufficient training and experience to conduct this particular study in accord with the approved protocol.
3. I agree to meet with the investigator on a regular basis to monitor study progress. Should problems arise during the course of the study, I agree to be available, personally, to supervise the investigator in solving them.
4. I assure that the investigator will promptly report significant incidents and/or adverse events and/or effects to the ORC in writing within 5 working days of the occurrence.
5. If I will be unavailable, I will arrange for an alternate faculty sponsor to assume responsibility during my absence, and I will advise the ORC by letter of such arrangements. If the investigator is unable to fulfill requirements for submission of renewals, modifications or the final report, I will assume that responsibility.

Linda Searby	Linda J. Searby Digitally signed by Linda J. Searby DN: cn=Linda J. Searby, o=Auburn University, ou=Auburn EFLT, email=ljs0007@auburn.edu, c=US Date: 2015.12.14 13.25.31 -06'00'	12/14/15
Printed name of Faculty Advisor / Sponsor	**Faculty Advisor's Signature**	**Date**

C. DEPARTMENT HEAD'S ASSSURANCE

By my signature as department head, I certify that I will cooperate with the administration in the application and enforcement of all Auburn University policies and procedures, as well as all applicable federal, state, and local laws regarding the protection and ethical treatment of human participants by researchers in my department.

Sheri Downer	Sherida Downer Digitally signed by Sherida Downer DN: cn=Sherida Downer, o=Auburn University, ou=EFLT Department, email=downesh@auburn.edu, c=US Date: 2015.12.15 12.46.09 -06'00'	12/15/2015
Printed name of Department Head	**Department Head's Signature**	**Date**

3

8. **PROJECT OVERVIEW: Prepare an abstract that includes:**
   (**350** *word maximum, in language understandable to someone who is not familiar with your area of study*):

   a) **A summary of relevant research findings leading to this research proposal:**
      (*Cite sources; include a "Reference List" as* **Appendix A.**)
   b) **A brief description of the methodology, including design, population, and variables of interest**

   A) The purpose of the study is to understand how the principal distributes leadership to assistant principals and teachers in high schools. This will be accomplished by interviewing principals, assistant principals, and teacher leaders, examining their assigned roles and responsibilities, and their perceptions of how leadership is distributed in their school setting. This study will be a multiple case study and evidence for this study derives from a purposeful sample of 5 principals and 10 assistant principals, 10 teacher leaders (consisting of one formal teacher and one informal teacher leader as designated by the principal) in 5 suburban schools within Alabama. The researcher will select the 5 high schools based on student population, location, number of assistant principals, diversity of administrators, and number of teachers. The high schools will range in size from 1,978 students to 579 students. Assistant principals and teacher leaders of diverse backgrounds will be sought to interview to provide a different lens to the study.

   B) I will use qualitative methodology that will consist of face to face interviews.

   I will request permission to interview principals, assistant principals, and teacher leaders was from system superintendents of the suburban school districts within the state. Once permission is granted to communicate with the principals, assistant principals and designated teacher leaders, I will begin discussion with the principal through electronic mail and/or telephone conversations to arrange for site visits. During the initial site visits more detailed information about the study will be provided to the principal. I will ask for permission to draw on multiple sources of information that will include interviews, observation of meetings, and written documents. I will interview principals and assistants with regard to their level of experience, formal leadership preparation, ethnicity, and gender. I will ask the senior principal to designate a formal teacher leader and an informal teacher leader. The study will be bound by time. The observations and interviews will occur during January - March 2016.

   I will explore the different perspectives of how leadership is distributed in selected secondary schools, and to whom. I will obtain this information from interviews in the five schools with 3 levels of leaders. I will assess the roles and responsibilities of assistant principals and teacher leaders in the high schools by conducting face-to-face interviews and asking for their perceptions of how they have assumed their leadership roles. I will ask all participants about their perceptions of the benefits and challenges of distributed leadership. I will collect data from multiple sources: school documents, interviewing principals, assistant principals and teacher leaders in their natural settings. Each interview will last for approximately 60 minutes.

