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Principals' Content Knowledge: Examining the Relationship between Principals' Reading Knowledge and Leadership Actions from Principals' and Teachers' Perceptions

Angela Suzanne Butler
University of South Florida, asschroden@gmail.com

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Principals’ Content Knowledge: Examining the Relationship between Principals’ Reading Knowledge and Leadership Actions from Principals’ and Teachers’ Perceptions

by

Angela Suzanne Butler

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies College of Education University of South Florida


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Keywords: instructional leader, leadership content knowledge, literacy, administration, policy

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At the time this dedication was written, I found out I was expecting my first child. After the initial shock and excitement wore off, I realized how every decision I made from that point forward would affect this new life. Would I know what to do? Would I make the right decisions? How would I know if I made the right decision? But perhaps the biggest question of all was: Can I be the kind of mother my mom was to me?

As a child my mother, Glenda Brown, was my hero. She embodied the type of woman I wanted to be when I grew up—beautiful, smart, generous, and patient. She inspired my love of reading, my decision to become an educator, and my belief that there are some causes worth fighting for even in the face of constant opposition. This dissertation is, in part, dedicated to my mom because without her I would not have had the passion or the courage to write about a topic not always deemed as important in today’s educational landscape. Thank you, mom, for reminding me how unconditional support and love can be motivating, but mostly for showing me what it means to be a mother. As a woman, I still see in you beauty, strength, dignity, and resilience. You are still my hero. I cannot wait for my child to meet you.

This dissertation is also dedicated to the most amazing man I’ve ever known who said the right words at the right time. On a random Saturday night at a random Irish bar in July of 2008, I met a stranger who claimed to understand the difficulties and
challenges of writing a dissertation. Thinking this was a strategic line in order to obtain my phone number I questioned this stranger as to how in the world he could understand what I was going through. “I have my Ph.D. in Chemistry.” That sentence alone kept me talking to this stranger and I acquiesced to giving him my phone number.

Dr. Jonathan Schroden became the love of my life, my husband, and my steadfast encourager. Without him this dissertation would not exist. He engaged me in professional discourse, provided alternative views to my assertions, checked my stats, edited my love of commas, read quietly for many hours while I wrote and reminded me (hundreds of times) that I was, indeed, smart enough to write a dissertation. For all of these reasons, and so many more, this dissertation is dedicated to him. Jonathan, thank you for believing in me when I didn’t believe in myself.

I am looking forward to our next 50 years together as Dr. and Dr. Schroden and to welcoming our little one into the world.
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Abstract

Principals’ leadership content knowledge in reading was investigated by examining the relationship between the perceived reading knowledge of principals and perceived leadership actions principals take to support reading instruction. Survey results from 78 principals and 1,876 teachers were analyzed. Results showed a positive, statistically significant correlation between principals’ perceptions of their reading knowledge and principals’ perceptions of the actions they take to support reading. A stronger positive, significant correlation between teachers’ perceptions of their principal’s reading knowledge and teachers’ perceptions of their principal’s actions was also demonstrated. These correlations substantiated studies that purported principals with more reading knowledge are more likely to take leadership actions to support effective reading instruction. In this study, reading knowledge was defined by both reading content and pedagogy. Significant but weak relationships were found between: teachers’ perceptions of their principal’s reading knowledge and type of school; teachers’ perceptions of their principal’s actions and type of school; and teachers’ perceptions of their principal’s actions and teachers’ years of experience. Non-significant results were found for all other relationships examined. Comparisons of survey responses revealed discrepancies between principals’ and teachers’ perceptions of the degree of principals’ reading knowledge and extent of their actions, which may be important since the literature suggests that differing levels of knowledge and ideas of actions a principal should take can stymie school progress. The study’s results suggest: changes in principal
preparation programs; ongoing content training for current principals; streamlining principal tasks; and a formal understanding of roles and responsibilities for instructional leadership.
Chapter 1 Introduction to the Study

Introduction

During the 2009-2010 school year, the National Governor’s Association Center for Best Practices and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) convened to draft a common core of state standards in English-language arts and mathematics for grades K-12. The goal of this work was to ensure all students were college and career ready by the end of high school. Included in the introduction of the standards was a vision of what it means to be literate. The committee defined that vision as one where students engage in close, attentive reading of both high quality literary and informational text while thinking critically about what they have read. Additionally, these Common Core State Standards define literate individuals as those persons who demonstrate independence, build strong content knowledge, comprehend as well as critique, value evidence, use technology and digital media strategically and capably, and come to understand other perspectives and cultures (National Governor’s Association Center for Best Practices and Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010). This definition of literacy is in stark contrast to the definition at the turn of the 20th century where the goal of reading instruction was to develop an appreciation and life-long interest in literature (Smith, 2002).
Federal Policy Influence

Perhaps nothing has been as influential in the evolution of the definition of literacy as the politicization of reading research and the resulting policies. In the last ten years, federal policy has changed the landscape of reading and the role of instructional leader by continually asking students, teachers, and administrators to perform at ever-increasing levels of rigor. The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 was education reform designed to improve student achievement for all students. The overall goal of the NCLB Act was 100% of students achieving at grade level in reading, writing, math and science by the year 2014. With the passage of NCLB, Congress reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). The ESEA was the principal federal law affecting education from kindergarten through high school. The No Child Left Behind Act is designed around several key factors: student testing and achievement, accountability for results, scientifically based research, and teacher quality. Although NCLB mandated testing of reading, writing, math and science, it contained a specific focus on reading.

Under the requirements set forth by the NCLB Act, the progress of all public school students was to be measured annually for reading and math in grades 3-8, and at least once during grades 9-12. Beginning in the 2007-2008 school year, testing was conducted in science at least once during grades 3-5, 6-9, and 10-11. State assessments could take any form as long as the same assessment was used for all students in the state and they were normally to be criterion-referenced, based on the content and/or skill specified in the state standards. Each state set specific scores or proficiency levels that indicated grade-level performance. These proficiency levels represented achievement in
relation to the state academic standards and curriculum they were designed to assess.
States were also to set student performance goals based on test results from previous years; these performance goals were based on overall student performance as well as performance of specific groups (or subgroups) of students including African American, Hispanic, Students with Disabilities, limited English proficiency, and those students who qualified for free and reduced lunch.

Every year, schools and districts were to demonstrate that all students and each subgroup had met state goals for academic achievement and grade level work. This demonstration of on-grade-level academic achievement for all subgroups was known as Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). Schools and districts would not be counted as making AYP if even one of the subgroups did not meet the performance goals. If any school or district did not meet AYP requirements for two years in a row, they were considered “schools in need of improvement” (SINI). If a school in need of improvement also received federal funds (Title I) they were required to develop and implement a school improvement plan that focused on scientifically based programs, staff development and parental involvement. In addition, SINI schools had to offer students the option of transferring to another public school in the district that was not in need of improvement. Administrators in schools not meeting AYP three years in a row faced extensive quarterly reporting of test scores, plans for academic achievement of all students, professional development, and parental involvement. One third of the nation’s schools did not make AYP in 2009 (Center on Education Policy, 2010). This equated to thousands of principals and teachers losing the autonomy to make decisions in relation to leadership, pedagogy, and curriculum (Moser, 2010; Usher, 2010). SINI schools, if they continued
to not make AYP, faced corrective action and possible restructuring or state takeover. An additional consequence of restructuring reported by some principals was the inability to fill teaching positions with qualified teachers, resulting in students receiving less qualified teachers. Some principals of restructured schools also reported having less time to monitor the instructional programs of their schools due to the time needed to recruit and hire qualified instructors (Usher, 2010).

In addition to the standards, NCLB, and AYP, administrators have been facing another policy initiative requiring reading domain knowledge and diagnostic expertise—Response to Intervention (RtI). When Congress reauthorized the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) in 2004, included in the reauthorization was the recommendation to change the model of identification process for Specific Learning Disorders from an IQ test model to an RtI model. RtI was a tiered prevention system designed to identify struggling students before they failed or fell significantly below level and to identify students that had learning disabilities. RtI had three levels of prevention and intervention: primary prevention, secondary intervention, and tertiary intervention. Primary prevention was general education or core instruction. Students who did not respond successfully to core instruction entered the RtI process with secondary prevention. This level of prevention was in addition to core instruction and consisted of small group tutoring specifically tailored to the needs of the student. If a student did not show progress at this level they could move on to the most intense form of intervention, that being tertiary. This level of intervention was defined by more frequent, individualized tutoring and systematic, ongoing progress monitoring.
A principal tenet of RtI was quality instruction at all levels of prevention and intervention with the intent of reducing the number of students classified as students with disabilities (Lyon, Fletcher, Shaywitz, Torgeson, Wood, Schulte, & Olson, 2001). Underlying the RtI initiative was research on early intervention that suggested early readers could catch up to grade level with effective intervention and that too many students were classified without ever having participated in any intensive early intervention (Allington, 2009). In reading, effective prevention for students began with effective core reading instruction. Taylor (2008) discussed components of effective reading instruction supported by research that were related to abilities students need to become competent readers (p. 7). The components of effective core reading instruction in grades K-5 included: phonemic awareness and phonics instruction, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension instruction (Taylor, pp. 6-13). Taylor (2008) also discussed pedagogy that relates to increased competency in reading: sound instructional choices based on students’ abilities, clarity of purpose and timing during lessons, constant and consistent use of data, intellectual challenge for all students, balanced grouping practices and independent student activities, active student involvement in learning, time spent on reading, and alignment of standards, curriculum, instruction and assessments (pp. 13-22).

When effective primary prevention was not enough for students as evidenced by assessments and data, secondary interventions were to begin. Secondary intervention in reading included research-supported interventions and increased progress monitoring to gauge student progress. This intervention was in addition to primary prevention and was provided by a classroom teacher, a specialized reading teacher, or other trained
personnel. The secondary interventions were in small, homogenous groups and could last from 20-40 minutes, over a period of 10-30 weeks. The majority of students receiving secondary intervention made adequate progress after 50-100 sessions (Vaughn & Denton, 2008).

For the minority of students who did not make adequate progress with primary prevention and secondary intervention, tertiary intervention may have been required. The primary difference between secondary and tertiary interventions was demonstrated by intensity and measurement precision (Reschly, 2005). Intensity could be defined as both duration of the intervention and size of the group (Vaughn & Denton, 2008). Tertiary interventions were provided for a more extended time per day and in very small groups. Additionally, the teacher providing the tertiary interventions had to demonstrate very high levels of expertise and knowledge of the reading process (Vaughn & Denton, 2008).

School leadership was crucial to the effective implementation of RtI and leaders had to be knowledgeable as well as supportive (Fuchs, Fuchs, & Vaughn, 2008). Instructional leaders guiding the RtI process had to know and ensure that prevention-oriented practices were occurring in classrooms, assure that scientifically based research practices were implemented, make certain that high-quality, ongoing professional development was provided for teachers, and provide and monitor the school-based assessment plan to determine student progress and adjust instructional decisions (Vaughn & Denton, 2008). Considering the majority of referrals for Exceptional Student Education (ESE) were attributed to students’ poor reading ability (Vellutino, Scanlon & Lyon, 2000), it could be argued a principal would benefit from having reading content
knowledge in order to lead and support the RtI process as it would most likely focus on students demonstrating reading deficiencies.

**State Policy Influence**

In addition to federal policy, instructional leaders also had to contend with state policy that reflected an increase in the accountability and rigor in relation to reading. According to Fla. Sta. § 1008.25 (2009), any student in grades kindergarten through third with an identified reading deficiency was mandated to receive immediate intensive intervention (iii) resulting in additional time and specialized reading instruction. If the deficiency was not corrected by third grade and a student scored a level one on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT), the student was automatically retained. All retained third graders, as well as any student in grades kindergarten through third who demonstrated a reading deficiency had to have the option of attending a summer reading camp. Although this statute required every district to have a comprehensive program for student progression and performance standards in the areas of reading, writing, math, and science, reading was the only subject where mandatory retention and criteria for iii was specified. This decision, to make reading the gate keeping subject area, supported the idea that although all subject areas share importance the ability to read is required to be successful in all other subject areas.

Florida statute also defines how each school and district was to be graded. Fla. Sta. § 1008.34 (2009) states all schools were to be measured (graded) according to annual learning gains of each student in reading, writing, math and science, the progress of the lowest quartile of students, and the meeting of proficiency standards. More specifically,
schools were awarded one point for each of the following: percentage of students who scored a level 3, 4, or 5 in reading, math, and science, percentage of students who scored 3.5 or above in writing, percentage of students that made learning gains in reading and math, and percentage of the lowest performing students who made learning gains in reading and math from the previous year. When students underperformed in reading, school grades suffered and schools, teachers, and administrators were subjected to increased accountability and oversight. A combination of low school grade and not making AYP could result in direct district and state intervention. Chronically underperforming schools faced intense district and state on-site support or restructuring. Restructuring included: ensuring students had the option to transfer to another public school that was not in need of restructuring, providing supplemental educational services for eligible students, and preparing a plan to implement change in governance for the school (Moser, 2010). While these requirements may have been intended for positive change in student achievement, Moser (2010) found the opposite effect, that “consequences of NCLB’s (2001) reform mandates intended to enhance student achievement may negatively impact that achievement due to the undermining of teacher efficacy.”

Additionally, how principals were to be evaluated was defined in Florida statute. Fla. Sta. § 1012.34 (2009) required each district to have a process for assessing the performance of all instructional, administrative, and supervisory personnel. The assessment procedure was primarily based on the performance of students, had to occur at least once a year, and was based upon contemporary research and sound pedagogical
practices. Criteria included in this performance assessment of school leaders were knowledge of subject matter and the ability to evaluate instructional needs.

**District Policy Influence**

District policy could also be a contributing factor to the expectation of instructional leaders having reading domain knowledge. Beginning in the 2010-2011 school year, Hillsborough County Public Schools (HCPS) in Tampa, Florida, began using a new evaluation system for teachers and principals that for the first time included student achievement data. Teachers were to be evaluated based on the following criteria: 40% student learning gains, 30% peer evaluation, and 30% principal evaluation. A principal’s evaluation was more complex as they were to be rated based upon 360 degree feedback from staff and area directors. The intention of the 360 degree feedback was to evaluate a principal in all the multi-faceted roles they held: instructional leader, building manager, fiscal manager, etc. The feedback from the various groups surrounding the principal (360 degrees) would theoretically provide a more nuanced and fair evaluation of the principal. Like the teacher evaluation, 40% of the principal evaluation was based on student achievement but also included, for example, discipline, attendance, and fiscal data. With the new evaluation system, principals who were identified as ineffective would have opportunities to improve or in some cases would be dismissed. With close to half of the principal evaluation coming from student achievement, more than ever, a principal would need to have both leadership and content knowledge in order to ensure a quality instructional program.
Changing Role of the Instructional Leader

This increase in expectation and rigor from federal, state, and district policy has contributed to the changing role of the instructional leader. Spillane (2004) proffered that administrators and their primary functions have historically been defined through the lens of positional leadership. Research viewed through this framework identified leader traits (self-confidence, sociability), specific leader behaviors (develop and effectively communicate the organization’s vision), or broad types of leader behaviors (task-oriented, relationship-oriented). Recognizing that leadership was not solely the purview of the building administrator, educational researchers began studying contingency theory—the relations between leaders and characteristics of the organization (Donaldson, 2001). Researchers studying institutional theory viewed the role of instructional leader as one tasked to preserve the educational institution by garnering public support and maintaining relationships with its clients (Elmore, 2004; Spillane, 2004). Elmore (2004) argued that none of these theories define the instructional leader needed today as none of the theories, “posits a direct relationship between the work that leaders should be doing and the core functions of the organization…improvement of practice and performance” (p. 66). The instructional leader needed today is one where managerial tasks (personnel management, finance, etc.) no longer take precedence over the instructional program and practices; instead there is an integration of the two (Nelson & Sassi, 2005). If learning is the responsibility of the leader, then leaders must be able to model the type of learning they expect from others and expect their practice to be analyzed, evaluated, and coached just as they would do for their teachers (Elmore, 2004). The type of instructional leader called to govern today’s schools needs not only knowledge of effective leader behaviors
and organizational management, but knowledge of curriculum, pedagogy, and adult learning.

**Statement of the Problem**

Instructional leaders face ever increasing responsibilities but perhaps none more important than increasing student achievement. In order to fulfill the role of instructional leader, administrators must be knowledgeable about effective practices and content, have the ability to model, support, and encourage these practices in their teachers, be able to design a sound instructional program, and understand the nature of assessment and progress monitoring (Elmore, 2004; Goldwyn, McGhee and Lew, 2007; Nelson & Sassi, 2005; Quint, et al, 2007). For instructional leaders to be, “genuinely helpful and supportive of their teachers as they both face the challenging realities of school renewal, they need to understand learning in a standards-based curriculum and what that means of both student and teacher” (Sergiovanni, 2002). In essence, instructional leaders need leadership content knowledge: a combination of subject matter knowledge and effective leadership practices (Stein & Nelson, 2003).

The challenge of leadership content knowledge is tri-fold; in what content area should administrators be knowledgeable, how much knowledge in that content area is needed, and how does that content knowledge affect leadership decisions? While all content areas are necessary for students to be college and career-ready, reading is the only content area that is required to access all others, and the only subject area that functions as a specific gateway to students’ promotion. Coupling the importance of reading as the gateway to all other areas and the federal, state and district policies
increasing the rigor of student achievement and expectation; instructional leaders with leadership content knowledge in literacy comprise the cornerstone of school improvement.

**Purpose**

The purpose of this study was to investigate principals’ perceived leadership content knowledge in the area of reading by examining the relationship between principals’ perceptions of their own reading knowledge and the actions they take to support teachers’ reading instruction. To further explore principals’ perceived leadership content knowledge, teachers’ perceptions of their principal’s reading knowledge and leadership actions were also examined. The Institute for Learning (IFL) Theory of Action (2007) was the theoretical framework for this study. The IFL Theory of Action hypothesized that principals who receive and value instruction-related professional development (increased knowledge) would be more involved in and willing to provide their teachers staff development (increased action in support of instruction), therefore teachers would receive more instruction-related professional development resulting in improved quality of classroom instruction and consequently increased student achievement.

Additionally, Stein and Nelson’s (2003) Nested Learning Communities was also part of the theoretical framework of this study. At the core of Stein and Nelson’s Nested Learning Communities framework was subject matter with every level of the district community—teacher, principal, and district personnel emanating from that core. The Nested Learning Community framework calls for every level of a district—teacher,
principal, and district leader—to serve as both teacher and student to the personnel under their charge as they focused on subject matter. A fundamental tenet of the Nested Learning Community theory was that personnel at every level must have an understanding of what the teachers and students below them are responsible for knowing, learning and teaching. A principal, therefore, must understand what the teachers under their purview are responsible for knowing and teaching to their students. Theoretically, then, principals must have an understanding of what their teachers have to know in order to effectively teach their students—content knowledge and effective pedagogical practices.