9. **PURPOSE.**
   a. **Clearly state the purpose of this project and all research questions, or aims.**

   The purpose of the study is to understand the ways in which principals in secondary schools distribute leadership to assistant principals and teachers, from the perspectives of the senior principal, the assistant principal(s), and teacher leaders.
   Research Questions:
   Central Question
   In what ways is leadership distributed in secondary schools to assistant principals and teacher leaders?
   Sub Questions
   In what ways does the principal perceive that he/she distributes leadership in the school?
   In what ways do assistant principals perceive that leadership is distributed to them in the school?
   In what ways do teacher leaders perceive that leadership is distributed to them in the school?
   What benefits result when leadership is distributed?
   What challenges exist when distributed leadership is practiced in the school?

   b. **How will the results of this project be used? (e.g., Presentation? Publication? Thesis? Dissertation?)**

   The results of this study will be used for completion of a dissertation and for possible future publication.

4

10. **KEY PERSONNEL.** Describe responsibilities. Include information on research <u>training or certifications</u> related to this project. **CITI is required. Be as specific as possible.** (Include additional personnel in an attachment.) *All key personnel must* **attach** *CITI certificates of completion.*

Principle Investigator Mary Holloway_____ Title: Student E-mail address myh0001@auburn.edu

Dept / Affiliation: EFLT/Education

Roles / Responsibilities:
emailing potential participants, consenting participants, selecting participants to interview, analyzing collected data.

Individual: Linda Searby Title: Faculty Adviso E-mail address ljs0007@auburn.edu

Dept / Affiliation: EFLT/Education

Roles / Responsibilities:
Advising the principal investigator with emailing potential participants, interviewing leaders, and analyzing data.

Individual: _____ Title: _____ E-mail address _____

Dept / Affiliation: _____

Roles / Responsibilities:

Individual: _____ Title: _____ E-mail address _____

Dept / Affiliation: _____

Roles / Responsibilities:

Individual: _____ Title: _____ E-mail address _____

Dept / Affiliation: _____

Roles / Responsibilities:

Individual: _____ Title: _____ E-mail address _____

Dept / Affiliation: _____

Roles / Responsibilities:

11. **LOCATION OF RESEARCH. List all locations where data collection will take place.** (School systems, organizations, businesses, buildings and room numbers, servers for web surveys, etc.) **Be as specific as possible. Attach permission letters in** Appendix E.
(See sample letters at http://www.auburn.edu/research/vpr/ohs/sample.htm)

Data collection will take place at each school site through face to face interviews with the school principals, assistant principals, and teacher leaders.

12. PARTICIPANTS.

    a.   Describe the participant population you have chosen for this project including inclusion or exclusion criteria for participant selection.

        ☑   Check here if using existing data, describe the population from whom data was collected, & include the # of data files.

        The units of analysis for this study will be the principals, assistant principals, and teacher leaders as designated to by the school principals. Principals = 5, assistant principals = 5-10, formal teacher leaders = 5, informal teacher leaders = 5.

    b.   Describe, step-by-step, in layman's terms, all procedures you will use to recruit participants. *Include in* **Appendix B** *a copy of all e-mails, flyers, advertisements, recruiting scripts, invitations, etc., that will be used to invite people to participate. (See sample documents at http://www.auburn.edu/research/vpr/ohs/sample.htm.)*

        To initially identify participants, I will contact superintendents of each system, explain my study, and ask for his/her nomination of a high school principal who practices distributed leadership. I will ask this of another central office administrator as well to identify a doubly nominated principal. When that principal is identified then he/she will be sent an invitation via email describing the study. Participants will be sent an emai describing the study and asking them to particiapte.

    c.   What is the minimum number of participants you need to validate the study?   <u> 20 </u>

        How many participants do you expect to recruit?   <u> 20+ </u>

        Is there a limit on the number of participants you will include in the study?   ☐ No   ☑ Yes – the # is <u> 35 </u>

    d.   Describe the type, amount and method of compensation and/or incentives for participants.

        (If no compensation will be given, check here: ☑)

        Select the type of compensation: ☐ Monetary   ☐ Incentives

                        ☐ Raffle or Drawing incentive (Include the chances of winning.)
                        ☐ Extra Credit (State the value)
                        ☐ Other

        Description:

6

13. PROJECT DESIGN & METHODS.

    a.   Describe, _step-by-step_, all procedures and methods that will be used to <u>consent</u> participants. If a waiver is being requested, check each waiver you are requesting, describe how the project meets the criteria for the waiver.

        ☐ Waiver of Consent (including using existing data)

        ☑ Waiver of Documentation of Consent (use of Information Letter)

        ☐ Waiver of Parental Permission (for college students)

The email invitation will include the information letter, their rights as a participant, the confidentiality, and what will happen to the results of the study. If they choose to participate, the opening page will again describe their rights of participation and inform them that agreeing to be a participant indicates their understanding and consent. After the participants have given consent datesand times for interviews will be arranged. The principle investigator will use the email response documenting that they are interested in being considered to be selected for one of the interviews.

The interview will take place in a location that is convenient for the participant and will take no longer than one hour. The participant will receive and complete the Informed Consent document. The interview will be audio recorded for transcribing and member checking purposes. The transcription will be kept in a locked file box belonging to the researcher and will be deleted no later than January 1, 2017. The questions in the interview protocol are written in 8b of this document.

    b.   Describe the research design and methods you will use to address your purpose. Include a <u>clear description</u> of when, where and how you will collect all data for this project. Include specific information about the participants' time and effort commitment. (_NOTE: Use language that would be understandable to someone who is not familiar with your area of study. Without a complete description of all procedures, the Auburn University IRB will not be able to review this protocol. **If additional space is needed for this section, save the information as a .PDF file and insert after page 7 of this form.**_)

When the IRB is finalized, I will send out an email invitation to participants asking them to take part in the study on understanding how leadership is distributed by the principal to assistant principals and teacher leaders in high schools. The email invitation will include the Information Letter and and will ask the participant to consider participating in an hour-long face-to-face interview if they will be asked to give consent by sending an email to the principle investigator indicating that they would like to be considered to participate. The investigator will ask the principal to choose a convenient date and time to interview participants that will include assistant principals and one formal and one informal teacher leader.

The interview would be audio taped for transcription and member checking purposes. The participant would be asked to participate in member checking. Before the interview is held the participants would be given and asked to sign an Informed Consent document that describes their rights as a participant, the confidentiality, and what will happen to the results of the study.

13. **PROJECT DESIGN & METHODS.** *Continued*

    c.   List all data collection instruments used in this project, in the order they appear in Appendix C.
        (e.g., surveys and questionnaires **in the format that will be presented to participants**, educational tests, data collection sheets, interview questions, audio/video taping methods etc.)

       Interview Questions

    d.   Data analysis: Explain how the data will be analyzed.

       Interviews with participants will be audiotaped. Responses will be transcribed and quotes that are relative to the participant roles will be coded and then themed. Main themes will be sought that will add description to the distributed forms of leadership to assistants and teachers. A Within Case Analysis then a Cross Case Analysis will done to analyze the data. The researcher will rely on Bernard and Ryan (2010) methodology for guidance.

14. **RISKS & DISCOMFORTS: List and describe all of the risks that participants might encounter in this research.** *If you are using deception in this study, please justify the use of deception and be sure to attach a copy of the debriefing form you plan to use in* Appendix D. *(Examples of possible risks are in section #6D on page 2)*

       The participating principals may feel a risk of breach of confidentiality, since their interviewer will know their names. They may feel some emotional discomfort in answering the interview questions. However, their responses will be totally voluntary and they can refuse to answer or even participate. Their confidentiality will be insured through previously stated safeguards put in place by the researcher (use of pseudonyms of the principals and their schools, protected documents).

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15. **PRECAUTIONS.** Identify and describe all precautions you have taken to eliminate or reduce risks as listed in #14. If the participants can be classified as a "vulnerable" population, please describe additional safeguards that you will use to assure the ethical treatment of these individuals. ***Provide a copy of any emergency plans/procedures and medical referral lists in Appendix D.*** *(Samples can be found online at http://www.auburn.edu/research/vpr/ohs/sample.htm#precautions)*

The researcher will assign pseudonyms to principals and the schools who are interviewed.
The researcher will allow the participants to deny participation, to choose not to answer any questions, and also to withdraw from the research at any time.
All interview data will be kept in a locked file box.
The participants will be informed of this in the informed consent document.

If using the Internet or other electronic means to collect data, what confidentiality or security precautions are in place to protect (or not collect) identifiable data? Include protections used during both the collection and transfer of data.