**Research Questions**

Leadership content knowledge in literacy is complex. Several questions surround the concept: what is it, how much is needed, and how does it affect the decisions regarding support for reading instruction? Because of this complexity, the following research questions guided this study:

1. Is there a relationship between principals’ perceptions of their reading knowledge and principals’ perceptions of the leadership actions they take to support reading instruction?
2. Is there a difference between principals’ perceptions of their reading knowledge and the type of school where they work: Title I, Renaissance or non-Title I?
2a. Is there a relationship between principals’ perceptions of their reading knowledge and their years of experience?
3. Is there a difference between principals’ perceptions of leadership actions they take to support reading instruction and the type of school where they work: Title I, Renaissance or non-Title I?

3a. Is there a relationship between principals’ perceptions of the leadership actions they take to support reading instruction and their years of experience?

4. Is there a relationship between teachers’ perceptions of their principal’s reading knowledge and teachers’ perceptions of the leadership actions principals take to support reading instruction?

5. Is there a difference between teachers’ perceptions of their principal’s reading knowledge and the type of school where the teachers work?

5a. Is there a relationship between teachers’ perceptions of their principal’s reading knowledge and teachers’ years of experience?

6. Is there a difference between teachers’ perceptions of the leadership actions principals take to support reading instruction and the type of school where the teachers work?

6a. Is there a relationship between teachers’ perceptions of the leadership actions principals take to support reading instruction and teachers’ years of experience?

7. Is there a relationship between principals’ perceptions of their reading knowledge and teachers’ perceptions of their principal’s reading knowledge?

8. Is there a relationship between principals’ perceptions of the leadership actions they take to support reading instruction and teachers’ perceptions of the leadership actions their principals take to support reading instruction?
Limitations of Study

Conclusions or implications drawn from this study were limited by the following conditions.

1. The instructional leader and teacher samples were voluntary and limited to employees working in the subject school district which encompassed rural, urban and suburban elementary (K-5) schools.

2. Voluntary samples may have resulted in a non-response bias if the non-respondents differed in systematic or meaningful ways from the respondents.

3. The surveys used for reporting principals’ and teachers’ perceptions of a principal’s reading knowledge and actions were self-reporting instruments and may have reflected only perception and not actual practices occurring at the school.

4. The sample population was from the researcher’s own district therefore principals in the survey may have felt the need to answer in a way that reflected their actions more favorably than what actually occurred. Teacher respondents may have felt the need to answer questions about their principal in a favorable light as opposed to actual occurrences at the school.

5. Results and interpretations may have reflected the bias and personal interpretation of the researcher based on personal knowledge of the respondents and the schools, but the researcher made every attempt to interpret data based on actual results.
Methodology

This study employed a quantitative, non-experimental method and design exploring the variation in independent variables. As such it was a correlational study. In this instance, principals’ perceived levels of reading knowledge, teachers’ perceptions regarding principals’ levels of reading knowledge, principals’ perceived actions to support reading instruction, teachers’ perceptions of principals’ actions to support reading instruction, as well as demographic information, were all variables studied to determine if relationships existed among and between them. Descriptive statistics, measures of central tendency, and dispersion were used to characterize the scores calculated on both the Principal’s Support for Reading Instruction – Principal Survey (PSRI-PS) (Appendix D) and the Principal’s Support for Reading Instruction – Teacher Survey (PSRI-TS) (Appendix E). Measures of association and tests of statistical significance were performed to establish the strength and direction of relationships. Simple linear regression and tests to determine the significance of the regression line were also conducted.

In order to examine the relationships among the variables, two similar questionnaires were used to measure both principals’ and teachers’ perceptions regarding principals’ knowledge and principals’ actions to support reading instruction. The PSRI-PS and the PSRI-TS also allowed for the collection of demographic information including the type of school at which each participant worked (e.g. Title I/non-Title I) and their years of experience. Table 1 in Chapter 3 provides an overview of the research questions, data collected, and analysis used in this study. Appendices A and B include the actual survey instruments.
This study included 144 elementary school principals in one large Florida school district. To be included in the study, a principal had to be employed at a traditional (K-5) elementary school. Also included in the study were teachers who taught reading; that included kindergarten through fifth grade classroom teachers (traditional and Exceptional Student Education), as well as reading resource teachers and content area coaches.

Definitions

**Leadership Content Knowledge:** The combination of subject matter knowledge principals hold and leadership actions principals take to support the instructional program and teachers at their school sites (Stein and Nelson, 2003).

**Phonics:** The sound-symbol system used especially in beginning (emergent/early) reading instruction for encoding speech sounds into written symbols to recognize words (Mesmer & Griffith, 2005).

**Phonemic Awareness:** The ability to hear, identify, and manipulate the individual sounds (phonemes) in spoken words. Requires advanced skills that involve relating sounds to the letters that represent them (Strickland & Schickedanz, 2009).

**Fluency:** The ability to read texts smoothly, accurately, and quickly (NIHCD, 2000) which provides freedom from word identification problems that might hinder comprehension (Harris & Hodges, 1995).

**Comprehension:** A process in which readers construct meaning by interacting with text through the combination of prior knowledge and previous experience, information in the text, and the stance the reader takes in relationship to the text (Pardo, 2004).
**Vocabulary:** Having knowledge of words and word meanings both orally and in print of high frequency words, words used by mature readers and writers, and rare words that are specific to particular content domains (Blachowicz, 2000).

**Non-Title I Schools:** Schools where the percentage of students enrolled who qualify for free and reduced lunch do not meet a district established percentage; and therefore do not qualify to receive additional federal funding.

**Title I Schools:** Schools where a designated percentage of students enrolled qualify for free or reduced lunch. The percentage is established by each district. Those schools designated as Title I receive additional federal funding to support teaching and learning.

**Renaissance Schools:** Schools where 90-100% of students enrolled qualify for free or reduced lunch and therefore qualify for additional federal funding (more than a typical Title I school) to support teaching and learning.

**Significance of the Study**

The role of instructional leader has evolved significantly since the beginning of public schooling. While leaders have always needed the ability to inspire, lead, and manage personnel as well as efficiently run their organizations; increased accountability, expectations, and rigor in relation to student achievement have increased the need for instructional leaders to also have specific content knowledge. This study addressed the gap in the literature on instructional leader content knowledge by investigating the relationship between principals’ reading content knowledge and the actions they take in supporting teachers’ reading instruction. The findings in this study add to the literature regarding leadership content knowledge in reading and enhance the research regarding
the role of the instructional leader in the school’s literacy program. Principals and teachers would benefit from identifying the leadership content knowledge in reading necessary to increase teacher knowledge and student achievement. The next chapter will present the conceptual framework for this study, a review of literature relevant to the study’s purpose, a rationale for research, and a research plan.
Chapter 2 Literature Review

Introduction

For as long as there has been public schooling there has been debate around what to teach (curriculum) and how to teach (pedagogy) in order to improve student learning. While this debate has played out in all content areas, throughout the 19th and 20th centuries reading has experienced a significant evolution. According to Blanton (2002) reading instruction during the first few decades of the 20th century was influenced by the scientific movement. This movement was characterized by instruments of measure—Gray’s Standardized Oral Reading Paragraphs, Hilligas Composition scale, etc. With the advent of these measurement tools came a call for improving the teaching of reading. Innovations of this period included moving from oral reading to silent reading, the initial use of reading experience charts in early reading, and individualized reading instruction (p. 28). Harris et al. (2010) reported the 1950’s could be characterized as the era of reading as decoding. Skills such as directionality, phonics, and word recognition were all taught in isolation and often in a “drill and kill” fashion. The 1960’s brought with it the “look-say” approach. This instructional approach was characterized by high frequency sight words practiced in controlled stories followed by the teaching of phonics in previously learned words (Pearson, 2002). Reading in the 1970’s under the influence of Cambourne, Harste, and others began to recognize that readers bring their own meaning to print in order to gain meaning from print. Reading during this era was described as a
process and its disparate parts were beginning to be taught in an integrated fashion (Harris, et al., 2010). Beginning in the 1980’s, reading classrooms were filled with books, reading and writing became more of an integrated process called literacy, and reading was seen as a much more complex process than previously thought (Harris, et al., 2010). The 1990’s brought with it high change and diversity due in some part to the explosion of technology (Unsworth, 2001). Reading was now recognized as a highly complex set of skills requiring readers to not only read for pleasure and information but to ask questions of the text and question the author. Readers were now asked to be critical thinkers of what they read. Unsworth (2001) claimed, “In the twenty-first century the notion of literacy needs to be reconceived as a plurality of literacies and being literate must be seen as anachronistic…emerging technologies continue to impact on the social construction of these multiple literacies” (p. 8).

Reading has evolved into a highly complex transaction between the reader and the page, media, and society. Teachers must understand this highly complex transaction and teach students to be highly literate as well as critically literate. Principals, in order to lead and monitor the reading program at their school, must also understand the complexities and nuances of reading and teaching reading to children. The purpose of this chapter is to review the literature pertinent to instructional leadership and leadership content knowledge, and to explore what leadership content knowledge a principal needs to have in the area of reading in order to successfully lead an elementary school.

Without leadership content knowledge in reading, principals can be easily and quickly misguided in relation to what should be included in a school’s reading program. A look at any major educational publisher’s reading program would show the words
“research based” and “proven to work for all students.” If all reading programs worked for all students would it matter which one an instructional leader chose? What should these instructional programs contain? How does an instructional leader know a program will work? These are all valid questions an instructional leader could and should ask, but they can only be answered with a solid knowledge base of effective practice in reading. “It is the absence of expertise that leads teachers and administrators to hope upon hope that a new reading series or new intervention program will solve all their woes” (Allington, 2002, p. 17). When administrators have leadership content knowledge in the area of reading, designing a literacy program that provides quality instruction for all students (including the decision to buy or not buy a reading curriculum) will be more likely. “Without the support of the principal… there cannot be a true school-wide literacy program” (Morrow, 2002, p. 345).

**Conceptual Framework**

Every researcher has a way of looking at the world; a belief about how knowledge is acquired, how the world operates, and how to interpret what is seen (Crotty, 1998; Merriam, 1998; Rubin & Rubin, 2005). This lens in which a researcher views life is identified as a theoretical perspective or conceptual framework. This conceptual framework guides the methodology and methods a researcher employs. Crotty defines theoretical perspective as “the philosophical stance informing the methodology and thus providing a context for the process and grounding in logic and criteria” (1998, p. 3).

This literature review was written with a combined conceptual framework of the IFL Theory of Action (Quint, Akey, Rappaport & Willner, 2007), and Nested Learning
Communities (Stein & Nelson, 2003). The IFL Theory of Action (see Figure 1) hypothesized that principals who receive and value instruction-related professional development would be more involved in and willing to provide their teachers staff development, therefore teachers would receive more instruction-related professional development resulting in improved quality of classroom instruction and consequently increased student achievement. This literature review examines professional development topics (specifically in reading) a principal may need to know, as well as effective teaching practices an instructional leader should recognize, support and encourage in his/her teachers.

Additionally, this literature review was written through the lens of Stein and Nelson’s (2003) Nested Learning Communities. Like Quint et al.’s (2007) theory that instruction related content training for principals ultimately results in increased teacher effectiveness and ultimately increased student achievement, at the core of Stein and Nelson’s Nested Learning Communities framework is subject matter (See Figure 2). The Nested Learning Community framework called for every level of a district–teacher, principal, and district leader–to serve as both teacher and student to the personnel under their charge as they focus on subject matter. Also, a part of this framework was the idea that the personnel at every level must have an understanding of what the teachers and students below them are responsible for knowing, learning and teaching. A principal, therefore, must understand what the teachers under their purview are responsible for knowing and teaching to their students. Theoretically, then, principals must have an understanding of what their teachers have to know in order to effectively teach their students—content knowledge and effective pedagogical practices. Taking the Nested
Learning Community theory into consideration, the professional development called for in Quint, et al.’s Theory of Action should revolve around content knowledge and pedagogical practices. This literature review focused on what content knowledge and pedagogical practices a principal must know about in the area of reading.

The remainder of this chapter will focus on: (1) instructional leadership: a definition, (2) leadership content knowledge: what it is and why it is necessary (3) what is reading? (4) what does a principal need to know about elementary (K-5) reading, and (5) what does a principal need to know about effective practices in reading instruction?

**Instructional Leadership**

“Without knowledge that connects subject matter, learning, and teaching to acts of leadership, leadership floats disconnected from the very processes it is designed to govern” (Stein & Nelson, 2003, p. 446). There is little debate the principal as instructional leader is a crucial element in the success of a school; the debate, rather, lies in the definition of instructional leader and the role that leader plays in the school success equation. “The term ‘instructional leader’ has been in vogue for decades as the desired model for education leaders—principals especially. Yet the term is often more a slogan than a well-defined set of leadership practices” (Leithwood & Riehl, 2004, p. 6).

Elmore (2004) discussed the idea of instructional leadership when he provided a romanticized and de-romanticized definition of instructional leadership. American culture romanticizes the definition of leadership for two reasons: Americans buy into the trait theories of success and they like their “heroes” to have qualities they do not think they have themselves. The trait theory of success revolves around the idea, “people
succeed because of their personal characteristics more than because of effort, skill and knowledge” (p. 57). Elmore adds that one of the problems of the trait theory of success is that character traits, “are much less amenable to influence by education, training, and practice than effort, skill, and knowledge” (p. 57).

Elmore’s (2004) de-romanticized definition of instructional leadership begins with the idea of defining instructional leadership in terms of instruction (p. 57). The definition of instructional leadership was illuminated further when he added,

Why not focus leadership on instructional improvement, and define everything else as instrumental to it? The skills and knowledge that matter in leadership, under this definition, are those that can be connected to, or lead directly to, the improvement of instruction and student performance (p. 58).

What Elmore suggested in this de-romanticized definition of instructional leadership requires a leader to have the skills and knowledge that connect her/him to the very processes he/she was designed to govern. Those skills and knowledge should include at the very least knowledge of subject matter, teaching, and learning.

Robinson (2006) reviewed “the extent to which research on educational leadership provides school leaders with useful guides about what they need to know and do to make a difference to teaching and learning in their schools” (p. 63). She argued much of the research, as well as educational leadership theory, provide little help to principals as they lead teaching and learning. This “generic leadership” research and theories (transactional, transformational, authentic, etc.), typically revolve around the idea of influence and the different ways to influence the members of an organization.
While generic leadership research can inform us about how to influence, and about the values that should inform the influence process (e.g. democratic, authoritative, emancipatory) it is silent about what the focus of the influence attempt should be. It is the research base on student and teacher learning, and on effective teaching in particular, that can give content to an otherwise abstract leadership process (p. 63).

The logic surrounding and supporting most generic leadership theory, Robinson argued, is backwards; they are based on leader-follower relations and how to accomplish generic leadership tasks such as setting goals, communicating those goals, and promoting organizational learning. Questions asked about how these theories may impact student and teacher learning and subsequent research are initiated only after the theory has been developed and implemented. “Given that leadership theory development has not been grounded in the details of effective teaching and learning, it is not surprising that leadership appears to make little difference to these outcomes” (p. 65).

The starting point for educational leadership theories should be the best evidence about teaching and learning and its effect on student achievement. When that happens instructional leadership will indeed be intimately connected to the very processes it was designed to govern. Robinson’s call for educational theory to be grounded in teaching, learning and student achievement does not dismiss the need for generic leadership theory and practices, rather, when the two are combined the result will be more effective teachers followed by higher student achievement.
Quint, Akey, Rappaport and Willner (2007) examined a backward-theory mapping logic, The Institute for Learning (IFL) Theory of Action, when they researched the question: does providing instruction related professional development to school principals set in motion a chain of events that can improve teaching and learning? The IFL Theory of Action (see Figure 1) hypothesized,

Through leadership training, school principals learn about high-quality instruction and about actions that they can take to motivate and support their teachers. Principals then organize professional learning for their teachers and otherwise help teachers improve their classroom practices. With improved instruction, the theory maintains, student achievement will also improve (p. iii).

\[ \text{District Policy context, curriculum choices, resources, principal and teacher characteristics, etc.} \]

\[
\begin{array}{c}
1 \quad \text{District officials' receipt of instruction-related professional development} \\
2 \quad \text{Principal's involvement in professional development for} \\
3 \quad \text{Teachers' recept of instruction-related professional development} \\
4 \quad \text{Quality of classroom instruction} \\
5 \quad \text{Student achievement} \\
\end{array}
\]

*Figure 1. The IFL Theory of Action. Note: From “Instructional Leadership, Teaching Quality and Student Achievement,” by J. Quint, T. Akey, S. Rappaport, and C. Willner, 2007, MDRC, p. ES-2. Copyright 2007 by MDRC*

Researchers look to describe the behaviors of principals, students, and teachers at each step of the theory and how the steps were linked to one another. Quint et al. recruited schools already working with the IFL for one to five years and participation was
completely voluntary. The study was intentionally limited to elementary schools as the researchers reasoned that elementary school principals role in instructional improvement was likely to be the most pronounced. Middle and high school principals often have department chairs and assistant principals of instruction, which can make for more distributed instructional leadership. Schools that participated (n=49) were from Austin, St. Paul, and Region 10 of New York City, and all had a student population at least 50 percent economically disadvantaged (as measured by eligibility for free and reduced price lunch), at least 50 percent nonwhite, and were lower in achievement levels than other schools in their district.

Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used to analyze the IFL theory. Quantitative data included scores of third graders on their statewide high stakes testing, principal and teacher surveys regarding frequency and value of instruction related professional development, and observational data of instructional practices. Qualitative data included interviews with district officials and IFL liaisons for the study districts. Case studies involved daylong visits to eight schools across the three geographic areas and helped researchers expound the findings from the close-ended surveys. The analysis of data was completed using multiple regression to understand the “extent to which outcomes at each step of the theory of action are associated with (or statistically linked) to the outcomes at the one or two preceding steps in the theory” (p. ES-3).

Researchers found, “statistically significant linkages connect variables at each step in the theory of action with variables at the next step” (p. ES-1). More specifically researchers found a significant and positive association between instruction-related Professional Development (PD) received by principals and PD provided to teachers by
those principals. The findings inferred instruction-related PD delivered to principals is the first step to increased opportunities for teachers to receive instruction-related PD (Quint et al., 2007). Not surprising, Quint et al., also found when teachers received instruction-related PD, researchers were more likely to observe greater implementation in the classroom. These findings are of particular importance in this paper as they suggested the more PD teachers received the more effective their instructional practices; as well as, evidence that suggested a direct link between principals’ involvement in PD and teachers’ implementation of these practices (Quint et al., 2007). Higher teacher scores on the Instructional Quality Assessment (IQA) observation instrument were associated with a greater number of students meeting the standard on both the reading and math state assessment.

In essence, Quint et al., found that specific acts of leadership (receiving PD, providing PD, and involvement with PD), when connected with subject matter, learning, and teaching (content area instruction in reading and math, academic rigor, and clear expectations), yield leadership that is connected to the very processes it is designed to govern—teaching and learning. Absent a thorough critique of the IFL’s Theory of Action, Cobb & Smith (2007) offered additional hypotheses to the IFL theory that specified instructional structures a school or district needed to employ to ensure improved instructional quality of mathematics instruction. Among those suggestions were: (1) resources to support teacher participation in professional networks: time built into the school day for the networks to meet and access to colleagues who are already accomplished in the instructional program adopted, (2) a common instructional discourse among all members of the learning community (students, teachers, administrators, district
leaders), (3) accountability relations between teachers, school leaders, and district leaders, and (4) establishing a principle of mutual accountability where principals are accountable to teachers in assisting them in understanding math content (pp. 13-17).