No identifiable information will be collected through email UNLESS the participant agrees to possibly being interviewed via facetime, skype, or Scopia, in which case the participant will provide their connection addresses AND send an email to the researcher to contact them using this method. When transcriptions are done I will instruct the transcriptionist to designate speakers as "principal," "assistant principal 1," "assistant principal 2," "teacher 1," "teacher 2," etc.

16. **BENEFITS.**
    a. **List all realistic direct benefits participants can expect by participating in this specific study.**
       (Do not include "compensation" listed in #12d.)   Check here if there are no direct benefits to participants. ☐

    The participants will be given the results of their distributed leadership practices and their perception of the Distributed Leadership Theory if they request the information.

    b. **List all realistic benefits for the general population that may be generated from this study.**

    Knowledge of how a principal distributes leadership to assistant principals and teacher leaders and their perceptions of distributed leadership.

17. **PROTECTION OF DATA.**

    a.   Data are collected:

        ☐ Anonymously with no direct or indirect coding, link, or awareness of who participated in the study (Skip to e)

        ☐ Confidentially, but without a link of participant's data to any identifying information (collected as "confidential" but recorded and analyzed as "anonymous") (Skip to e)

        ☑ Confidentially with collection and protection of linkages to identifiable information

    b.   If data are collected with identifiers or as coded or linked to identifying information, describe the identifiers collected and how they are linked to the participant's data.

        There will be no mention of the identifiable information of the participant during the interview, which will be audio taped. Participants will be given pseudonyms when reporting information collected from the interview.

    c.   Justify your need to code participants' data or link the data with identifying information.

        none

    d.   Describe how and where identifying data and/or code lists will be stored. (Building, room number?) **Describe how the location where data is stored will be secured in your absence. For electronic data, describe security. If applicable, state specifically where any IRB-approved and participant-signed consent documents will be kept on campus for 3 years after the study ends.**

        Data collected will be kept in the investigator's home in a locked file box, with all information being destroyed by January 1, 2017.

    e.   Describe how and where the data will be stored (e.g., hard copy, audio cassette, electronic data, etc.), **and how the location where data is stored is separated from identifying data and will be secured in your absence. For electronic data, describe security**

        The results of the obtained data will be kept on a password protected computer that belongs to the investigator. The audio transcription will also be kept on the computer, but it will not have identifiable information. All information will be destroyed by January 1, 2017.

    f.   Who will have access to participants' data?
        (The faculty advisor should have full access and be able to produce the data in the case of a federal or institutional audit.)

        The investigator and faculty advisor. If the advisor receives the collected data she will store it on Auburn University's password protected G-Drive.

    g.   When is the latest date that identifying information or links will be retained and how will that information or links be destroyed?
        (Check here if only anonymous data will be retained ☐)

        The data transcription from audiotapings of interviews will be deleted by January 1, 2017.

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COLLABORATIVE INSTITUTIONAL TRAINING INITIATIVE (CITI PROGRAM)
COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS REPORT*

* NOTE: Scores on this Requirements Report reflect quiz completions at the time all requirements for the course were met. See list below for details.
See separate Transcript Report for more recent quiz scores, including those on optional (supplemental) course elements.

- **Name:** Mary Holloway (ID: 4666775)
- **Email:** myh0001@auburn.edu
- **Institution Affiliation:** Auburn University (ID: 964)
- **Institution Unit:** Education
- **Phone:** (334) 663-4389

- **Curriculum Group:** Institutional/Signatory Official: Human Subject Research
- **Course Learner Group:** Same as Curriculum Group
- **Stage:** Stage 1 - Basic Course

- **Report ID:** 15233173
- **Completion Date:** 12/09/2015
- **Expiration Date:** 12/08/2018
- **Minimum Passing:** 80
- **Reported Score*:** 85

REQUIRED AND ELECTIVE MODULES ONLY	DATE COMPLETED	SCORE
Introduction to Being an Institutional Official (IO) (ID: 16640)	12/07/15	4/5 (80%)
IO Knowledge Requirements: Human Subject Protections (ID: 16641)	12/09/15	4/5 (80%)
Expectations of the IO (ID: 16642)	12/09/15	4/5 (80%)
Challenges of Being an IO: Human Subject Protections (ID: 16643)	12/09/15	5/5 (100%)

For this Report to be valid, the learner identified above must have had a valid affiliation with the CITI Program subscribing institution identified above or have been a paid Independent Learner.