Fink and Resnick’s (2001) exploration of the instructional leadership role is similar to that of Stein and Nelson (2003) when they speculated those who become administrators grow further and further removed from issues of instruction and learning. The longer a principal is on the job the wider the distance an instructional leader is from the primary purpose of leading, teaching and learning. “Administration in education has come to mean not the management of instruction but the management of structures and processes around instruction” (Elmore, 2006, p. 46). Structure and processes such as scheduling field trips, disciplining students, and completing paperwork due to the district offices, consume much of an administrator’s available time. These processes and structures have to do with enabling teaching and learning, but not teaching and learning per se.

An instructional leader has two primary responsibilities: building intellectual and social capital (Fink & Resnick, 2001). The two responsibilities are intricately linked. A principal must be able to build strong personal relationships while increasing teacher knowledge. The difficulty lies in establishing those relationships around the idea of teaching and learning (Stein & Nelson, 2003). Fink and Resnick (2001) explored this idea by reporting on the eleven year period of successful school improvement in Community School District 2 in New York City where Fink was a principal, assistant superintendent, and superintendent. The school improvement era was marked by rising test scores and a marked sense of professional collegiality by teachers, principals, and senior administrators, “the latter exhibit an exceptionally high level of detailed
knowledge about the craft of teaching…even more striking is the culture of learning and mutual dependency among staff members at all levels” (p. 599). The core of the school district’s success was attributed to the concept of nested learning communities, focused on continuously improving its capacity to teach children, where all levels of the district were supported by and learned from each other. Teachers were expected to learn from principals, staff developers and others within the school, and principals were expected to learn from the superintendent, the deputy, and one another how to be a better principal.

While nested learning communities were the core of Community School District’s success regarding student achievement, they were also instrumental in establishing relationships among all levels of the district. Fink and Resnick (2001) realized, “Solid knowledge of instruction isn’t all there is to the job of instructional leadership. The principal also needs special capabilities for leadership…the focus is on leadership, not just the specifics of instruction” (p. 601). In order to ensure principals increased their knowledge of curriculum and teaching as well as leadership, the district leaders created several learning opportunities within the nested learning community framework. These opportunities included cognitive apprenticeships between master and new principals, monthly support and study groups, peer learning, and individualized coaching. Of particular importance to this review was the opportunity for principals to participate in monthly principal conferences and institutes focused solely on instruction and learning. New and on-going content initiatives were discussed and evaluated, and effective pedagogical practices were analyzed.

Community School District’s success was contingent on principals building intellectual and social capacity at their sites through staff development focused on
instructional knowledge and supported through a nested learning community framework. “Do not think of leadership skills and instructional knowledge as capabilities to be developed independently; instead, they must be intimately woven together” (Fink & Resnick, 2001, p. 606). This symbiotic relationship, focused staff development supported through a nested learning community, allowed a principal to stay connected to the very processes they were designed to govern by allowing all members of the community to engage in working toward the same goal. The ideas of principals needing to build both intellectual and social capacity at their sites through a nested learning community is a construct of the definition of instructional leadership used throughout this dissertation.

Stein and Nelson (2003) used the nested learning communities as a theoretical framework for their study focused on the idea of leadership content knowledge. Based on a cross-case analysis of three studies of instructional leadership and leadership content knowledge, they submitted principals are a critical leverage point in the improvement of instruction. The diagram shown in Figure 2 depicts the relationships or nested learning communities between educators at all levels of a typical district and the varying knowledge needed to perform each role. In the diagram all positions on the left hand side provide both leadership and teaching functions for the positions on the right at the same level. Similar to Community School District #2 and its focus on teaching and learning, at the heart of the nested learning communities in Stein and Nelson’s framework is subject matter.

Directly related to subject matter are the personnel responsible for subject matter in the classroom—teachers and students. The first two ovals represent the technical core of education, namely teaching and learning in the classroom. The third oval presents principals as teachers and leaders of teachers, and the fourth oval presents principals as students of district leaders.

The communities work in conjunction with each other focused around the idea of subject matter. “The substance of what is taught, learned, and managed consists of all
content and practices ‘beneath’ the ‘teachers’ and ‘learners’ at each level’ (p. 426).

Teachers work with learners (students) about subject matter that includes content and how learners learn that content. If a principal’s work is to support teachers and improve their instruction, their work will include knowledge about subject matter and pedagogy as well as knowing how adults (teachers) learn and how best to effectively teach teachers. For example, an administrator who is training principals must have knowledge about the three inner circles (subject matter, pedagogy, and how teachers learn) in addition to what principals need to know and how principals learn. Much like Community School District’s support and study groups, the personnel at each level in the nested learning community framework work and learn together in communities. In other words, principals work with groups of teachers as well as individuals, and district personnel work with groups of principals as well as individuals.

Based on the nested learning community framework and the belief that, “the learning of complex knowledge and skills is supported by interaction between individuals in settings in which individuals work toward the accomplishment of common goals and in which varying levels of expertise exist” (Stein & Nelson, 2002, p. 426), the authors proffered that the role of instructional leader is that of administrator-as-teacher. In order for principals to assume this responsibility of administrator-as-teacher and claim the role of instructional leader they must have some understanding of the various subjects under their purview. They must have leadership content knowledge to recognize strong teaching, require it when it is not evident, and set conditions for continuous academic learning. Stein and Nelson (2003) stated,
Standing at the intersection of subject matter knowledge and the practices that define leadership, this form of knowledge would be the special province of principals, superintendents, and other administrators charged with the improvement of teaching and learning. Knowledge about subject matter content is related in complex ways to knowledge about how to lead (p. 424).

Both Elmore (2006) and Stein and Nelson (2003) called for administrators to focus leadership efforts and decisions around the improvement of teaching and learning. Subject matter knowledge and leadership have a symbiotic relationship where, depending on the situation, either one may influence the other.

Stein and Nelson (2003) observed an elementary school principal use subject matter knowledge about mathematical exploration to enhance one of her leadership responsibilities—supervision and observation of teachers. As the principal learned more about the concept herself, she began to look for it during classroom observations and discuss it during post-observation conferences with teachers. After concluding most teachers did not understand the concept of mathematical exploration, the principal worked with the school’s curriculum specialist to provide in-class support of the concept. She also worked with the specialist to design professional development where teachers could experience mathematical exploration themselves as they learned how it functioned in their students’ learning and how to include it in their math lessons. Stein and Nelson’s observations in this case support the IFL Theory of Action in that, when a principal learns about high-quality instruction and actions to motivate and support their teachers, they can plan professional development for teachers that will support teaching and learning.
Stein and Nelson’s (2003) leadership content knowledge has not gone un-criticized. Cobb and Smith (2007) suggested principals do not need the depth of leadership content knowledge Stein and Nelson posited, rather they need some level of content knowledge and the ability to distribute instructional leadership among their staff. “In other words, we suggest that the depth of leadership content knowledge that principals require is situational and depends in large measure on the expertise of others in the school” (Cobb & Nelson, 2007, p. 17). Although Cobb and Smith purported principals do not need the depth of content Stein and Nelson called for, they agreed with the authors when they stated greater instructional improvement is found in schools where principals and other school leaders collectively hold leadership content knowledge (Cobb & Smith, 2007, p. 17).

McGhee and Lew (2007) also explored the idea of leadership content knowledge in their quantitative study that looked at teachers’ perceptions of their principals’ support and understanding of effective writing instruction, and if certain areas of knowledge influence a principal’s actions. Researchers used the Principals Support for Writing Instrument (PSWI) to survey participants at a statewide writing conference (N=169). The PSWI contained elements of both principal leadership (e.g., scheduling, resource allocation, community relations) and best practice components of effective literacy and writing; respondents were asked to provide their agreement or disagreement with thirteen statements. The reliability of the instrument was \( \alpha = .94 \).

The authors established validity of the instrument using a factor analysis in an effort to reduce the total number of variables to a smaller set of “super variables”. The initial analysis demonstrated that the PSWI could be reduced to one or two latent
variables or variables that are present but not visible. After another review of the literature the authors found two features of literacy leadership commonly studied: principal’s knowledge and implementation/intervention (or actions). With the theoretical rationale of the two constructs of literacy leadership, another factor analysis was conducted to retain two factors. Factor one included items that were related to principal’s support (leadership actions) for literacy instruction: e.g., My principal provides time in the master schedule for writing workshop; or, My principal models writing and celebrates literacy. Thus, factor one was titled intervention (leadership action) for literacy instruction. Factor two included items that were related to a principal’s knowledge of literacy: e.g., My principal understands and can talk about best practice in writing instruction. Thus, factor two was titled knowledge and belief for literacy instruction.

Based on the results of the exploratory factor analysis, a confirmatory factor analysis was conducted by the authors to corroborate the two factors of PSWI—leadership actions and principal’s knowledge of literacy instruction. Amos, a structural equation modeling software, was used for the confirmatory analysis and resulted in all the fit indices for the two factor model being satisfactory. For the comparative fit index (CFI), goodness-of-fit index (GFI), and the Tucker and Lewis Index (TLI), values of .90 or greater on a 0.0-1.0 scale are deemed acceptable. Values closer to 1.0 represent a better fit. Respectively the overall fit indices were: CFI = .957, GFI = .900 and TLI = .947. These findings confirmed the decision of the two-factor model of PSWI.

Lastly, to explore a possible causal relationship between the two factors—knowledge and leadership actions—a path analysis was conducted. By summing the four items related to principal’s knowledge and summing the nine items related to principal’s
actions, two new variables (subscale scores) were created. The graphical analyses of the residuals showed no violations of linearity, normality, and homoscedasticity; serious violations of homoscedasticity result in overestimating the goodness of fit as measured by Pearson coefficient (Berry & Feldman, 1985). Because a principal’s knowledge of literacy is assumed to affect the actions they take to support literacy instruction, the direction of the causal relation was placed from knowledge to intervention. The result of the path analysis was: When principals’ knowledge of literacy increased by one unit, the principals’ actions towards literacy instruction increased by .77 units (n= 161, p < .01).

The survey results reported that a teacher’s perception of their principal’s literacy leadership was higher when principals participated in a writing project. More importantly, teachers revealed that a principal who participated in a writing project applied stronger literacy leadership than principals who did not and, “statistical significance was observed for 12 of the 13 items” (p. 365). Participants also had the opportunity to provide written remarks and 73% chose to respond. Researchers found a primary theme emerge: the undeniable influence (positively and negatively) of principals on the work and lives of teachers and students, and the impact of state assessments.

“Based on the responses of the participants, there is evidence that principals who have strong knowledge of and belief in effective writing practices organize the school and act in ways that help teachers do their best work” (p. 372). Although the participants in this study, all attendees at a state writing conference, would have a potential bias towards the idea that a principal should know about effective writing instruction, the findings corroborate Stein and Nelson and the IFL Theory of Action and are worthy of additional study in other curriculum areas.
Distributed Leadership

The research literature offers multiple perspectives on the focus and forms of school leadership— instructional, transformational and distributed (Goddard & Miller, 2010). While one could debate the merits and faults of each of those perspectives, it is difficult to debate the necessity of distributed leadership. The knowledge, tasks, and time needed to effectively lead a school is beyond the scope of one individual. Hallinger and Heck (1999) suggested it foolish to think that only principals in their formal role of leader provide the leadership necessary for school improvement. The remainder of this section will discuss a definition of distributed leadership, a distributed perspective on school leadership as a frame for studying leadership practice, how a distributed leadership model impacts student achievement, and why distributed leadership was not the focus of this research study.

Defining distributed leadership includes several key concepts. In its simplest form distributed leadership could be defined as a form of collective leadership in which the activities of formal and informal leaders interact around a central idea, e.g., increasing student achievement (Harris, 2003; Spillane, et al., 2004). Spillane and Healey (2010) furthered the definition of distributed leadership when they proposed the leader-plus and practice aspect of distributed leadership. The leader-plus aspect recognizes that multiple individuals in addition to the principal are responsible for managing and leading schools. Beyond just identifying these individuals though, an important piece of the leader-plus aspect calls on identifying how those individuals are arranged to carry out the work of leading and managing. The practice aspect of distributed leadership revolves around defining leadership and management in terms of actions individuals take in relation to the
shared vision and how those actions are carried out in interactions among leaders, followers and situations. In other words, distributed leadership could be defined as “forms of collaboration practiced by the principal, teachers, and members of the school improvement team in leading the school’s development” (Heck & Hallinger, 2009).

The definitions of distributed leadership may have similar concepts but will differ slightly according to the view in which the author sees distributed leadership. Therefore the framework and study operations for empirically studying the effects of distributed leadership on school outcome are also varied. Spillane, et al., (2010) framed the idea of instructional leadership through a distributed perspective. Included in this framework was the idea of looking at leadership in situ or in position. Leadership in this distributed perspective involved the identification, collection, distribution and use of the, “social, material, and cultural resources necessary to establish the conditions for the possibility of teaching and learning” (p. 24). Upon explaining this framework, the authors offered a theoretically grounded framework for examining the day-to-day leadership practices involving the interaction of leaders and tools at the school level, rather than the individual level, to move beyond simple checklists of skills a leader must possess.

In order to investigate which formally designated leadership roles took responsibility for different leadership functions in a distributed leadership framework, Camburn et al., (2003) operationalized leadership as a set of leadership functions falling into three categories: instruction, building management, and boundary spanning. Camburn surveyed teachers and leaders in elementary schools across the United States (N = 120) and found that some formal leadership positions (e.g., content area coaches) tended to be specialists focused solely on instruction, but other formal leadership
positions (e.g., principals) were generalists. Generalist positions spanned all three functions. Camburn’s findings support the idea that principals or generalists need to have some degree of content knowledge as their role includes instruction.

Leithwood et al., (2007) also took a distributed perspective when examining the degree to which leadership is preplanned and aligned among leaders (Spillane & Healey, 2010). Specifically, Leithwood looked at the conscious and unconscious alignment of leadership functions among different sources of leadership in 35 secondary and 140 elementary schools in a large urban/suburban school district. Planful alignment, spontaneous alignment, spontaneous misalignment, and anarchic misalignment were all studied as ways that leadership functions were disseminated among the formal and informal leaders of a school. Based on their observations, the authors theorized how these alignments and misalignments impacted school outcomes. As might be expected, spontaneous misalignment and anarchic alignment had negative effects on an organization’s effectiveness. The authors also found that, “the structures, cultural norms and opportunities for staffs to build their leadership capacities depended heavily on the intentional work of principals” (Leithwood, et al., 2007, pp. 62).

Heck & Hallinger (2010) studied three analytic models of leadership in relation to the linkage between collaborative leadership and school capacity over time and its effect on student achievement growth in math. The first model (a purely linear model) predicted collaborative leadership would influence improvement capacity in schools. The second model (a longitudinal model) predicted improvement in student outcomes over time contribute to school capacity and collaborative leadership. The third model (a reciprocal model) predicted the paths between collaborative leadership and school
improvement capacity both reinforce one another and systematically improve student learning over time. The authors examined the process of school change by studying the relationships among collaboration, school’s capacity for improvement, and student achievement in math. This large, longitudinal study of third grade students in one state (N = 13,391), over the course of four years used student achievement data and statewide survey data on leadership and school improvement capacity. The results of the study found that the reciprocal model was the strongest fit among the three proposed models. The initial achievement was positively related to change in both collaborative leadership and school improvement capacity (.12, p < .05; .33, p < .05). Additionally, authors found that initial school improvement capacity was positively related to subsequent change in leadership and initial collaborative leadership was related to subsequent change in school improvement capacity (.39, p < .05; .18, p < .05). The authors demonstrated that collaborative leadership and school improvement are reciprocally related.

In summary, while the reality of a principal’s role includes distributing across an organization the macro and micro tasks (cognitive and action) necessary to effectively lead a school; it still remains that the principal needs a skill set including knowledge of the subject matter and pedagogy under his/her domain. Harris (2003) posited that, “the skills and knowledge necessary to shape leadership practice have not directly focused upon the improvement of instruction and student performance” (p. 4). Therefore, this study did not posit that the principal should be the lone individual holding the knowledge necessary to improve teaching and learning, rather this study attempted to define what subject matter in reading (cognitive) is necessary for a principal to know and how that
knowledge affected the leadership decisions (actions) principals make to support the teaching of reading.

There is no question of the importance of the principal. The question, rather, lies in what exactly is the role of the principal? Is it simply to lead by setting goals, communicating those goals, and ensuring those goals are met? Or is it to lead by taking an active role in the instructional program and setting, communicating and reaching goals in relation to teaching and learning? This review of the literature in relation to instructional leadership and leadership content knowledge suggests the latter. Sergiovanni (2002) called for this type of instructional leadership when he purported supervisory leadership, “focuses on improving a school’s instructional capacity and quality and on strengthening student academic engagement…Supervisors have to look for observable evidence that students are learning, to discuss specific teacher skills and develop and design new ways to foster learning” (p. 8).

An instructional leader must have both leadership capabilities and leadership content knowledge in order to increase teacher effectiveness and consequently student achievement. “Without knowledge that connects subject matter, learning, and teaching to acts of leadership, leadership floats disconnected from the very processes it is designed to govern” (Stein and Nelson, 2003, p. 446). The remainder of this chapter will examine the subject matter, learning and teaching principals need to know in the area of reading.

What Is Reading?

E. B. Huey in his seminal work *The Psychology and Pedagogy of Reading* (1908) posits, “to completely analyze what we do when we read would almost be the
acme of a psychologist’s achievement, for it would be to describe some of the most intricate workings of the human mind” (p. 15). Reading is a complex and intricate process much of which happens in the minds of those attempting the process. This complexity, in turn, often makes it difficult to articulate what a “good” reader or “struggling” reader is. Are they successful in decoding and alphabetics? Do they have prosody while they read? Are they able to comprehend and think critically about their texts? Reading is multifaceted; many individual skills make up the whole of reading and as stated earlier there is much debate as to the best way to teach students those individual skills.

Although there may be disagreement regarding the best way to teach reading there is little argument that the definition of reading has evolved significantly. The definition of what it means to be literate has advanced with the advancement of society—socially, economically, and technologically (Strickland, 2003). As our nation evolved from an agrarian to an industrial and most recently a global, technologically-dependent society, the definition of reading has evolved as well. For most of the last century reading was defined as being able to decode words. It was once assumed a person was literate if they could simply read words even without understanding of those words (Allington, 2002).

Langer (2002) defined reading as a much more rigorous process as she conducted a five year study to determine what separated effective schools from typical schools. Effective schools were defined as those schools who “beat the odds” when compared to schools with similar populations; these effective schools not only outperformed their counterparts on standardized tests but were also capable of high literacy. High literacy refers to students’ abilities to thoughtfully participate in reading, writing, and discussions,
use what they’ve learned in new situations, and perform well on literacy tasks and high-stakes testing (Langer, 2002). Langer’s definition of high literacy is echoed by Snow, Burns and Griffin (1998) in the influential report Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children, “In a technological society, the demands for higher literacy are ever increasing, creating more grievous consequences for those who fall short” (p. 34).

Instructional leaders must be able to recognize, encourage, and support this type of high literacy in order to ensure that students are becoming literate in the truest sense of the word. As reading evolves, so does the role of the instructional leader. It is a parallel journey—the more students need to know in reading, the more teachers need to know and in turn the more principals need to know in order to support and facilitate this new definition of reading. “Administrators must be able to know strong instruction when they see it, to encourage it when they don’t, and to set the conditions for continuous academic learning among their professional staffs” (Stein & Nelson, p. 424).

**What Needs To Be Taught In Reading: According to the National Reading Panel Report**

In 2000, the National Reading Panel (NRP), comprised of fourteen members including reading research scientists, college of education professors, reading teachers, educational administrators, and parents, published what is arguably the most widely-known review of reading instruction to date. Congress asked the Director of the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) to,

convene a national panel to assess the effectiveness of various approaches to teaching children to read. The panel was charged with providing a report that
“should present the panel’s conclusions, an indication of the readiness for application in the classroom of the results of this research, and, if appropriate, a strategy for rapidly disseminating this information to facilitate effective reading instruction in schools” (National Reading Panel, NIH Publication No. 00-4754, p. 1-1).

To be included in the NRP’s scientific review of the research literature on reading instruction, a study had to be: relevant to the instruction of reading among normal readers, published in a scientific journal, have an experiment with one treatment and control group, and have participants or classrooms randomly assigned to those treatment and control groups (Report of the National Reading Panel, 2000, pp. 1-5 – 1-6).

According to its own report, the Panel only included studies that could sustain a claim of effectiveness with experimental or quasi-experimental studies of sufficient size and scope. “Their concern, as scientists, was whether or not a particular line of instruction was clearly enough defined and whether the evidence of its experimental success was strong” (Report of The National Reading Panel- Minority View, 2000, p. 2). The panel reported the five areas of literacy they chose to study were critical in learning to read: alphabets (phonemic awareness and phonics), fluency, comprehension and vocabulary; often referred to as the “Fab 5”.

This report is often heralded as the “go-to” manual when creating literacy programs. Publishing companies such as Houghton-Mifflin and Macmillan McGraw-Hill advertise that their programs will ensure student success as they are scientifically researched based according to the NRP report. While many reading researchers agree that these five areas should be included in a balanced literacy program (discussed in more
depth later in this review) (Allington, 2002; Flippo, 1998; Morrow, Gambrell & Pressley, 2003; Pressley, Allington, Wharton-McDonald, Block, Morrow, 2001; Routman, 2003; Taylor, Pearson, Clark & Walpole, 1999; Zemelman, Daniels & Hyde, 2005), the report has not gone without criticism in regard to its methodologies and what it chose not to address.

Joanne Yatvin, Ph.D., former elementary, middle and high school teacher, principal, superintendent, vice-president of NCTE, and member of the NRP panel, wrote in her minority view,

These reviews show comprehensive and painstaking work by the subcommittees. They will prove valuable, I think, to other experimental researchers as they seek to expand the body of knowledge on those topics and fill in the gaps. On the other hand, the reviews are of limited usefulness to teachers, administrators, and policymakers because they fail to address the key issues that have made elementary schools both a battleground for advocates of opposing philosophies and a prey for purveyors of quick fixes…In fairness to the panel, it must be recognized that the charge from Congress was too demanding to be accomplished by a small body of unpaid volunteers, working part time, without staff support, over a period of a year and a half…In the end, the work of the NRP is not of poor quality; it is just unbalanced and, to some extent, irrelevant (2000, p. 3).

Garan (2002) argued the report of the National Reading Panel is a blatantly flawed report. She defended this argument by refuting the NRP’s definition of reading as, “isolated skills that could be mastered and performed by children regardless of whether or not they
could actually apply the skills to text‖ (p. 14) and stated they disregarded the intricacies of the reading process and children’s learning (Garan, 2002). She added to her argument that the NRP eliminated a large, widely respected body of research from its report because the studies did not conform to their scientific, medical model (Garan, 2002).

What is an instructional leader to make of this? Is it enough for a principal to know what phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension sound like, and then make sure they see it in their teacher’s classrooms? After all, the National Reading Panel and the abundance of available reading programs all call for the Fab 5 (phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, comprehension, and vocabulary) to be taught systematically and explicitly. Yet there is research to support that the NRP report is flawed and that the Fab 5 are not enough on their own. “Depth of subject matter knowledge and knowledge of how students learn those subjects does seem to give administrators a significant advantage as effective instructional leaders” (Stein and Nelson, 2003, p 443). While most principals would accept this statement as valid the challenge, especially in reading, is recognizing what subject matter knowledge to learn.

The following two sections will attempt to address that challenge by reviewing the literature on what should be taught in reading and what are best practices in reading. This author admits that like Huey, “to completely analyze what we do when we read would almost be the acme of a psychologist’s achievement”, (1908, p. 15) but also recognized like Allington (2002), “the last 25 years have been exciting times for literacy researchers because so much has been learned about the processes of reading and writing” (p. 41). These sections do not presume to present every facet of reading instruction and pedagogy that could possibly be successful with every student in every
school; instead, these sections will present what is agreed upon by most researchers to be effective for students, therefore, should become a part of an instructional leader’s content knowledge.

Finally, this author conceded being of a balanced literacy background. This philosophical belief system was borne out of practice, reading of research and sensibility of how the world works. “The problems we face are too vexing to limit ourselves to a single methodology or epistemology” (Pearson, 2004, p. 244). Lyon, in his 1999 testimony to Congress, called for just this type of balance,

In order to develop the most effective instructional approaches and interventions, we must clearly define what works, the conditions under which it works, and what may not be helpful. This requires a thoughtful integration of experimental, quasi-experimental, and qualitative/descriptive methodologies (p. 6).

As was stated in the introduction, ask any educator how best to teach reading and you will not only receive an answer but you will receive “proof” from their experiences as to why their way is the best way. The following information discusses through multiple methodologies what needs to be taught in reading, effective practices in reading, and specific actions principals can take to support these findings at their own site.

What Needs to be Taught in Reading: A Thoughtful Integration of Methodologies

Hoewing and Dowell (2009) conducted a three year case study where they observed elementary administrators (n = 62) in a literacy development intervention designed to build an administrator’s content knowledge, pedagogy, and supervision of teacher’s practice. The administrators were placed in learning communities to work in
literature studies and discussion groups to explore literacy issues and concerns.

Throughout the three year intervention data were collected through participant observation, reflection, and review of artifacts. Field notes were recorded quarterly over the course of the intervention during site visits, when meeting with master teachers and alone after meetings. The researchers also kept a yearly journal to record implementation decisions, resources, events, and situations in relation to the participants. Additionally, artifacts such as emails and notes from colleagues of participants and teachers were collected.

These field notes were analyzed using Strauss & Corbin’s (1990) open coding and Creswell’s (1998) constant comparative method. The researchers compared all sources of data and coded categories when themes and patterns emerged. Three major issues emerged from the data analysis: building a literacy knowledge base, the importance of literacy learning environments, and how to supervise and evaluate literacy teachers (Hoewing & Dowell, 2009).

Qualitative research like Hoewing and Dowell’s has come under considerable criticism since moving from the field of anthropology into educational research. Primary concerns raised about qualitative research often revolve around: reliability of data, validity of research conclusions, and generalizability of findings due to their illumination of a single phenomenon. It was argued that the single phenomenon study was too narrow to generalize to other groups and settings (Charles, 1988, p. 152). Conversely qualitative research, “helps us understand and explain the meaning of social phenomena…and can reveal how all the parts work together to form a whole” (Merriam, 1998, pp. 5-6). Hoewing and Dowell’s research, while only focusing on one school district and the
elementary principals contained therein, was conducted in the 100th largest district in the nation; and as a large, public, urban district their findings have bearing on similar districts across the nation. Of particular relevance to the idea of leadership content knowledge in reading was their finding that, “in respect to literacy, leadership was possessing and understanding a common lexicon of terms and a shared understanding of what terms mean” (Hoewing & Dowell, 2009, p. 15).

Instructional leaders need a common vocabulary and common understanding of that vocabulary in order to communicate with teachers when discussing student progress and teaching decisions, as well as when evaluating teachers (Hoewing & Dowell, 2009). Goldwyn (2008) also found, “knowledge of each element [reading components] is necessary for proper implementation” (p. 58). This common vocabulary, at least in the state of Florida, is assessed on the Florida Educational Leadership Exam (FELE). Approved by Florida’s State Board of Education in 2008, the FELE contains three subtests: (1) Instructional Leadership, (2) Operational Leadership, and (3) School Leadership. According to the Competencies and Skills Required for Certification in Educational Leadership (2008) under the subtest of Instructional Leadership, would-be administrators must demonstrate knowledge by using, “school based student assessment data on reading performance, [and being able to] identify instructional strategies to facilitate student’s phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and reading comprehension throughout the content areas” (p. 5). As stated earlier, many reading researchers agreed that these five areas should be included in a balanced literacy program (Allington, 2002; Flippo, 1998; Morrow, Gambrell & Pressley, 2003; Pressley, Allington, Wharton-McDonald, Block, Morrow, 2001; Routman, 2003; Taylor, Pearson, Clark &
Walpole, 1999; Zemelman, Daniels & Hyde, 2005), therefore a definition, description, and task examples of these areas will be discussed in the next five sections.

**Phonemic Awareness**

“Phonemic awareness is the awareness of the sounds (phonemes) that make up spoken words” (Harris & Hodges, 1995, p. 185). Often cited as one of the two best predictors of reading achievement (letter knowledge being the second), phonemic awareness is most effective in kindergarten and first grade. (Share, et al., 1984, p. 1314). Phonemic awareness is the understanding that speech or language is made up of individual sounds or phonemes. Children who have phonemic awareness, “recognize that the speech stream is a sequence of small sounds…and can identify and manipulate the three sounds in the spoken word fish (/f/-/i/-/sh/)” (Yopp and Yopp, 2000, p. 130).

Grounding phonemic awareness in language play is most effective when the instruction is deliberate, purposeful, and intentional. Although the difficulty of the phonemic awareness task is mostly dependent on the ability of the student, there is a possible hierarchy to the difficulty of sound manipulation tasks. This hierarchy in order from easiest to most difficult is: matching, isolation, substitution, blending, segmentation, and deletion (Yopp & Yopp, 2000).

**Phonics**

Essentially phonics is the relationship between speech and print (Beck, 2006). Phonics falls under the umbrella term of phonological awareness and is used especially in emergent and early stages of reading. Phonics, maybe more so than any other area of reading, is often debated. “The interested reader can get a flavor of this debate by
reviewing such sources as Adams (1990), Chall (1983a, 1989), Carbo (1988), and so on. To rehash these arguments would not be useful” (Stahl, 1992, p. 619). With phonics instruction it is not an “either/or” debate. Students, especially those with little exposure to reading and writing, have had fewer opportunities to figure out how letters and sounds work (Allington and Cunningham, 2006). Perhaps what is most important is not whether to teach phonics or not, but what constitutes quality phonics instruction.

Cunningham (2000) suggested supporting students by applying phonics instruction to real reading when she posited that phonics activities should all stress transfer. Phonics knowledge is only useful when it is applied to real reading (Cunningham, 2000). Phonics instruction is a necessary part of any literacy program and while there is no one best way to teach phonics (Allington & Cunningham, 2002; Beck, 2006; Cunningham, 2000, 2003; Garan, 2002; Stahl, 1992; Zemelman, Daniels & Hyde, 2005), integrating phonics instruction into a balanced literacy program including phonemic awareness (when needed), vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension instruction seem to provide the most success.

**Vocabulary**

“One of the most persistent findings in reading research is that the extent of students’ vocabulary knowledge relates strongly to their reading comprehension and overall academic success” (Lehr, Osborn & Heibert, 2004, p. 6). Like fluency, vocabulary has a strong correlational relationship with comprehension—the higher the vocabulary, the higher the overall reading achievement. Vocabulary knowledge is a significant predictor of reading comprehension (Blachowichz et al, 2006). This
relationship has proven elusive for researchers to demonstrate because vocabulary is learned both directly and indirectly (Nichols, 2002).

The following five practices allow for a balanced approach to vocabulary instruction: (1) intentional and explicit instruction of words to be learned, (2) multiple exposures to words being taught, (3) models of appropriate and effective independent word-learning strategies, (4) a rich verbal environment that stimulates an atmosphere of word consciousness, and (5) encouraging wide reading (Beck, 2002; Cunningham, 2009). As a student’s vocabulary increases, fluency is also affected.

Fluency

“Although there is no single definition of fluency, there appears to be consensus regarding its primary components: accurate decoding, automatic word recognition, and the appropriate use of stress, pitch, and suitable phrasing, or the prosodic elements of language” (Kuhn, 2002, p. 129). Fluency without comprehension, though, is word calling. Routman (2003) submitted fluency, when it focuses on understanding, is an important reading goal. The purpose of fluency instruction is not simply reading quickly but reading fluently as meaning is derived from the text (Rasinski, 2000).

Fluency seems to have a symbiotic relationship with most other areas of reading: word recognition, decoding, vocabulary knowledge, oral language, and comprehension. If a student has automaticity in recognizing whole words and word parts, and an average vocabulary, fluency is often a skill that comes easily to a reader. Consequently, the fluent reader has a greater chance at comprehending what they read as the cognitive capacity used to sound out unknown words is freed up to focus on understanding the words. The
disfluent reader, on the other hand, uses much of their available cognitive capacity on sounding out word parts and chunks. Reading that is laborious and lacks fluency discourages reading, interferes with comprehension and creates frustration in the reader (Rasinski, 2000). Effective fluency practices are a necessary component of all reading classrooms. “Finally, it is important to remember that while students can be trained to read fluently, this instruction should not ignore, and does not preclude, comprehension of the text” (Richards, 2000, p. 538).

Comprehension

Dolores Durkin in her seminal study *What Classroom Observations Reveal About Reading Comprehension Instruction* (1978) sought to discover what classroom observations revealed about reading comprehension instruction. Through 300 hours of classroom observation and analysis of reading and social studies teaching blocks, Durkin and her team of researchers investigated if elementary schools provide comprehension instruction and what amount of time is allotted to it. Three sub-studies were conducted in 24 classrooms within 13 Illinois school systems analyzing comprehension instruction from multiple perspectives: fourth grade, grades 3-6, and individual children. In all studies, classrooms were visited on three successive days from early September to mid-May and researchers noted teacher activities, time spent in each activity, audience, and source.

Major findings of the study exploded two assumptions originally made by the researchers and confirmed a third. Durkin originally assumed: “reading comprehension can be taught, reading comprehension is being taught, and what is done to teach it is not
as effective as comprehension instruction needs to be if reading problems are to be reduced” (Durkin, 1978-1979, p. 483). Researchers found practically no comprehension instruction—less than one per cent of total instructional time (28 minutes)—and what little instruction they found was conducted in the form of interrogation (assessment). This interrogation instruction, it appeared, was primarily concerned with receiving a right or wrong answer from students, not in teaching them how to find the answer. “At no time was study skills instruction seen” (Durkin, 1978-1979, p. 497).

Effective Practices

“As demands increase for administrators to improve teaching and learning in their schools, administrators must know strong instruction when they see it, encourage it when they do not, and set the conditions for continuous academic learning among their professional staffs” (Stein & Nelson, 2003, p. 424). While this is a reasonable expectation of an instructional leader; it becomes especially challenging in the area of reading as there is near unanimity in the field of reading research that there is no one best way to teach reading (Allington, 2002; Flippo, 1998; Lyon, 1999; Morrow, Gambrell & Pressley, 2003; National Reading Panel Report, 2000; Pearson, 2004; Pressley, Allington, Wharton-McDonald, Block, Morrow, 2001; Routman, 2003; Taylor, Pearson, Clark & Walpole, 1999; Zemelman, Daniels & Hyde, 2005). What, then, would an instructional leader look for in terms of strong instruction? Is there any agreement among the field in regard to effective practices in reading instruction that an administrator could recognize, encourage, and set conditions around for continuous academic learning?
Pearson (2004) addressed this idea when he called for educators to favor an ecologically balanced approach to reading instruction; an approach that favored taking the best of all approaches and incorporating those components into a “balanced repertoire of instructional strategies” (p. 245). Pearson provided four rationales for educators to embrace ecologically balanced reading instruction: (1) his reading of the research points to the balanced-curricular position, not the new-phonics position or the whole-language position, and it does so on both a theoretical and a pedagogical plane, (2) it is more respectful of the entire range of research as it does not exclude major research paradigms or methodological approaches, (3) it respects the wisdom of practice as it includes studies of exemplary teachers who employ varying approaches, and (4) it respects the professional history of reading research by retaining practices from each era that have proven useful, expanding and extending them to render them more effective and useful for students and teachers.

Flippo’s (1998) qualitative research on points of agreement in the field of reading is similar to Pearson’s (2004) call for an ecologically balanced approach. Using the Delphi technique study, defined by Linstone and Turoff (1975) as “a method for structuring a group communication process so that the process is effective in allowing a group of individuals, as a whole, to deal with a complex problem” (p. 3), Flippo asked eleven literacy experts from varying fields and with broad ranges of beliefs and philosophies: What can you agree to regarding context and practices for teaching reading? Her sample size, although small with only eleven participants, was well balanced for the purpose of her study. Using purposive (or judgmental) sampling, Flippo
sought to find participants representing three of the most prevalent philosophies in reading instruction: traditional, whole language and interactive.

The experts, from varying philosophical beliefs, unanimously agreed on several contexts and practices that would make learning to read difficult and many other practices that facilitate learning to read. Most notably among the contexts and practices that would make reading to learn difficult were: teaching reading as something separate from writing, talking and listening, expecting students to spell all words they can read correctly, following a basal without modification, using workbooks with each lesson, and emphasizing only phonics instruction. Notably among the contexts and practices that would facilitate learning to read were: combining reading with other language processes, provide students lots of time and opportunity to read real books, use a broad spectrum of sources for student reading materials, and provide multiple, repeated demonstrations of how reading is done or used. Interestingly, all experts involved in the study were concerned that the readers of the study understood that there are no certainties when dealing with children and their learning (Flippo, 1998). In essence, they all agreed that there is no one best way to teach reading to children, but there are practices that will facilitate or inhibit learning to read. Teachers and administrators alike, “must be able to understand literacy and learning well enough to adapt teaching and learning environments, materials, and methods to particular situations and students” (p. 38).