CITI Program
Email: citisupport@miami.edu
Phone: 305-243-7970
Web: https://www.citiprogram.org

COLLABORATIVE INSTITUTIONAL TRAINING INITIATIVE (CITI PROGRAM)
COURSEWORK TRANSCRIPT REPORT**

** NOTE: Scores on this Transcript Report reflect the most current quiz completions, including quizzes on optional (supplemental) elements of the course. See list below for details. See separate Requirements Report for the reported scores at the time all requirements for the course were met.

- **Name:** Mary Holloway (ID: 4666775)
- **Email:** myh0001@auburn.edu
- **Institution Affiliation:** Auburn University (ID: 964)
- **Institution Unit:** Education
- **Phone:** (334) 663-4389

- **Curriculum Group:** Institutional/Signatory Official: Human Subject Research
- **Course Learner Group:** Same as Curriculum Group
- **Stage:** Stage 1 - Basic Course

- **Report ID:** 15233173
- **Report Date:** 12/12/2015
- **Current Score**:** 85

REQUIRED, ELECTIVE, AND SUPPLEMENTAL MODULES	MOST RECENT	SCORE
Introduction to Being an Institutional Official (IO) (ID: 16640)	12/07/15	4/5 (80%)
IO Knowledge Requirements: Human Subject Protections (ID: 16641)	12/09/15	4/5 (80%)
Expectations of the IO (ID: 16642)	12/09/15	4/5 (80%)
Challenges of Being an IO: Human Subject Protections (ID: 16643)	12/09/15	5/5 (100%)

For this Report to be valid, the learner identified above must have had a valid affiliation with the CITI Program subscribing institution identified above or have been a paid Independent Learner.

CITI Program
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Phone: 305-243-7970
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CITI Program

Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative at the University of Miami

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- My Profiles
- My CEUs
- My Reports
- Support

- Main Menu › Previously Completed Coursework

NOTE: The My Reports section now provides access to course completion data for both your current active affiliations and for past affiliations that are no longer active.

Auburn University Reports

Course In The Protection Human Subjects

International Research - SBR

Stage	Completion Report #	Passing Score	Your Score	Start Date	Completion Date	Expiration Date	Completed Modules	Completion Report
Basic Course	15404745	80%	80%	02/25/2015	N/A	N/A		N/A

Research in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools - SBR

Stage	Completion Report #	Passing Score	Your Score	Start Date	Completion Date	Expiration Date	Completed Modules	Completion Report

Basic Course	15404746	80%	80%	02/25/2015	N/A	N/A		N/A

IRB # 2 Social and Behavioral Emphasis - AU Personnel (Blue) - Basic/Refresher

IRB # 2 Social and Behavioral Emphasis - AU Personnel (Blue) - Basic/Refresher

Stage	Completion Report #	Passing Score	Your Score	Start Date	Completion Date	Expiration Date	Completed Modules	Completion Report
Basic Course	10777321	80%	86%	06/25/2007	07/10/2013	07/10/2016		

University of Alabama, Birmingham Reports

Human Research

Group 2.Social Behavioral Research Investigators and Key Personnel

Stage	Completion Report #	Passing Score	Your Score	Start Date	Completion Date	Expiration Date	Completed Modules	Completion Report
Basic Course	1100387	80%	84%	06/25/2007	07/06/2007	07/06/2008		
Refresher Course	1722406	80%	100%	01/02/2009	01/02/2009	01/02/2010		
Refresher Course	3605626			Due Now	N/A	N/A		N/A

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AUBURN UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS, LEADERSHIP AND TECHNOLOGY

(NOTE: DO NOT AGREE TO PARTICIPATE UNLESS AN IRB APPROVAL STAMP WITH CURRENT DATES HAS BEEN APPLIED TO THIS DOCUMENT.