Mazzoni and Gambrell (2003) also called for finding common ground in effective practices when they declared, “we must move away beyond the terms and labels that are driving us apart…and move toward common ground” (p. 12). The authors supported Pearson’s (2004) ecologically balanced instruction and Flippo’s (1998) no one best way
to teach reading to children, by stating that effective practice was more like a custom fit rather than a one size fits all. Teachers using effective practice draw on a variety of strategies and methods to meet the needs of the students in their room instead of relying on a prescribed order of teaching available through most reading programs. Similar to the list of effective practices offered by Flippo’s (1998) expert sample, Mazzoni and Gambrell (2003) offered ten research-based effective practices: (1) teach reading for authentic, meaning-making literacy experiences, (2) use high quality literature, (3) integrate word study/phonics into reading/writing instruction, (4) use multiple text to expand concepts, (5) balance teacher led and student led discussions, (6) build a class community that emphasizes important concepts and builds background knowledge, (7) work with students in small groups, (8) give students plenty of time to read in class, (9) provide direct instruction in phonics and comprehension and balance direct instruction, guided instruction, and independent learning, and (10) use a variety of assessments to inform instruction.

Summary

Instructional leadership is a multifaceted, complicated role. At the very least, one must be able to hire and manage personnel, establish and communicate clear institutional goals and objectives, create a culture of interdependency, and design a sound instructional program. An instructional leader who has leadership content knowledge will make decisions about the instructional program based on researched methods and skills. The combination of effective leadership practices and content knowledge ensures
that the primary responsibilities of a school leader, building intellectual and social capital (Fink & Resnick, 2001), are actualized. An instructional leader without leadership knowledge will have difficulty building the organization and culture necessary to keep a school functioning. An instructional leader without content knowledge will have difficulty establishing a sound instructional program to ensure students learn.

The reading skills and practices discussed in the previous sections offered a glimpse at what research suggests should be present in elementary reading classrooms. Principals with leadership content knowledge in reading can acknowledge these elements when they see them, encourage them when they do not, and provide support or professional development when needed.

While there is no one right way to teach reading, a leader who has knowledge of generally accepted research based practices should be able to fend off fads in favor of effective teaching and learning. A principal’s understanding of reading instruction, ability to be an instructional leader, and vision for the reading program at their school has a sizable influence on the literacy development of students.

**Rationale for research**

Jermaine is nine-years-old, African-American and a struggling reader. This is his second time in second grade and he knows he is taller and bigger than his classmates. He does not fit comfortably in the “baby” seats and the games the other kids want to play are, in his words, “stupid.” Jermaine describes almost everything as stupid—especially reading. He doesn’t understand why his teachers continue to ask him to read every day when it is hard and it does not get any better. Every day he has to read from those (in his
words) “stupid” books with the “stupid” words that look different than what the other kids read. All the other kids read longer chapter books and Jermaine’s books are little and only have four or five words on each page. Jermaine does not have reading with his classroom teacher; he has reading with the “other lady” down the hall.

Reading with the other lady is always the same; she picks Jermaine up, goes to the next class and picks up Larry and Dante. Two doors down she picks up T’tonisha, then they all have to walk past the rest of the second grade rooms, past the third grade rooms, beyond the library to the portable that contains the other lady’s room. Once inside Jermaine and the rest of his group sit in the yellow chairs and open up the “orange” book. The orange book does not have a title like the books in the library. It just has two long words on the front; one begins with a capital c and the other looks like the word read but has extra letters at the end. The other lady tells them which page to open up to and then she makes a quick jerky signal with her hand telling Jermaine and the other kids to “get ready.” She then calls on each student to read a page out loud and if they miss a word she makes a stop signal with her hand and says, “Stop. Go back. Try that again.” The other lady tells Jermaine to look at the letters and remember the sound they make but that is the hard part—the sounds. Jermaine does not understand why there is not something else he can try or why he is so “stupid” he cannot remember the sounds. He hates coming to reading with the other lady and often causes trouble in line while walking to her portable. Sometimes he causes so much trouble she sits Jermaine in the corner once they get there. She hands him a packet of dittos to do. Sometimes he tries, but most of the time he cannot read the directions so he ends up drawing pictures of cars, his friends, or dogs. It does not matter because the other lady never collects the dittos; when the
reading time is over she just calls out to Jermaine, “It’s time to go. I hope tomorrow you make better choices.” Jermaine’s choice would be to not come to this class at all.

When the other lady is absent Jermaine is allowed to stay in his classroom during reading. His teacher does not meet with him but he is able to see what reading looks like in his classroom while he is in the other lady’s room. He watches as other kids talk about the books they are reading. He sees them in small groups with the teacher and notices she does not make them read aloud, she moves in closer to them so she can hear them read. This teacher does not use any hand signals and the other kids do not have to, “Stop. Go back. Try that again.” This teacher gives the other readers many things to try when they do not know a word. Jermaine also sees that the books the kids are reading look like real books, with a real title. He likes this reading class better and does not understand why he has to leave this place every day to go with the other lady. The longer he sits and thinks about it the angrier he becomes. Jermaine does the only thing he knows to do when he gets angry—he lashes out. It begins by throwing his pencil eraser against the wall hard enough that it bounces back. He continues throwing harder each time, until he accidentally throws it too hard and it hits the boy sitting near the book case. That boy looks up, sees Jermaine looking at him, and runs to tell the teacher that Jermaine hit him. Jermaine knows what is going to happen next—the principal’s office—and he immediately yells to the teacher in the back of the room, “I didn’t do nothin’!” The teacher asks him to explain and Jermaine just repeats, “I didn’t do nothin’!” Then adds, “He’s lyin’! This is stupid! I hate this school!” The teacher calls the office and because this is the second time this week, Jermaine is sent to in-school detention. There are no books in detention
so Jermaine has successfully avoided the one thing he did not want to do in the first place—read.

When the teachers meet to discuss Jermaine all they can say is, “he can’t read.” When probed the teachers cannot discuss with any depth Jermaine’s strengths and weaknesses as a reader other than that he has difficulty sounding out words. They know he does not like to read and he rarely chooses to read on his own. Unfortunately for Jermaine neither his classroom teacher nor the other lady knows much about reading. One is new—her first year—and overwhelmed. The other lady has not been to a reading training in five years and does not think she needs to because she has a program she uses. The principal asks about Jermaine during report card conferences each 9-weeks, and asks both teachers what they are doing to provide interventions, but does not offer any specific recommendations on what might work for Jermaine after she notices that he has been “below level” for three grading periods. Three educators together cannot find a solution for Jermaine’s reading difficulties and Jermaine is approaching the end of his second time in second grade, reading no better than he could the first time. Jermaine, if he continues struggling, is only five to six years away from dropping out of school altogether—on his way to becoming a statistic.

Who is to be held accountable for Jermaine? The first year teacher who is still struggling on a daily basis with paperwork, parents, and her “preparing new educators” program? The veteran teacher who was told that “this reading program” would solve all reading problems if used on a daily basis and implemented with fidelity? Or is the instructional leader of the school ultimately accountable? Does the instructional leader’s knowledge or lack thereof have any influence over teacher knowledge and subsequently
over Jermaine’s achievement? If the principal was knowledgeable in reading would he/she be able to offer specific reading strategies that would help Jermaine overcome his challenges? Would the teachers be provided specific and targeted support, coaching and training that would not only help Jermaine but all the other students having reading difficulties? What effect does a principal’s literacy knowledge have on their support of effective reading instruction? Those questions, Jermaine, and the thousands of students like him, keep me awake at night. They keep me at work long after it is time to go home, keep me questioning what I tell teachers to do, and keep me focused on the idea of the principal as instructional leader. What leadership content knowledge do principals need specifically in the area of literacy? What is a principal’s role in making teachers more knowledgeable? What specific actions do “successful” principals take to make their teachers more knowledgeable? The focus of my research was never a question of what I wanted to research, but rather how to ask the right questions to find the information I needed to help students like Jermaine.

**Research Plan**

“Sometimes selecting a case turns out to be no ‘choice’ at all…It happens when a teacher decides to study a student having difficulty, when we get curious about a particular agency, or when we take the responsibility of evaluating a program. The case is given” (Merriam, p. 65). My choice to investigate the effects of a principal’s literacy knowledge on a teacher’s literacy knowledge and the leadership decisions principals make, was really no choice at all. In my position as district resource teacher for elementary reading I have spent the majority of my time in schools where Jermaine was not the exception but the rule. These schools had large pockets of poor, minority students
languishing in classrooms with ill-equipped teachers who did not know how to meet the numerous needs of the children they served. As I worked with teachers facing these challenges, I often debriefed my observations, plans, and conversations with their administrators. I have been dismayed at the lack of depth in the conversations I have had with these instructional leaders. This lack of administrative literacy knowledge has also been felt by teachers looking to them for guidance and leadership. My research investigated eight questions:

1. Is there a relationship between principals’ perceptions of their reading knowledge and principals’ perceptions of the leadership actions they take to support reading instruction?

2. Is there a difference between principals’ perceptions of their reading knowledge and the type of school where they work: Title I, Renaissance or non-Title I?

2a. Is there a relationship between principals’ perceptions of their reading knowledge and their years of experience?

3. Is there a difference between principals’ perceptions of leadership actions they take to support reading instruction and the type of school where they work: Title I, Renaissance or non-Title I?

3a. Is there a relationship between principals’ perceptions of the leadership actions they take to support reading instruction and their years of experience?

4. Is there a relationship between teachers’ perceptions of their principal’s reading knowledge and teachers’ perceptions of the leadership actions principals take to support reading instruction?
5. Is there a difference between teachers’ perceptions of their principal’s reading knowledge and the type of school where the teachers work?

5a. Is there a relationship between teachers’ perceptions of their principal’s reading knowledge and teachers’ years of experience?

6. Is there a difference between teachers’ perceptions of the leadership actions principals take to support reading instruction and the type of school where the teachers work?

6a. Is there a relationship between teachers’ perceptions of the leadership actions principals take to support reading instruction and teachers’ years of experience?

7. Is there a relationship between principals’ perceptions of their reading knowledge and teachers’ perceptions of their principal’s reading knowledge?

8. Is there a relationship between principals’ perceptions of the leadership actions they take to support reading instruction and teachers’ perceptions of the leadership actions their principals take to support reading instruction?

“Without knowledge that connects subject matter, learning, and teaching to acts of leadership, leadership floats disconnected from the very processes it is designed to govern” (Stein & Nelson, 2003, p. 446). There is little debate the principal or instructional leader is a crucial element in the success of a school; the debate, rather, lies in the definition of instructional leader and the role that leader plays in the school success equation. Based on this review of literature in relation to the role of the instructional leader, leadership content knowledge, and reading, I argue that a primary role of the elementary principal is to have leadership content knowledge about the subjects in their purview. While I admit that all subjects are important, literacy is the gatekeeper to
success in other areas. Students who do not acquire the skills to read, process, and comprehend text at high levels will surely struggle in other areas, since writing, math, science, and social studies all require reading. If a principal is to accept the role of instructional leader then a principal accepts that leadership content knowledge, especially in reading, is a skill that teachers and students alike deserve from their leader.

The next chapter will describe the methodology used in the study, to include the research design, sampling, maximizing responses, details of the surveys used, and data collection and analysis procedures.
Chapter 3 Methodology

Overview

The evolving role of principal as instructional leader calls for an increased level of knowledge of the content areas under their purview. This increase in content area knowledge influences leadership decisions regarding the organization of the school allowing teachers to do their best work (McGhee & Lew, 2007; Nelson & Sassi, 2005; Stein & Nelson, 2005). The review of literature provides little understanding of what knowledge principals must need or bring to their role as instructional leader in order to act in specific ways that support school improvement. Additionally, little is known about how principals use content knowledge when deciding which action to take (Goldring, Huff, Spillane, & Barnes, 2006). The study of leadership content knowledge and the specific actions principals take to support and encourage effective teaching practices in reading are especially relevant in light of increased accountability.

In order to add to examine the construct of leadership content knowledge this study examined four variables: (1) a principal’s perception of their reading knowledge, (2) a principal’s perception of the leadership actions they take to support reading instruction, (3) teachers’ perceptions of their principal’s reading knowledge, and (4) teachers’ perceptions of the leadership actions their principal takes to support reading instruction. Figure 3 illustrates the relationships between those four variables as well as
two demographic factors—type of school and years of experience as a principal or teacher. The numbers in figure 3 correspond to each research question.

![Diagram of Variables and Relationships Analyzed](image)

**Figure 3. Illustration of Variables and Relationships Analyzed**

This chapter discusses the design of the research including sampling, instrumentation, data collection and data analysis.

**Research Design**

According to Nardi (2003) in order to explore, describe, explain and/or predict human social behavior, a research design must include scientific methods for gathering observations. Empirical observations (data), systematic and deliberate methods, and objective and replicable procedures characterize scientific thinking. This study implemented a quantitative, non-experimental method and design to explore the naturally occurring variation in variables as a means of examining the relationship amongst those variables. In this instance, principals’ perceived reading knowledge, teachers’ perceptions regarding principals’ perceived reading knowledge, principals’ actions to
support reading instruction, teachers’ perceptions of principals’ actions to support reading instruction, and demographic information were all variables studied to determine if relationships existed among and between the variables. Descriptive statistics, measures of central tendency, and dispersion (e.g., mean, standard deviation), were used to characterize the scores calculated on the two survey instruments used in this study. Measures of association and tests of statistical significance were performed to establish the strength and direction of relationships as well as their significance.

In order to examine the relationships among the variables, two similar survey instruments were used to measure both principals’ and teachers’ perceptions regarding principals’ knowledge and principals’ support of reading instruction: the Principal’s Support for Reading Instruction – Principal Survey (PSRI-PS) and the Principal’s Support for Reading Instruction – Teacher Survey (PSRI-TS). The surveys also allowed for the collection of demographic information including years of experience and type of school where each participant worked (e.g. Title I/non-Title I). Table 1 provides an overview of the research questions, data collected, and analysis used in this study.

Table 1
**Research questions and how they were addressed**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Data to be Collected</th>
<th>Method of Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Is there a relationship between principals’ perceptions of their reading knowledge and principals’ perceptions of leadership actions they take to support reading instruction?</td>
<td>Questions 1-21 on the Reading Content Knowledge section of the PSRI-PS and 1-15 on the Leadership Actions section of the PSRI-PS.</td>
<td>Pearson product moment correlation ($r$) to establish strength and direction of the correlation and statistical significance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Is there a difference between principals’ perceptions of their reading knowledge and the type of school where they work: Title I, Renaissance or non-Title I?</td>
<td>Questions 1-21 of the Reading Content Knowledge section of the PSRI-PS and question 3-4 of the Demographic section of the PSRI-PS.</td>
<td>ANOVA to determine statistically significant differences in perception of reading knowledge of principals at Title I, Renaissance or non-Title I schools.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2a. Is there a relationship between principals’ perceptions of their reading knowledge and their years of experience as a principal?</td>
<td>Questions 1-21 of the Reading Content Knowledge section of the PSRI-PS and question 2 of the Demographic section of the PSRI-PS.</td>
<td>Pearson product moment correlation ($r$) to establish strength and direction of the correlation and statistical significance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Is there a difference between principals’ perceptions of leadership actions they take to support reading instruction and the type of school where they work: Title I, Renaissance or non-Title I?</td>
<td>Questions 1-15 of the Reading Content Knowledge section of the PSRI-PS and question 3-4 of the Demographic section of the PSRI-PS.</td>
<td>ANOVA to determine statistically significant differences in perception of leadership actions taken to support reading instruction of principals at Title I, Renaissance or non-Title I schools.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3a. Is there a relationship between principals’ perceptions of leadership actions they take to support reading instruction and their years of experience as a principal?</td>
<td>Questions 1-15 of the Reading Content Knowledge section of the PSRI-PS and question 1 of the Demographic section of the PSRI-PS.</td>
<td>Pearson product moment correlation ($r$) to establish strength and direction of the correlation and statistical significance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Is there a relationship between teachers’ perceptions of principals’ reading knowledge and teachers’ perceptions of leadership actions principals take to support reading instruction?</td>
<td>Questions 1-16 on the Reading Content Knowledge section of the PSRI-TS and 1-15 on the Leadership Actions section of the PSRI-TS.</td>
<td>Pearson product moment correlation ($r$) to establish strength and direction of the correlation and statistical significance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Is there a difference between teachers’ perceptions of their principal’s reading knowledge and the type of school where the teachers work?</td>
<td>Questions 1-16 on the Reading Content Knowledge section of the PSRI-TS and the survey respondent’s school code.</td>
<td>ANOVA to determine statistically significant differences in teachers’ perceptions of their principals’ reading knowledge at Title I, Renaissance or non-Title I schools.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Question</td>
<td>Data to be Collected</td>
<td>Method of Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5a. Is there a relationship between teachers’ perceptions of their principal’s reading knowledge and teachers’ years of experience?</td>
<td>Questions 1-16 on the Reading Content Knowledge section of the PSRI-TS and question 1 of the Demographic section of the PSRI-TS.</td>
<td>Pearson product moment correlation (r) to establish strength and direction of the correlation and statistical significance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Is there a difference between teachers’ perceptions of the leadership actions principals take to support reading instruction and the type of school where the teachers work?</td>
<td>Questions 1-15 on the Leadership Actions section of the PSRI-TS and the survey respondent’s school code.</td>
<td>ANOVA to determine statistically significant differences in teachers’ perceptions of their principals’ support for reading instruction at Title I, Renaissance or non-Title I schools.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6a. Is there a relationship between teachers’ perceptions of the leadership actions principals take to support reading instruction and teachers’ years of experience?</td>
<td>Questions 1-15 on the Leadership Actions section of the PSRI-TS and question 1 of the Demographic section of the PSRI-TS.</td>
<td>Pearson product moment correlation (r) to establish strength and direction of the correlation and statistical significance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Is there a relationship between principals’ perceptions of their reading knowledge and teachers’ perceptions of their principal’s reading knowledge?</td>
<td>Questions 1-21 of the PSRI-PS: Reading Content Knowledge portion; Questions 1-16 of the PSRI-TS: Reading Content Knowledge section. (5 of the 21 questions on the PSRI-PS were used to gather information but not used in the correlation.)</td>
<td>Pearson product moment correlation (r) to establish strength and direction of the correlation and statistical significance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Is there a relationship between principals’ perceptions of leadership actions they take to support reading instruction and teachers’ perceptions of leadership actions principals take to support reading instruction?</td>
<td>Questions 1-15 on both the PSRI-PS and PSRI-TS: Leadership Actions section.</td>
<td>Pearson product moment correlation (r) to establish strength and direction of the correlation and statistical significance.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The research design of this study used an online survey tool called SurveyMonkey. The choice of an online survey reduced cost and increased time efficiency. This had the potential to increase responses as the probability of survey responses increases as the cost of money and time to the respondent decreases (Nardi, 2003).
Each item from the PSRI-PS and the PSRI-TS was entered into SurveyMonkey. In order to match principals and teachers per school (the unit of study for research questions 7 and 8), while maintaining anonymity to the researcher, the district where the research was conducted provided an anonymized list of elementary school principals and teachers and a randomly generated school code that enabled the principal to be matched with her/his teachers. Rather than providing a list of email addresses that included educators’ names, the researcher was provided the unique district numbers issued to each educator in the district being studied. A valid e-mail address could be generated from the unique educator identification number. For example, teacher Charlie Brown would typically have the e-mail address charlie.brown@sdps.k12.fl.us, but with the anonymized list the email address was 123456@sdps.k12.fl.us. This anonymized list allowed the surveys to be distributed without knowing any respondent’s identity. Because the surveys did not ask for names or school names, the results remained anonymous. Additionally, because the email addresses were not reported in the final dissertation, the school district was not able to review how individual principals or teachers responded. Essentially, the researcher did not see principal, teacher, or school names when the instruments were sent, and the district was not able to see principal, teacher, or school names or employee identification numbers when the results were returned.

Each survey created in SurveyMonkey received a unique identification number hyperlink. This hyperlink was included in the email addressed to each principal and teacher (Appendix F). In addition to the survey link, the email also included information about the researcher, the research conducted, an explanation of how the data collected were to remain anonymous, that the research was anonymous, and, if desired, how to ask
for the research from the International Review Board (IRB) at the University of South Florida.

Sampling

“The logic of surveys based on self-report questionnaires is to collect information from some group of people—or sample—in order to answer the research questions” (Punch, 2003, p. 36). This study used a non-probability sampling technique known as purposive or judgmental sampling. This type of sampling is often used when the researcher is working alone, has limited resources, limited time, and limited access to people (Punch, 2003). Additionally, purposive sampling is utilized when the researcher has identified a specific reason for choosing the population; usually to study specific traits of that population (Nardi, 2003). The specified school district was chosen due to its size as well as its diversity in schools and student population. The district had over 90,000 elementary students with a total of 144, Kindergarten-5th grade, traditional and magnet elementary schools. These 144 schools were made up of rural, urban, and suburban sites as well as Title I and non-Title I schools (Education Information & Accountability Services Data Report, May 2010). For this study, the population consisted of elementary (Kindergarten – fifth grade) principals of traditional and magnet schools. Also included in the population were teachers (general education and Exceptional Student Education), content area coaches, resource teachers, and support personnel (guidance counselors, school psychologists, etc.).
Maximizing Response Rates

When using survey research, attempting to increase response rates is crucial. This study utilized Porter’s (2004) suggestions for maximizing response rates. Porter suggested using multiple e-mail contacts (if possible, two reminders) as a single email reminder should double the number of respondents and sending the reminder email two days after the initial notification found the greatest returns (see Appendix F). Personalizing and keeping the content of the email contacts similar to that of a paper survey with a deadline and time estimation of how long it should take to complete the survey also yielded higher returns. These suggestions were utilized in an attempt to maximize response rates for the surveys.

Instrumentation

The instruments used in this study were designed around two constructs: principals’ perceived reading knowledge and perceived leadership actions taken to support reading instruction. The Principals’ Support for Reading Instruction – Principal Survey (PSRI-PS) and the Principals’ Support for Reading Instruction – Teacher Survey (PSRI-TS) consisted of 42 and 36 total items, respectively. In order to analyze principals’ perceptions of their reading knowledge and perceived leadership decisions in relation to reading instruction with their teachers’ perceptions of their knowledge and perceived leadership decisions in relation to reading instruction (research questions 7 and 8), the responses were matched by school and only responses from teachers whose principal also responded were used for the analysis. For all other research questions, all available principal or teacher data were analyzed to maximize use of the data.
Face validity

In order to establish face validity of both the PSRI-PS and the PSRI-TS, the original surveys (see Appendices A and B) were sent to five principals and five teachers for feedback on each item. Feedback included whether or not the question measured the intended variable (principals’ perceived knowledge, principals’ perceived leadership actions), clarity of the item, and any suggestions to add or delete items. The surveys were emailed to the principals and teachers asking for their expert opinion on each item and for permission to schedule a follow up interview in person or via phone. Based on suggestions from teachers and principals, revisions were made to the wording on both instruments (see Appendices D and E for the final revised surveys). Examples of revisions made to the PSRI-PS and PSRI-TS can be found in Table 2.

Table 2

_Examples of revisions made to the PSRI-PS and PSRI-TS after feedback from principals and teachers_

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instrument/Section: Original Question</th>
<th>Revised Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PSRI-PS/Reading Knowledge: I can read and interpret data from reading assessments.</td>
<td>I can read and interpret data from reading assessments to assist teachers in making decisions about classroom instruction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSRI-PS/Leadership Actions: I provide time in the master schedule for an uninterrupted 90-minute reading block.</td>
<td>I ensure every teacher has an uninterrupted 90-minute reading block.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSRI-TS/Reading Knowledge: My principal can interpret and use data from reading assessments to make decisions about the classroom instruction that takes place at our school.</td>
<td>My principal can read and interpret data from reading assessments to assist teachers in making decisions about classroom instruction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSRI-TS/Leadership Actions: My principal visits classrooms during the reading block, takes notes about what he/she sees, and discusses those observations with me.</td>
<td>My principal observes me during my reading block and discusses her/his observations with me.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Reliability

After revising both instruments based on feedback from principals and teachers, the PSRI-PS and PSRI-TS were sent via email to fifteen principals and fifteen teachers to establish reliability of the instruments (Appendix C). The survey was sent to both groups via email and included a link to the respective survey. Also included in the email was an explanation of test/retest reliability, why they would need to answer it twice, and that the results would not be used in the final survey. See Appendix C for copies of the test/retest emails sent to principals and teachers. Following the initial email twelve principals and fourteen teachers responded. Approximately two and a half weeks later, another email was sent to all principals and teachers who received the original email. Eight principals and ten teachers responded to both surveys.

Principal Survey (PSRI-PS)

After matching original survey responses to the second survey responses for principals (PSRI-PS), Pearson’s product moment correlation and Cronbach’s alpha were calculated for each section—reading content knowledge and leadership actions. Test-retest reliability for the reading knowledge section demonstrated a statistically significant correlation, \( r = .88, p = .004, .05 \). Cronbach’s alpha for the 20 reading knowledge items (\( \alpha = .86 \)) showed the items to be reliable. Test-retest reliability for the reading actions section of the PSRI-PS was not significant, \( r = .11, p = .79 \). Cronbach’s alpha for the 9 leadership actions items showed the items to be reliable (\( \alpha = .72 \)).

At least two possible factors contributed to the differences in correlation between the reading content knowledge and the leadership action sections. The range of responses from principals for the leadership section was small (34-40) as most principals responded
either “Strongly Agree” or “Agree” to all questions. This small range meant any change from the test to the retest affected the reliability adversely. At least two participants changed their response on one question from “Strongly Agree” on the initial survey to “Agree” on the second survey.

A second factor affecting the low reliability score was the small number of questions in the leadership actions section. To increase the number of questions and increase the likelihood of variability in responses, a review of the literature was conducted to identify any leadership actions not represented in the surveys. Two leadership actions not originally in the survey were identified—assessment plans and identifying teacher leaders. Questions regarding these actions were added to the survey, for example: *I ensure my school has a K-5 reading assessment plan to monitor student progress*. Additionally, to increase the number of questions as well as to make the survey as clear as possible, two-part questions were separated into two separate questions. For example, question eight originally read: *I visit classrooms during the reading block and discuss those observations with teachers.* After being separated, the revised question eight and new question nine read: *I visit classrooms during the reading block, and I discuss reading observations with teachers after I visit their classroom.* These changes resulted in the leadership actions section of the final survey increasing from nine questions to fifteen questions. A summary of changes made to the leadership actions section of the PSRI-PS can be found in Table 3. The final survey instrument can be found in Appendix D.
Table 3

*Summary of changes made to Leadership Actions section of the PSRI-PS to increase variability*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Change Made</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I visit classrooms during the reading block and discuss those observations with teachers.</td>
<td>Broken into two questions: I visit classrooms during the reading block; After observing teachers during their reading block, I discuss my observations with those teachers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I ensure my school has a K-5 reading assessment plan to monitor student progress.</td>
<td>Added after literature review.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I communicate my expectations to teachers in regard to my school’s reading assessment plan.</td>
<td>Added after literature review.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I meet with teachers regularly to discuss reading data.</td>
<td>Added after literature review.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I meet with teachers regularly to discuss student progress in reading.</td>
<td>Added after literature review.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I identify teacher leaders in reading.</td>
<td>Added after literature review.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I encourage teachers who are leaders in reading to take on leadership roles outside the classroom.</td>
<td>Added after literature review.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Once revisions were made to the PSRI-PS internal reliability was conducted to examine the consistency of questions in each section of the survey. For the principal’s perception of their reading knowledge section the reliability was .79. The principal’s perception of their leadership actions section demonstrated a reliability of .84. The reliability for the PSRI-PS as a whole was .92.
**Teacher Survey (PSRI-TS)**

After matching original survey responses to the second survey responses for teachers (PSRI-TS), Pearson’s product moment correlation and Cronbach’s alpha were calculated for each section—reading content knowledge and reading leadership actions. Test-retest reliability for the reading knowledge section of the PSRI-TS demonstrated a statistically significant correlation, \( r = .92, p < .001 \). Cronbach’s alpha for the 9 reading knowledge items demonstrated the items to be reliable (\( \alpha = .91 \)). Test-retest reliability for the reading actions section of the PSRI-TS demonstrated a statistically significant correlation, \( r = .71, p < .014 \). Cronbach’s alpha for the 9 leadership actions demonstrated the items to be reliable (\( \alpha = .74 \)). The greater correlation and reliability of the leadership action section of the PSRI-TS compared to the PSRI-PS could be attributed to more respondents (\( n = 11 \), teachers; \( n = 8 \), principals) and a greater range in responses (22-40, teachers; 34-40, principals).

Once revisions were made to the PSRI-TS, internal reliability was conducted to examine the consistency of questions in each section of the survey. For the teachers’ perceptions of their principal’s reading knowledge section the reliability was .95. The teachers’ perceptions of their principal’s leadership actions section demonstrated a reliability of .94. The reliability for the PSRI-PS as a whole was .97.

**Final Survey Instruments**

Both the PSRI-PS (Appendix D) and the PSRI-TS (Appendix E) contained three sections: (1) Demographic Information, (2) Principal’s Perceived Reading Knowledge, and (3) Principal’s Perceived Leadership Actions. The demographic section of the PSRI-PS contained four total questions asking principals: (1) how long they had been an
administrator, (2) how many years they had been an administrator at their current school, (3) whether they were a principal of a Title I or non-Title I school, and (4) whether they were a principal at a Renaissance school. Likewise, the demographic section of the PSRI-TS also contained four questions asking teachers: (1) how long they had been a teacher, (2) how long they had worked for their current principal, (3) what grade they taught and/or what position they held, and (4) whether they taught reading.

The majority of questions on each survey were found in the reading knowledge and leadership actions sections, with 21 questions (PSRI-PS) and 15 questions (PSRI-TS) assessing principals’ perceived reading knowledge and 15 questions (PSRI-PS and PSRI-TS) assessing perceived leadership actions principals take to support reading instruction. Both the PSRI-PS and PSRI-TS contained an open-ended question allowing principals and teachers to write any thoughts they had regarding a principal’s reading knowledge and leadership actions principals take to support reading instruction.

Table 4 provides the total number of questions and total number of questions scored for both the reading knowledge section and leadership action section on both instruments as well as the possible range of scores.
Table 4

Total number of questions, total number of questions scored, and range of scores on PSRI-PS and PSRI-TS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total # of questions: Reading Knowledge</th>
<th>Total # of questions scored: Reading Knowledge</th>
<th>Possible Range of scores</th>
<th>Total # of questions: Leadership Actions</th>
<th>Total # of questions scored: Leadership Actions</th>
<th>Possible Range of scores</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PSRI-PS</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>21-105</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15-75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSRI-TS</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15-75</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15-75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Variables

This study looked for correlations amongst pairs of variables tied to the study questions: the various relationships between principals’ perceptions of their own knowledge of reading and perceived leadership actions to support reading instruction; teachers’ perceptions of their principal’s knowledge of reading and perceived leadership actions to support reading instruction; principals’ and teachers’ years of experience; and the type of school they led or at which they taught. Table 5 shows the pairs of variables explored in each correlation and relationship to the research question.
Table 5

Variables explored by research question

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question (by number)</th>
<th>Variable One</th>
<th>Variable Two</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Principals’ perceptions of their reading knowledge</td>
<td>Principals’ perceptions of the leadership actions they take to support reading instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>School Type (Title I, Renaissance, non-Title I)</td>
<td>Principals’ perceptions of their reading knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2a</td>
<td>Years of experience as a principal</td>
<td>Principals’ perceptions of their reading knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>School type (Title I, Renaissance, non-Title I)</td>
<td>Principals’ perceptions of the leadership actions they take to support reading instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3a</td>
<td>Years of experience as a principal</td>
<td>Principals’ perceptions of the leadership actions they take to support reading instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Teachers’ perceptions of their principal’s reading knowledge</td>
<td>Teachers’ perceptions of the leadership actions principals take to support reading instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>School type (Title I, Renaissance, non-Title I)</td>
<td>Teachers’ perceptions of their principal’s reading knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5a</td>
<td>Years of experience as a teacher</td>
<td>Teachers’ perceptions of their principal’s reading knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>School type (Title I, Renaissance, non-Title I)</td>
<td>Teachers’ perceptions of the leadership actions principals take to support reading instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6a</td>
<td>Years of experience as a teacher</td>
<td>Teachers’ perceptions of the leadership actions principals take to support reading instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Principals’ perceptions of their reading knowledge</td>
<td>Teachers’ perceptions of their principal’s reading knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Principals’ perceptions of the leadership actions they take to support reading instruction</td>
<td>Teachers’ perceptions of the leadership actions principals take to support reading instruction</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data Collection

After final revisions to the PSRI-PS and PSRI-TS were entered into SurveyMonkey, a pre-survey email was sent to all principals (n = 144) and all teachers (n
84 principals of traditional K-5 elementary schools in one large Florida school district and the PSRI-TS was sent to 8,473 traditional, K-5 elementary personnel including K-5 classroom teachers, K-5 Exceptional Student Education (ESE) teachers, content area resource teachers and coaches, specials area teachers (music, art, physical education, etc.) guidance counselors, school psychologists and social workers. Table 6 provides exact response rates for both instruments.
Table 6

**Respondent numbers for the PSRI-PS and PSRI-TS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>PSRI-PS</th>
<th>PSRI-TS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of surveys emailed</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>8473</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of respondents</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>2121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>beginning survey</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of respondents</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>1876</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>completing the survey</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(includes those with missing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>data)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of respondents</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>1665</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>completing all questions in</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the principal’s perceived</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reading knowledge section</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of respondents</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>1671</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>completing all questions in</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the principal’s perceived</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>leadership actions section</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response rate based on</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>number of respondents</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>completing the survey</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Data Analysis**

Once data collection was complete, the data were downloaded and entered into a statistical software program (SPSS) in order to calculate descriptive statistics, measures of association, and tests of statistical significance to establish the strength and direction of relationships as well as their significance.
Coding

The principal’s reading knowledge and leadership actions sections primarily contained Likert items with assigned scores ranging from 1-5. The data as outputted from Survey Monkey were in text form, e.g., “Strongly Agree,” “Agree,” etc. Each of the questions in the Reading Knowledge and Leadership Actions sections was re-coded in SPSS to output numerically: Strongly Agree = 5, Agree = 4, Undecided = 3, Disagree = 2, Strongly Disagree = 1. Additionally, the PSRI-PS contained six questions not found on the PSRI-TS. These six questions asked principals to specify the grade level to which they were typically talking when they discussed the Gradual Release of Responsibility and five areas of literacy: phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. The response options for these six questions were “kindergarten-2nd”, “3rd-5th”, and “all grade levels”.

Certain grade levels spend more time than others in two of the five areas of literacy. Phonemic awareness and phonics are areas of literacy typically found in early grades—kindergarten, first and second. Consequently, in order to score a principal’s perceived knowledge in reading, specific scoring for each response was required. To earn the full points (5) for the two questions regarding phonemic awareness and phonics a principal needed to answer “kindergarten-2nd”. If principals chose “3rd-5th”, they received the lowest number of points possible (1) as the grade levels where phonics and phonemic awareness are taught were not represented in the answer. If principals chose “All grade levels” they received three points as that option included the three grade levels typically using phonics instruction in their classrooms (kindergarten-2nd). The score of zero could
not be used in the calculations as it would eliminate the data from the calculation. Table 7 provides exact scoring for each of the questions.

Table 7

Exact scoring for questions requiring principals to identify a specific grade level on the PSRI-PS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question Number: Subject of Question</th>
<th>Response Option</th>
<th>Scoring</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5: Phonemic Awareness</td>
<td>Kindergarten-2rd</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3rd-5th</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All grade levels</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8: Gradual Release of Responsibility</td>
<td>Kindergarten-2rd</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3rd-5th</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All grade levels</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11: Phonics</td>
<td>Kindergarten-2nd</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3rd-5th</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All grade levels</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15: Vocabulary</td>
<td>Kindergarten-2nd</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3rd-5th</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All grade levels</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18: Fluency</td>
<td>Kindergarten-2nd</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3rd-5th</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All grade levels</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22: Comprehension</td>
<td>Kindergarten-2nd</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3rd-5th</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All grade levels</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Once all questions on the PSRI-PS and the PSRI-TS were coded numerically, the Likert-like items assessing principals’ reading knowledge and leadership actions to support reading instruction which were predominantly used in this study were combined to create two “super variables:” perception of principals’ reading knowledge and perception of principals’ actions to support reading instruction. Because the questions were not viewed at the item level but were combined to create one larger score for each
super-variable, the items were considered interval. Consequently, the items were analyzed using commonly applied tests of statistical significance and measures of association relating the two variables.

**Statistical Analyses**

Using SPSS, descriptive statistics, measures of central tendency, and dispersion (e.g., mean, standard deviation), were used to characterize the scores calculated on both the PSRI-PS and PSRI-TS. For research questions 1, 2a, 3a, 4, 5a, 6a, 7, and 8, the Pearson product moment correlation \( r \) was calculated to measure the strength, direction, and statistical significance of the relationship between the variables of principals’ perceived knowledge and principals’ perceived level of action towards reading instruction. Research questions 2, 3, 5, and 6, used a one-way ANOVA to test for differences among principals and teachers from varying type of schools (non-Title I, Title I non-Renaissance, Title I Renaissance) on each of the variables—principals’ perceived reading knowledge and principals’ perceived leadership actions taken to support reading instruction.

For any missing data, pairwise deletion was used in order to maximize use of the available data. When pairwise deletion is used cases are excluded from any calculations involving variables for which they have missing data. If the question needed for a correlation was unanswered, the correlations between each pair of variables were calculated from all cases having valid data for those two variables (Allison, 2001). Pairwise deletion allowed for all teacher data where the principal also answered to be used.
Open-Ended Questions

Answers from the open-ended question asking respondents to elaborate on the topic of principal reading knowledge and principal support for reading instruction were exported into a database for analysis. The constant comparison method was used to identify themes among the units of data. Glauser and Strauss (1967) reported the constant comparison method involved searching for similarities and differences among data by making systematic comparisons across the data. The open ended questions were read and analyzed several times in order to conduct systematic comparisons.