INFORMED CONSENT
for a Research Study entitled

**"*Understanding Distributed Leadership*
through the Perceptions of
Principals, Assistant Principals and Teacher Leaders in Secondary Schools "**

You are invited to participate in a research study to understand how principals distribute leadership to assistant principals and teacher leaders at the secondary school level. Distributed leadership involves the principal of the school sharing influence with team members who step forward when situations warrant, providing the leadership necessary, and then stepping back to allow others to lead. Such shared leadership has become more and more important in today's organizations to allow faster responses to more complex issues (Pearce, Manz, & Sims, 2009). The study is being conducted by Mary Holloway, graduate student, under the direction of Linda Searby, Associate Professor in the Auburn University Department of Educational Foundations, Leadership, and Technology. You are invited to participate because you are a principal of a high school and have assistant principals and teacher leaders whom you lead.

If you decide to participate in this research study, you will be asked to participate in a face-to-face interview to give insight on ways that leadership is distributed in secondary schools to assistant principals and teacher leaders. Your total time commitment will be approximately sixty minutes to complete the interview. The interview will be audio taped only for the purposes of transcribing and member checking. No name of participants or locations will be identified in the recordings. The audio recording will be kept in a locked file box of the researchers and will be deleted no later than January 1, 2017.

If you participate in this study, you will be expected to provide first hand knowledge to the scholarly research on how a principal distributes leadership to assistant principals and teacher leaders in high schools and their perceptions of distributed leadership. These are possible benefits of participating in the study, but are not guaranteed benefits. Results of the research findings will be provided to you as a participant upon request.

Participant's Initials _____

The risks associated with participating in this study are that the researcher will be able to associate your name with your email address when you respond as a participant. To minimize these risks, your response will be blinded and password protected, stored on a secure server and only accessed by Mary Holloway. No cost will be associated with your decision to participate in this study.

Any information obtained in connection with this study will be kept confidential and if any quotes are used from your responses in fulfillment of educational requirements publications or presentations reporting this research, they will be de-identified for the participant, your school, and your district with a pseudonym.

If you change your mind about participating, you can withdraw at any time by letting the researcher know that you no longer wish to participate. Your participation is completely voluntary. If you choose to withdraw, any data that you have provided can be withdrawn as long as it is identifiable by emailing me at MYH0001@auburn.edu. Your decision about whether to participate or to stop participating will jeopardize your relations with Auburn University, the College of Education, or the Department of Educational Foundations, Leadership, and Technology.

If you have questions about this study, please contact me at MYH0001@auburn.edu or my advisor, Dr. Linda Searby at LJS0007@auburn.edu. A copy of this document will be given to you to keep if you decide to participate in the interview.

If you have questions as a research participant, you may contact the Auburn University Office of Research Compliance of the Institutional Review Board by phone (334) 844-5966 or e-mail at IRBadmin@auburn.edu.

HAVING READ THE INFORMATION ABOVE, YOU MUST DECIDE IF YOU WANT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS RESEARCH PROJECT. IF YOU DECIDE TO PARTICIPATE, YOUR SIGNATURE BELOW INDICATES YOUR AGREEMENT TO DO BELOW. YOU WILL BE GIVEN A COPY OF THIS LETTER TO KEEP.

_____   _____
Participant Signature   Date   Investigator obtaining consent   Date

_____   _____
Printed Name   Printed Name

The Auburn University Institutional
Review Board has approved this
Document for use from
___3/18/16___ to ___3/17/17___
Protocol # ___16-078 EP 1603___

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APPENDIX A

REFERENCES

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Harris, A. (2012). Distributed leadership: Implications for the role of principal. Journal
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role of the assistant principal. (National Association of Secondary School
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Natsiopoulou, E., & Giouroukakis, V. (2010). When teachers run the school.
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Please allow me to introduce myself; I am a doctoral student and now in dissertation candidacy under the guidance of Dr. Linda Searby, Associate Professor in the Auburn University Department of Educational Foundations, Leadership, and Technology. The focus of my study is *"Understanding Distributed Leadership through the Perceptions of Principals, Assistant Principals and Teacher Leaders in Secondary Schools"*. I am currently in the process of seeking permission from school systems to interview principals, assistant principals, and teacher leaders of 7A and 6A high schools. In the event that principals decide to participate in this research study, they will be asked to take part in a face-to-face interview to give insight on ways that leadership is distributed in secondary schools to assistant principals and teacher leaders. Their total time commitment will be approximately sixty minutes to complete the interview. The interview will be audio taped only for the purposes of transcribing and member checking. No name of participants or locations will be identified in the recordings. The audio recording will be kept in a locked file box of the researchers and will be deleted no later than January 1, 2017.

I would appreciate it if you would grant permission for your high school principals to take part in this study. Once, I have gained your consent or that of your designee, I will then add that consent to my IRB Protocol and submit it. Once my IRB is approved, I'll email you back and then make contact with the principals to request an interview. Thank you in advance for your assistance and support with my study, *"Understanding Distributed Leadership through the Perceptions of Principals, Assistant Principals and Teacher Leaders in Secondary Schools"*. Please feel free to email me with any questions at: myh0001@tigermail.auburn.edu or Dr. Searby at ljs0007@auburn.edu.

Sincerely,

Mary Holloway
Doctoral Candidate 2016
Auburn University
Auburn, Alabama

APPENDIX C

PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Participant: _____

Location: _____

Date: _____

Time: _____

Introduction: Thank you for your willingness to participate in this interview. The purpose of this interview is to explore the different perspectives of how leadership is distributed in selected secondary schools, and to whom. Your participation is voluntary; therefore you may withdraw from the interview at any time. No identifiable information will be used to reveal your name, school, principal, teachers, or school district. If you do not understand the questions, please do not hesitate to ask for clarification. Additionally, please include examples and elaborate on each question. Your honesty is greatly appreciated.

Interview Questions:

1. In what ways do you think you distribute leadership to assistant principals and teacher leaders within your school? Why do you do this?

2. How do you determine which leadership roles you will share with assistant principals and teacher leaders?

3. To what extent do personal attributes determine roles and responsibilities of assistant principals and teacher leaders in the school? Can you give examples?

4. In what ways do you think that leadership is reflected as a collective activity among formal and informal leaders within your school? Can you give examples?

5. What are some of the challenges and benefits when the concept of distributed leadership is enacted in the school?

ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Participant: _____

Location: _____

Date: _____

Time: _____

Introduction: Thank you for your willingness to participate in this interview. The purpose of this

interview is to explore the different perspectives of how leadership is distributed in selected

secondary schools, and to whom. Your participation is voluntary; therefore you may withdraw

from the interview at any time. No identifiable information will be used to reveal your name,

school, principal, teachers, or school district. If you do not understand the questions, please do

not hesitate to ask for clarification. Additionally, please include examples and elaborate on each

question. Your honesty is greatly appreciated.

Interview Questions:

1. In what ways has leadership been distributed to you by your principal?

2. How do you determine which leadership roles you will share with assistant principals and teacher leaders?

3. To what extent do personal attributes determine roles and responsibilities of assistant principals and teacher leaders in the school? Can you give examples?

4. What ways do you think that leadership is reflected as a collective activity among formal and informal leaders within your school? Can you give examples?

5. What are some of the challenges and benefits when the concept of distributed leadership is enacted in the school?

TEACHER LEADER INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Participant: _____

Location: _____

Date: _____

Time: _____

Introduction: Thank you for your willingness to participate in this interview. The purpose of this interview is to explore the different perspectives of how leadership is distributed in selected secondary schools, and to whom. Your participation is voluntary; therefore you may withdraw from the interview at any time. No identifiable information will be used to reveal your name, school, principal, teachers, or school district. If you do not understand the questions, please do not hesitate to ask for clarification. Additionally, please include examples and elaborate on each question. Your honesty is greatly appreciated.

1. In what ways has leadership been distributed to you by your principal and/or assistant principal?

2. How do you determine which leadership roles you will share with other teachers? Can you give examples of roles that you have shared?

3. To what extent do personal attributes determine roles and responsibilities of teacher leaders in your school? Can you give examples?

4. In what ways do you think leadership is reflected as a collective activity among formal and informal leaders within your school? Can you give examples?

5. In what ways do you think distributed leadership is a benefit in your school? In what ways is distributed leadership a challenge to enact in your school?

APPENDIX E – Permission Letter

Re: Dissertation Support

Mary Holloway

Sun 1/24/2016 10:33 PM
To: Ron Dodson <rdodson@hoover.k12.al.us>;

Good evening Dr. Dodson and thank you so very much. I will email the principals of Hoover and Spain Park High schools and I will email you back to let you know the status of my plea for an interview from the principals.