The purpose of the first reading was to gain an overall sense of what respondents thought in relation to principals’ reading knowledge and principals’ support for reading instruction. The second reading was more directed as the reading was designed to highlight key phrases and words in the response that exemplified the response. For example, in the teacher response, “I have not had much chance to experience my principal’s leadership with reading, as our AP has spearheaded everything within this aspect of teaching,” the words “AP has spearheaded everything within this aspect of teaching” were highlighted. After highlighting key words and phrases, brief notes were written to the side of the response summarizing the idea written in the response. Using the same teacher response example as above, the notes to the side read, “AP responsibility.”

The third and fourth readings were focused on the notes or summarized ideas already identified in the previous readings in order to classify the discrete pieces of data. Strauss and Corbin (1990) purported that themes or categories are the organization,
linking, and classifying of discrete concepts. Themes were discovered by comparing the summarized ideas one to another several times. A final reading considered the themes in relation to the correlation analyses. The responses to these questions allowed the quantitative relationships to be explored and placed into perspective. The comments from both principals and teachers provided insight into specific knowledge and actions that supported, impeded, or prevented effective literacy instruction.

The next chapter will discuss the results of the study in terms of principal data, teacher data, and differences in principal and teacher responses.
Chapter 4 Results

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between the perceived reading knowledge of principals and the perceived leadership actions they take to support reading instruction in the schools they lead from the perspective of both principals and teachers. In order to examine this relationship two instruments were used: the Principal’s Support for Reading Instruction – Principal Survey (PSRI-PS) and the Principal’s Support for Reading Instruction – Teacher Survey (PSRI-TS) found in Appendix D and E, respectively. Between the PSRI-PS and the PSRI-TS, there were four variables used to examine these relationships: (1) a principal’s perception of their reading knowledge, (2) a principal’s perception of the leadership actions they take to support reading instruction, (3) teachers’ perceptions of their principal’s reading knowledge, and (4) teachers’ perceptions of the leadership actions their principal takes to support reading instruction. These variables resulted in the following research questions: the following research questions guided this study:

1. Is there a relationship between principals’ perceptions of their reading knowledge and principals’ perceptions of the leadership actions they take to support reading instruction?

2. Is there a difference between principals’ perceptions of their reading knowledge and the type of school where they work: Title I, Renaissance or non-Title I?
2a. Is there a relationship between principals’ perceptions of their reading knowledge and their years of experience?

3. Is there a difference between principals’ perceptions of leadership actions they take to support reading instruction and the type of school where they work: Title I, Renaissance or non-Title I?

3a. Is there a relationship between principals’ perceptions of the leadership actions they take to support reading instruction and their years of experience?

4. Is there a relationship between teachers’ perceptions of their principal’s reading knowledge and teachers’ perceptions of the leadership actions principals take to support reading instruction?

5. Is there a difference between teachers’ perceptions of their principal’s reading knowledge and the type of school where the teachers work?

5a. Is there a relationship between teachers’ perceptions of their principal’s reading knowledge and teachers’ years of experience?

6. Is there a difference between teachers’ perceptions of the leadership actions principals take to support reading instruction and the type of school where the teachers work?

6a. Is there a relationship between teachers’ perceptions of the leadership actions principals take to support reading instruction and teachers’ years of experience?

7. Is there a relationship between principals’ perceptions of their reading knowledge and teachers’ perceptions of their principal’s reading knowledge?
8. Is there a relationship between principals’ perceptions of the leadership actions they take to support reading instruction and teachers’ perceptions of the leadership actions their principals take to support reading instruction?

Research questions, 1 through 6, were calculated for the entire principal and teacher populations in order to make full use of the data collected. Research questions 7 and 8 were calculated at the individual school level. In order to ensure aggregation at the school level did not skew the school level results, the response rate of teachers at each school where teachers’ responses were aggregated (i.e., schools for which the principal also responded; n = 78) was compared to the average response rate for all the teachers who completed the survey (22%). This comparison showed 40 schools were above the average response rate, 34 schools were below the average response rate, and the remaining four schools were equal to the average response rate. The range of teachers responding at the schools where the principals also responded was 7 to 33.

This chapter presents a description of the populations studied and a thorough discussion of the data organized by principal data, teacher data, and differences between the two populations. The chapter concludes with a summary of the findings.

**Principal Data**

**Description of Population**

The principal sample (n = 78) had years of experience ranging from 1-21 years (M = 5.66, SD = 4.95). Of the principals responding, 35% were principals at non-Title I schools while 63% were principals at Title I schools. Title I schools in this district were identified as elementary schools where 60% or more of the student population qualify for
free or reduced-price lunch. Of the principals at Title I schools, 23% identified themselves as principals of a Renaissance school. Renaissance schools in this district were identified as elementary schools where 90% or more of the population qualify for free or reduced-price lunch. The sample representation of principals at various school types (non-Title I, Title I, Renaissance) was similar to the population representation in the studied school district, which consisted of 40% non-Title I schools and 60% Title I schools, with 32% of those Title I schools being Renaissance schools.

**Results of the PSRI-PS**

The PSRI-PS studied two variables, a principal’s perception of their reading knowledge and a principal’s perception of the leadership actions they take to support reading instruction. The range of possible scores on the PSRI-PS for the perceived reading knowledge section was 21-105, where higher scores indicated higher levels of perceived reading knowledge. The obtained range was 76-105, with a mean of 91.61. The high mean score indicated principals in this study perceived themselves to be highly knowledgeable in reading. The range of possible scores on the PSRI-PS for the perceived leadership actions taken to support reading instruction was 15-75, where higher scores indicated higher levels of perceived leadership actions taken to support reading instruction. The obtained range was 54-75, with a mean score of 67.65. The high mean score indicated principals in this study perceived themselves to take high levels of action to support their teachers in reading. The descriptive statistics, measures of central tendency, and dispersion for both variables are shown in Table 8.
### Table 8

*Descriptive statistics, measures of central tendency, and dispersion for the two variables measured on the PSRI-PS*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Principals’ perceived reading knowledge</th>
<th>Principals’ perceived leadership actions to support reading instruction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N Valid</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possible Range</td>
<td>21-105</td>
<td>15-75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range</td>
<td>76-105</td>
<td>54-75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>91.61</td>
<td>67.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median</td>
<td>96.00</td>
<td>68.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mode</td>
<td>96.00</td>
<td>72.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Std. Deviation</td>
<td>7.41</td>
<td>5.24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Results of the PSRI-PS by school type.**

In order to determine if the principals at different types of schools (non-Title I, Title I non-Renaissance, Renaissance) in this study varied in the amount of perceived reading knowledge and perceived leadership actions to support reading instruction, each variable on the PSRI-PS was disaggregated into the three school categories. For the reading knowledge variable there was less than a one point difference among principals at the three types of schools. The perceived leadership action variable also demonstrated less than a one point difference in mean between principals at the three types of schools. Table 9 provides the descriptive statistics of each variable disaggregated by type of school.
Table 9

*Descriptive statistics, measures of central tendency, and dispersion for the two variables measured on the PSRI-PS by school type*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Principals’ perceived reading knowledge</th>
<th>Principals’ perceived leadership actions to support reading instruction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Title I non-Renaissance</td>
<td>Renaissance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N Valid</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possible Range</td>
<td>21-105</td>
<td>21-105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range</td>
<td>76-104</td>
<td>78-101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>92.0</td>
<td>91.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median</td>
<td>93.0</td>
<td>92.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mode</td>
<td>96.0</td>
<td>95.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Std. Deviation</td>
<td>7.52</td>
<td>7.09</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Principals’ knowledge on grade level specific questions.**

In order to determine if the principals at different types of schools (non-Title I, Title I non-Renaissance, Renaissance) varied in the amount of perceived reading knowledge for the six questions requiring specific grade level answers, the data for the six questions were broken down into the three school categories. When reviewed, principals at non-Title I schools had the highest percentage of accurate answers on four of the six questions on reading knowledge. Table 10 lists the percentage of principals at each type of school that correctly answered the six questions requiring specific grade level answers.
Table 10

*Percentage of principals for each type of school correctly answering the six questions requiring specific grade level answers*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question Number: Subject of Question</th>
<th>Non-Title I</th>
<th>Title I- non Renaissance</th>
<th>Renaissance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5: Phonemic awareness</td>
<td>72.2%</td>
<td>67.9%</td>
<td>65.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8: Gradual Release of Responsibility</td>
<td>88.9%</td>
<td>75.0%</td>
<td>68.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11: Phonics</td>
<td>55.6%</td>
<td>53.6%</td>
<td>43.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15: Vocabulary</td>
<td>94.4%</td>
<td>89.3%</td>
<td>96.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18: Fluency</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>92.9%</td>
<td>90.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22: Comprehension</td>
<td>94.4%</td>
<td>96.4%</td>
<td>90.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following section addresses principals’ perceived reading knowledge and leadership actions taken to support reading instruction by examining correlations (Pearson’s *r*) and analysis of variance (ANOVA). The results of each correlation and ANOVA are organized by research question. Only the research questions focused on principals will be discussed in this section.

**Research Question One**

Research question one examined principals’ perceptions of their reading knowledge and the leadership actions they take to support reading instruction. Question one asked: **Is there a correlation between principals’ perceptions of their reading knowledge and principals’ perceptions of the actions they take to support reading**
instruction? The unit of analysis was at the individual principal level. Pearson’s Product Moment correlation ($r$) showed a statistically significant, positive correlation of .510 ($p < .001$) which demonstrated a relationship between principals’ perceptions of their reading knowledge and principals’ perceptions of the actions they take to support reading instruction. Principals’ scores on both variables fell only in the upper right quadrant of the scatter plot which showed that when principals perceived themselves as having high levels of reading knowledge they also perceived themselves as taking high levels of action to support reading instruction at their school. Figure 4 illustrates the positive statistically significant correlation between the two variables.
Research Questions Two and Two (a)

Research questions two and two (a) examined principals’ perceptions of their reading knowledge and two demographic variables. These questions asked: (2) Is there a difference between principals’ perceptions of their reading knowledge and the type of school they lead, and (2a) Is there a relationship between principals’ perceptions of their reading knowledge and their years of experience. Both were calculated at the individual principal level (n = 78). In order to determine if the difference between perceptions of principals at the three types of schools were significant an analysis of variance was
conducted. The results of the ANOVA demonstrated $F = .055$ ($p = .946$). While there was no statistically significant difference among the principals at the various schools, the data showed that regardless of the type of school they led (non-Title I, Title I non-Renaissance, Title I Renaissance) principals’ perceptions of their own reading knowledge remained high. Figure 5 illustrates the similar perceptions among the principals at the three types of schools represented in this study. The bars represent the mean for each type of school.

Figure 2. Principals’ Perceptions of Their Own Reading Knowledge and the Type of School Where They Work at the Individual Principal Level
For correlation two (a) Pearson’s Product Moment correlation \( (r) \) correlation was \(-.086 (p = .519)\) which indicated no relationship between principals’ perceptions of their reading knowledge and their years of experience. While there was no statistically significant correlation the data showed that regardless of the number of years a principal had held a principal position their perception of their own reading knowledge remained high. Figure 6 illustrates the non-significant correlation between the two variables.

*Figure 6. Correlation Between Principals’ Perceptions of their Own Reading Knowledge and Their Years of Experience at the Individual Principal Level*
Research Questions Three and Three (a)

Research questions three and three (a) examined principals’ perceptions of their leadership actions and two demographic variables. These questions asked: (3) Is there a difference between principals’ perceptions of their leadership actions to support reading instruction and the type of school they lead, and (3a) Is there a relationship between principals’ perceptions of their leadership actions to support reading instruction and their years of experience. Both correlations were calculated at the individual principal level (n = 78). In order to determine if the difference between principals’ perceptions at the three types of schools were significant an analysis of variance was conducted. The results of the ANOVA demonstrated $F = .138$ ($p = .871$). While there was no statistically significant difference among the principals at the various schools, the data showed that regardless of the type of school they led (non-Title I, Title I non-Renaissance, Title I Renaissance) principals’ perceptions of the leadership actions they take to support reading instruction remained high. Figure 7 illustrates the similar perceptions among the principals at the three types of schools represented in this study. The bars represent the mean for each type of school.
Figure 7. Principals’ Perceptions of the Leadership Actions They Take to Support Reading Instruction and the Type of School They Led at the Individual Principal Level

For correlation three (a) Pearson’s Product Moment correlation ($r$) was $0.105 (p = 0.392)$ which indicated no statistically significant relationship between principals’ perceptions of their leadership actions to support reading instruction and their years of experience. While there was no statistically significant correlation the data showed that regardless of the number of years a principal held a principal position their perception of the level of action they take to support reading instruction was high. Figure 8 illustrates the non-significant correlation.
Figure 8. Correlation Between Principals’ Perceptions of the Leadership Actions They Take to Support Reading Instruction and Their Years of Experience at the Individual Principal Level

Open Ended Principal Responses

Principals were provided the opportunity to share, through an open-ended question on the PSRI-PS and PSRI-TS, any additional thoughts regarding principals’ reading knowledge and the leadership actions principals take to support reading instruction. Thirty-eight percent of principals and 35% of teachers responded to this question. All responses to the open-ended question were read multiple times and coded according to the subjects they contained. Subjects that consistently appeared throughout the open-ended responses were then identified are themes in the responses. The principals’ responses were similar to each other, revolving around the idea that reading
was an important area for a principal to know about and a focus for their school. An example of a principal’s response illustrating this theme was, “Reading is fundamental in student academic success....which means it must be a priority in the classroom.” A second and third reading of the principal’s responses also revealed a theme of distributed leadership. Principals relied on others—reading coaches, reading resource teachers, and classroom teachers to support effective reading instruction. An example of a principal’s response representing this theme was, “Working closely with the Reading Coach and Title 1 Reading Resource Teacher helps to increase my knowledge in Reading Instruction. We work together to analyze data and provide professional development to teachers to improve instruction.” An additional theme revealed through multiple readings of the principal responses was the importance of staff development as the means for principals building their reading knowledge. An example of a principal’s response representing this theme was, “I appreciate being invited to workshops, speakers etc. by district staff in order to build my current knowledge of reading instruction. I am always welcomed at the reading in-services my teachers take.”

**Teacher Data**

**Description of Population**

The teacher sample (n = 1876) had years of experience ranging from 1-40 years (M = 13.07, SD = 9.53). Of the teachers responding, 8.6% were Kindergarten teachers, 10.3% were first grade teachers, 10.6% were second grade teachers, 13.1% were third grade teachers, 10.5% were fourth grade teachers, and 11.0% were fifth grade teachers. The remaining teacher sample was comprised of content area coaches (11.1%), special
area teachers (3.7%), supportive services providers (5.3%), and other, including ESE teachers, media specialists, and Academic Interventions Specialists (15.8%).

**Results of the PSRI-TS**

The PSRI-TS studied two variables: a teacher’s perception of their principal’s reading knowledge and a teacher’s perception of the leadership actions their principal takes to support reading instruction. The range of possible scores on the PSRI-TS for the perceived reading knowledge section was 15-75, where higher scores indicated higher levels of perceived reading knowledge. The obtained range was 15-75. The range of possible scores on the PSRI-TS for the perceived leadership actions taken to support reading instruction was 15-75, where higher scores indicated higher levels of perceived leadership actions taken to support reading instruction. The obtained range was 15-75. The descriptive statistics, measures of central tendency and dispersion for both variables are found in Table 11.
Table 11

*Descriptive statistics, measures of central tendency, and dispersion for the two variables measured on the PSRI-TS*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Teacher’s perception of principal’s reading knowledge</th>
<th>Teacher’s perception of principal’s leadership actions to support reading instruction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N Valid</td>
<td>1665</td>
<td>1671</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possible Range</td>
<td>15-75</td>
<td>15-75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range</td>
<td>15-75</td>
<td>15-75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>48.92</td>
<td>56.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median</td>
<td>50.00</td>
<td>57.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mode</td>
<td>53.00</td>
<td>58.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Std. Deviation</td>
<td>13.15</td>
<td>12.09</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Results of PSRI-TS by school type.**

In order to determine if the teachers at different types of schools (non-Title I, Title I non-Renaissance, Renaissance) varied in their perceptions of their principal’s reading knowledge and leadership actions to support reading instruction, each variable was broken down into the three school categories. The reading knowledge variable demonstrated an only slightly greater than two point difference between the teachers at the three types of schools. The leadership actions to support reading instruction variable demonstrated slightly more than a two point difference between teachers’ perceptions at the three types of schools. Table 12 contains the descriptive statistics of each variable on the PSRI-TS disaggregated by type of school.
Table 12

Descriptive statistics, measures of central tendency, and dispersion for the two variables measured on the PSRI-TS by school type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Principal’s perceived reading knowledge</th>
<th>Principal’s perceived leadership actions to support reading instruction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Title I non-Renaissance</td>
<td>Renaissance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N Valid</td>
<td>716</td>
<td>349</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range</td>
<td>18-75</td>
<td>15-74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>48.6</td>
<td>50.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>52.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mode</td>
<td>53.0</td>
<td>46.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Std. Deviation</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>12.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following section addresses teachers’ perceptions of their principal’s reading knowledge and leadership actions taken to support reading instruction by examining correlations (Pearson’s $r$) and analysis of variance (ANOVA). The results of each correlation and ANOVA are organized by research question. Only the research questions focused on teachers will be discussed in this section.