Sincerely,

Mary Holloway

On Jan 18, 2016, at 2:06 PM, Ron Dodson <rdodson@hoover.k12.al.us> wrote:

Mary, thank you for following the research approval protocols for our district. I am the superintendent's designee for research participation approval, and I will grant permission for you to invite our high school principals to participate in your study. It will be their decision as to whether they choose to participate. Good luck with your study, and please say hello to Dr. Searby for me. You have a rock star professor in your corner.

Ron Dodson, Ph.D.
Assistant Superintendent of Instruction
Hoover City Schools
2810 Metropolitan Way
Hoover, AL 35243
(205) 439-1053
rdodson@hoover.k12.al.us

On Thu, Jan 14, 2016 at 9:33 PM, Mary Holloway <myh0001@tigermail.auburn.edu> wrote:
Good evening Dr. Dodson and how are you? Please allow me to introduce myself. I am a doctoral student and now in dissertation candidacy under the guidance of Dr. Linda Searby, Associate Professor in the Auburn University Department of Educational Foundations, Leadership, and Technology. The focus of my study is "*Understanding Distributed Leadership through the Perceptions of Principals, Assistant Principals and Teacher Leaders in Secondary Schools* ". I am currently in the process of seeking permission from school systems to interview principals, assistant principals, and teacher leaders of 7A and 6A high schools. In the event that principals decide to participate in this research study, they will be asked to take part in a face-to-face interview to give insight on ways that leadership is distributed in secondary schools to assistant principals and teacher leaders. Their total time commitment will be approximately sixty minutes to complete the interview. The interview will be audio taped only for the purposes of transcribing and member checking. No name of participants or locations will be identified in the recordings. The audio recording will be kept in a locked file box of the researchers and will be deleted no later than January 1, 2017.

Dr. Dodson, I would appreciate it if you would grant permission for your high school principals to take part in this study and me permission to make contact with the principals of Hoover and Spain Park High Schools. Once I have gained your consent or that of your superintendent, I will then add that consent to my IRB Protocol and submit it. Once my IRB is approved, I'll email you back and then make contact with the principals to request an interview. Dr. Dodson, thank you in advance for your assistance and support with my study, "*Understanding Distributed Leadership through the Perceptions of Principals, Assistant Principals and Teacher Leaders in Secondary Schools* ". Dr. Searby advised that I make contact with you straightway and let you know that I'm her student. Please feel free to email me with any questions at myh0001@tigermail.auburn.edu or Dr. Searby at ljs0007@auburn.edu.

Sincerely,

Mary Holloway
Doctoral Candidate 2016
Auburn University
Auburn, Alabama

Request to Proceed with a Professional Study

Shelby County Schools

Applicant's Name: Mary Chestnut Holloway

University Association: Auburn University – Department of Educational Foundations and Leadership

Date of Submission: 02/04/2016

_____X_____ 1. **IRB Approval**

- Must contain signature of approval

_____X_____ 2. **Abstract of Study, including Methodology**

- Documentation to explain the study (see presentation)

_____X_____ 3. **Cover Letter, Memorandum, etc.**

- Consent form explaining the study to the participant that clearly states person does NOT have to participate in study; that participation is strictly voluntary

_____X_____ 4. **Copy of Survey or Interview Questions, if applicable**

(see presentation)

_____√_____ Approved**   _____ Denied

Explanation (if needed):

Superintendent or Designee's Signature: Dr. Lynn Cook

Date of Approval/Denial: 2/4/16

**If approved, the researcher may contact administrator(s) of schools, if applicable.

- The administrator has the final decision as to whether or not he/she will allow for the study to be conducted at his/her site.

Additional Comments

June 2012

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Memo

To: IRBsubmit@auburn.edu

From: Mary Holloway

cc: Lindy Searby

Date: March 31, 2016

Re: "Revisions for protocol # 16-039, Holloway"

The IRB's comments are as follows:

"Informed Consent:
It is titled "Information Letter" but it should be titled "Informed Consent."
Should be on department letterhead.
1st page, last paragraph, there is a risk of breach of confidentiality."

"Revisions for protocol # 16-039, Holloway"

I removed the "Information Letter" and added the "Informed Consent". I put the "Informed Consent" on department letterhead. The "Informed Consent" has the associated risks involved and how the risks will be minimized.