**Research Question Four**

Research question four examined teachers’ perceptions of their principal’s reading knowledge and leadership actions their principals take to support reading instruction. This question asked: Is there a relationship between teachers’ perceptions of principals’ reading knowledge and teachers’ perceptions of leadership actions principals
take to support reading instruction. The unit of analysis was at the individual teacher level (n = 1876). Pearson’s Product Moment correlation (r) showed a statistically significant, strong, positive correlation of .801 (p < .001) demonstrating a strong relationship between teachers’ perceptions of their principal’s reading knowledge and teachers’ perceptions of the actions their principals take to support reading instruction. This correlation illustrated that when teachers perceived their principals as having high levels of reading knowledge they also perceived their principal as taking high levels of action to support reading instruction at their school. Conversely when teachers perceived their principals as having lower levels of knowledge they also perceived their principal to take low levels of action to support reading instruction at their school. The strong correlation was due to the variability of teachers’ scores on both variables as evidenced by scores falling in all four quadrants of the scatter plot. Figure 9 illustrates the statistically significant correlation.
Figure 9. Correlation Between Teachers’ Perceptions of the Leadership Actions Their Principals Take to Support Reading Instruction and Teachers’ Perceptions of Their Principal’s Reading Knowledge

Research Questions Five and Five (a)

Research questions five and five (a) examined teachers’ perceptions of their principal’s reading knowledge and two demographic variables. Specifically, these questions asked: (5) Is there a difference between teachers’ perceptions of their principal’s reading knowledge and the type of schools where the teachers work, and (5a) Is there a relationship between teachers’ perceptions of their principal’s reading knowledge and teachers’ years of experience? Both were calculated at the individual teacher level (n =
1665, n = 1619). In order to determine if the difference between teachers’ perceptions at the three types of schools were significant an analysis of variance was conducted. The results of the ANOVA demonstrated F = 3.48 (p = .031). A Tukey HSD post hoc test showed non-Title I teacher perceptions and Title I Renaissance teacher perceptions were different at a statistically significant level (p = .033). When examining the overall teacher scores on the reading knowledge variable, the data demonstrated that teachers at all three types of school scored their principal’s perceived reading knowledge similarly encompassing the entire range of scores (15-75). Figure 10 illustrates the similarity in teachers’ perceptions. The bars on the data points represent the mean of each school type.
Figure 10. Teachers’ Perceptions of Their Principal’s Reading Knowledge and the Type of School (non-Title I, Title I non-Renaissance, Title I Renaissance) Where Teachers Work

For correlation five (a) Pearson’s Product Moment correlation \((r)\) was \(0.042 (p = 0.091)\) which indicated no relationship between teachers’ perceptions of their principal’s reading knowledge and their years of experience as a teacher. Figure 11 illustrates the data for this non-significant correlation between the two variables scattered across the entirety of the range.
Research Questions Six and Six (a)

Research questions six and six (a) examined teachers’ perceptions of the leadership actions their principals take to support reading instruction and two demographic variables. Specifically, these questions asked: (6) Is there a difference between teachers’ perceptions of the leadership actions their principals take to support reading instruction and the type of schools where the teachers work, and (6a) Is there a relationship between teachers’ perceptions of the leadership actions principals take to support reading instruction and teachers’ years of experience? Both were calculated at
the individual teacher level (n = 1671, n = 1627). In order to determine if the difference between teachers’ perceptions at the three types of schools was significant an analysis of variance was conducted. The results of the ANOVA demonstrated F = 4.347 (p = .013). A Tukey HSD post hoc test showed a statistically significant difference between non-Title I teacher perceptions and Title I Renaissance teacher perceptions (p = .016). There was also a statistically significant difference between Title I Renaissance and Title I non-Renaissance teacher perceptions (p = .025). When examining the overall teacher scores on the leadership variable, the data demonstrated that teachers at all three types of schools scored their principals’ perceived reading knowledge similarly encompassing the entire range of scores (15-75). Figure 12 illustrates the similarity in teachers’ perceptions. The bars on the data points represent the mean of each school type.
For correlation six (a) Pearson’s Product Moment correlation ($r$) was $0.084$ ($p = 0.001$) which indicated a statistically significant but weak relationship between teachers’ perceptions of the leadership actions their principals take to support reading instruction and teachers’ years of experience. The data showed that scores tend to be more concentrated in the upper half of the range of scores meaning that regardless of how long a teacher has been teaching they tended to score their principals high on the leadership actions taken to support reading instruction variable. Figure 13 illustrates the statistically significant but weak correlation.
Open Ended Teacher Responses

Teachers’ responses to the open-ended question on the PSRI-TS were read and coded to identify recurring themes in the same manner as principals’ responses. Based on their open-ended responses, teachers spoke more often than principals about the need for their principal to know about reading in order to support instruction. Statements from teachers ranged from principals being highly knowledgeable and highly supportive to principals having no knowledge and offering no support, but overall teacher responses were mainly favorable of their principals. An example of the teacher responses
characterizing their principal as highly knowledgeable and highly supportive of teaching reading was:

Before my current principal took over the leadership position, she was a Math and Science person. She understood that reading was not something she had a lot of knowledge about. However, she went to trainings, read professional publications and asked a district reading teacher to come and show her how she can support her staff. She encouraged us to focus on comprehension strategies, incorporate SEM-R into our reading block, and to request modeling and coaching from the DRT. That was a few years ago, and our knowledge about reading has grown by leaps and bounds. She continues to look for ways that we can take our students’ reading experience to the highest levels. She leads by example.

An example of the teacher responses that were favorable of their principal’s reading knowledge and leadership actions taken to support reading instruction but to a lesser degree than the above statement was, “My principal is very active, engaged, and knowledgeable as it relates to reading. Furthermore, his leadership definitely enhances our school’s overall reading instruction.” Conversely, an example of the teacher responses that portrayed the principal as having no knowledge and providing no support was:

My principal has very limited knowledge in the area of reading especially emergent and early reading. She is not an effective reading leader and does not have the skills necessary to hold the primary teacher responsible for their instruction and their students. My principal has given our reading coach other administrative responsibilities so she is not able to support and coach teachers as much as she is needed.

A second reading of teacher responses revealed a theme also found in the principal responses—relying on others to support the reading instructional program (distributed leadership). An example of a teacher’s response illustrating this theme was, “I believe my principal is very knowledgeable in reading, but I really get most of my input, teaching/learning, and guidance from the reading resource teachers.” A theme also found in the teacher responses was that the instructional leader role belonged to the
assistant principal, not the principal. An example of a teacher’s response describing the role of the assistant principal as instructional leader was, “My assistant principal is the one who does all of the communicating about reading instruction and assessment.”

After several readings of teacher responses a final theme was revealed—no time for the principal to be the reading instructional leader of the school. The lack of time was primarily attributed to the district’s new evaluation system being implemented during the school year in which the survey was distributed. An example of a teacher’s response describing the effects of the lack of time was, “My principal is very supportive. However because of the new evaluation system the administration is not as present in the class as much as in the past, which is very sad for the teachers and the students.” Principals’ and teachers’ open ended responses will be discussed further in chapter five.

**Differences in Principal and Teacher Responses on the PSRI-PS and PSRI-TS**

Correlations for each of the items on the PSRI-PS and PSRI-TS where the principal and teachers were asked the same question were conducted. The correlations for individual items were weak ranging from -.13 to .39. Table 13 provides exact correlations for each question where the principal and teacher answered the same question.

Table 13

*Correlations between principal and teacher answers on like questions*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question topic</th>
<th>Correlation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Read and interpret data from reading assessments</td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talk about phonemic awareness</td>
<td>.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific examples of phonemic awareness</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talk about Gradual Release of Responsibility</td>
<td>.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific examples of Gradual Release of Responsibility</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talk about phonics</td>
<td>.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific examples of phonics</td>
<td>.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage teachers to follow basal</td>
<td>.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talk about vocabulary</td>
<td>.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific examples of vocabulary</td>
<td>-.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talk about fluency</td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific examples of fluency</td>
<td>-.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage teachers to use various reading materials</td>
<td>-.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talk about comprehension</td>
<td>.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific examples of comprehension</td>
<td>-.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure 90-minute reading block</td>
<td>.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide materials beyond district purchased</td>
<td>.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Celebrate literacy</td>
<td>-.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicate with parents about reading</td>
<td>.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure a K-5 reading assessment plan</td>
<td>.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicate expectations regarding assessment plan</td>
<td>.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meet with teachers to discuss reading data</td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meet with teachers regularly to discuss student progress</td>
<td>.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure professional development</td>
<td>-.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create time for teachers to meet collaboratively to discuss reading content</td>
<td>.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visit classrooms during the reading block</td>
<td>-.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discuss reading observations with teachers</td>
<td>-.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify teacher leaders in reading</td>
<td>.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage teacher leaders to take on leadership roles outside the classroom</td>
<td>.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read articles in relation to reading</td>
<td>.09</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Further examination of the individual questions in the reading content knowledge and leadership actions sections of the PSRI-PS and PSRI-TS uncovered differences in the
“agree” and “disagree” responses from principals and teachers for both variables—principals’ perceived reading knowledge and principals’ perceived leadership actions to support reading instruction. As principals answered “agree” or “strongly agree” for almost every question, the differences in principals and teachers that agreed with each question in both sections (reading knowledge and leadership actions) were calculated by subtracting the percentage of teachers who agreed with each question from the number of principals who agreed with each question in that section. Likewise, as principals answered “agree” or “strongly agree” for almost every question, the differences where principals and teachers disagreed were calculated by subtracting the percentage of principals who disagreed from the percentage of teachers who disagreed. Calculating the disagree responses in this manner avoided negative percentages.

Likert scale responses of “strongly agree” and “agree” or “strongly disagree” and “disagree” do not provide insight into the difference respondents perceived between the two responses. Therefore, for this discussion the differences among the two variables where respondents answered “agree” include both “strongly agree” and “agree”. The differences among the two variables where respondents answered “disagree” include both “strongly disagree” and “disagree”.

To quantify these response differences parameters were established to define the size of the difference. Any response difference greater than 40% between principals and teachers was defined as a large difference. A response difference ranging from 20% to 40% between principals and teachers was defined as a medium difference. Any response difference less than 20% between principals and teachers was defined as a small difference.
**Reading content knowledge response differences.**

Looking specifically at the reading content knowledge variable there were eight total questions (3, 4, 7, 8, 11, 12, 13, and 16) with large response differences. Five questions (2, 5, 6, 10, and 15) resulted in medium response differences and two questions (1 and 14) resulted in small response differences. Question nine asking if principals encouraged teachers to follow the basal resulted in a negative difference (-7.2%) as fewer principals agreed than teachers. Table 14 summarizes the differences in responses between principal and teacher populations on reading content knowledge sections of the PSRI-PS and PSRI-TS.
**Difference in responses between principal and teacher populations on reading content knowledge sections of the PSRI-TS and PSRI-PS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question # and Summary</th>
<th>% of Principals Agree</th>
<th>% of Teachers Agree</th>
<th>Diff. in % Agree (P-T)</th>
<th>% of Teachers Disagree</th>
<th>% of Principals Disagree</th>
<th>Diff. in % Disagree (T-P)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1: Principal can read and interpret data from assessments</td>
<td>98.8</td>
<td>84.4</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2: Reading assessments most frequently used</td>
<td>FAIR: 92.4 FCAT: 94.9 SAT-10: 86.1 DRA2: 65.8 RR: 57.0 CIM: 44.3</td>
<td>FAIR: 87.3 FCAT: 80.2 SAT-10: 54.1 DRA2: 55.9 RR: 47.8 CIM: 26.5</td>
<td>FAIR: 5.1 FCAT: 14.7 SAT-10: 32.0 DRA2: 9.9 RR: 9.2 CIM: 17.8</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3: Principal talks about phonemic awareness</td>
<td>87.2</td>
<td>30.3</td>
<td>56.9</td>
<td>48.9</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>39.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4: Principal provides examples of phonemic awareness instruction</td>
<td>72.2</td>
<td>23.4</td>
<td>48.8</td>
<td>53.8</td>
<td>22.8</td>
<td>31.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5: Principal talks about Gradual Release of Responsibility</td>
<td>88.6</td>
<td>60.9</td>
<td>27.7</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6: Principal provides examples of Gradual Release of Responsibility</td>
<td>80.8</td>
<td>45.7</td>
<td>35.1</td>
<td>34.8</td>
<td>14.1</td>
<td>20.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7: Principal talks about phonics instruction</td>
<td>90.9</td>
<td>33.7</td>
<td>56.3</td>
<td>48.0</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>40.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8: Principal provides examples of phonics instruction</td>
<td>70.6</td>
<td>25.8</td>
<td>44.8</td>
<td>52.0</td>
<td>21.3</td>
<td>30.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9: Principal encourages teachers to follow the basal</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>-7.2</td>
<td>71.4</td>
<td>94.8</td>
<td>-23.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10: Principal talks about phonics instruction</td>
<td>97.4</td>
<td>59.7</td>
<td>37.7</td>
<td>27.9</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>26.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question # and Summary</td>
<td>% of Principals Agree</td>
<td>% of Teachers Agree</td>
<td>Diff. in % Agree (P-T)</td>
<td>% of Teachers Disagree</td>
<td>% of Principals Disagree</td>
<td>Diff. in % Disagree (T-P)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>about vocabulary instruction</td>
<td>85.9</td>
<td>41.7</td>
<td>44.2</td>
<td>40.2</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>28.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11: Principal provides examples of vocabulary instruction</td>
<td>97.4</td>
<td>50.7</td>
<td>46.7</td>
<td>35.7</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>34.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12: Principal talks about fluency instruction</td>
<td>83.4</td>
<td>35.1</td>
<td>48.3</td>
<td>44.9</td>
<td>14.1</td>
<td>30.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13: Principal provides examples of fluency instruction</td>
<td>98.7</td>
<td>80.0</td>
<td>18.7</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>10.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14: Principal encourages use of variety of reading materials</td>
<td>98.7</td>
<td>69.9</td>
<td>28.8</td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>20.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15: Principal talks about comprehension instruction</td>
<td>90.9</td>
<td>50.1</td>
<td>40.8</td>
<td>34.3</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>26.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Leadership actions response differences.**

Looking specifically at the leadership actions variable there were two total questions (7 and 8) with large response differences. Nine questions (2, 4, 6, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15) resulted in medium response differences and four questions (1, 3, 5, and 10) resulted in small response differences. Table 15 summarizes the differences in responses between principal and teacher populations on leadership actions sections of the PSRI-PS and PSRI-TS.
Table 15

*Difference in responses between principal and teacher populations on leadership actions sections of the PSRI-TS and PSRI-PS*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question # and Summary</th>
<th>% of Principals Agree</th>
<th>% of Teachers Agree</th>
<th>Diff. in % Agree (P-T)</th>
<th>% of Teachers Disagree</th>
<th>% of Principals Disagree</th>
<th>Diff. in % Disagree (T-P)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1: Principal provides 90-minute reading block</td>
<td>96.6</td>
<td>84.9</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2: Principal provides reading resources beyond district-purchased ones</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>70.3</td>
<td>29.7</td>
<td>19.7</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>19.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3: Principal incorporates reading into school events</td>
<td>98.7</td>
<td>81.7</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>9.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4: Principal communicates with parents</td>
<td>94.8</td>
<td>74.2</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5: Principal ensures school has a K-5 reading assessment plan</td>
<td>98.7</td>
<td>81.9</td>
<td>16.8</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6: Principal communicates expectations to teachers</td>
<td>98.7</td>
<td>74.8</td>
<td>23.9</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7: Principal regularly discusses reading data</td>
<td>93.4</td>
<td>49.9</td>
<td>43.5</td>
<td>35.4</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>32.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8: Principal regularly discusses student progress</td>
<td>97.5</td>
<td>51.9</td>
<td>45.6</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>30.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9: Principal ensures professional development</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>73.8</td>
<td>26.2</td>
<td>14.1</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>14.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10: Principal creates time for collaborative discussion</td>
<td>97.4</td>
<td>81.8</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question # and Summary</td>
<td>% of Principals Agree</td>
<td>% of Teachers Agree</td>
<td>Diff. in % Agree (P−T)</td>
<td>% of Teachers Disagree</td>
<td>% of Principals Disagree</td>
<td>Diff. in % Disagree (T−P)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reading content</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11: Principal visits classrooms during the reading block</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>67.1</td>
<td>32.9</td>
<td>19.7</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>19.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12: Principal discusses reading block observations with teachers</td>
<td>92.2</td>
<td>55.2</td>
<td>37.0</td>
<td>26.7</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>22.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13: Principal identifies teacher leaders in reading</td>
<td>96.2</td>
<td>64.1</td>
<td>32.1</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>17.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14: Principal encourages teacher leaders in reading to take on leadership roles</td>
<td>94.9</td>
<td>61.7</td>
<td>33.2</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>13.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15: Principal reads and passes reading articles to teachers</td>
<td>77.9</td>
<td>55.4</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>30.4</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>16.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In summary, for the reading content knowledge variable, there were eight questions with a large difference, five questions with a medium difference, two questions with a small difference and one question with a negative difference. The leadership actions variable had two questions with a large difference, nine questions with a medium difference, and four questions with a small difference. Table 16 summarizes the overall response differences for both variables.
The following section addresses principals’ and teachers’ perceptions regarding principals’ reading knowledge and leadership actions taken to support reading instruction by examining correlations (Pearson’s $r$) between the variables. The results of each correlation are organized by research question. Only the research questions focused on both principals and teachers are discussed in this section.

**Research Question Seven**

Research question seven examined the perception of both principals and teachers in relation to principals’ perceived reading knowledge. Specifically, this question asked: Is there a relationship between a principal’s perception of their reading knowledge and teachers’ perceptions of their principal’s reading knowledge? This correlation used a principal’s score on the reading knowledge section (PSRI-PS) and the mean score on the reading knowledge section (PSRI-TS) of all the teachers at that principal’s school that answered the survey; therefore the unit of analysis for this correlation was at the school level ($n = 78$). Pearson’s Product Moment correlation ($r$) was $-.145 (p = .275)$ which
indicated no statistically significant relationship between a principal’s perception of their reading knowledge and the teachers’ perception of their principal’s reading knowledge. While there was no significant correlation the data showed that teachers perceived their principals and principals perceived themselves to be knowledgeable in reading. This conclusion was based on the majority of data points falling in the upper right quadrant of the scatter plot. Figure 14 illustrates the non-significant correlation between the two variables.
Figure 3. Correlation Between a Principal’s Perception of Their Reading Knowledge and Teachers’ Perception of Their Principal’s Reading Knowledge at the Individual School Level

Additionally, effect size was calculated for the principals’ reading knowledge variable using the data as reported in Tables 8 and 11. This study did not have a standard control and experimental population as there was no treatment in the study. When the experimental and control groups are not obvious, the effect size can still be calculated as long as the populations assigned as the control and experimental groups are identified in the computation. When the effect size is calculated in this manner it simply shows the difference between the two groups, (Coe, 2000). Based on Coe’s (2000)
recommendations, Cohen’s $d$ was calculated by subtracting the mean of the control group from the mean of the experimental group and dividing the results by the pooled standard deviation of both groups (p. 3). In this case principals were considered the control group and teachers were considered the experimental group. Using Cohen’s $d$, the effect size between the two groups in relation to principals’ reading knowledge was .89. According to Cohen (1988) this was a large effect size. Cohen (1988) additionally reported that effect size differences can be interpreted as the percent of non-overlap between the two groups (p. 22). The effect size of .89, equated to a 51.6% non-overlap of the perception of principals’ reading knowledge between the principals and teachers.

**Research Question Eight**

Research question eight asked: Is there a relationship between a principal’s perception of the leadership actions they take to support reading instruction and teachers’ perceptions of the leadership actions their principals take to support reading instruction? This correlation used a principal’s score on the leadership action section (PSRI-PS) and the mean score on the leadership action section (PSRI-TS) of all the teachers at that principal’s school who answered the survey, therefore the unit of analysis was at the school level ($n = 78$). Pearson’s Product Moment correlation ($r$) was -.103 ($p = .399$) which indicated no statistically significant relationship between a principal’s perception of the leadership actions they take to support reading instruction and their teachers’ perceptions of the leadership actions their principals take to support reading instruction. While there was no significant correlation the data showed that teachers perceived their principals and principals perceived themselves to take high levels of action to support reading instruction. This conclusion was based on all data points falling in the upper
right quadrant of the scatter plot. Figure 15 illustrates the non-significant correlation between the two variables.

![Scatter plot](image)

**Figure 4.** Correlation Between Principals’ Perceptions of the Leadership Actions They Take to Support Reading Instruction and Teachers’ Perceptions of the Leadership Actions Principals Take to Support Reading Instruction at the Individual School Level

Additionally, effect size was calculated for the principals’ leadership action variable. Based on Coe’s (2000) recommendations Cohen’s d was calculated by subtracting the mean of the control group from the mean of the experimental group and dividing the results by the pooled standard deviation of both groups (p. 3). Again, in this case principals were considered the control group and teachers were considered the experimental group. Using Cohen’s d, the effect size between the two groups in relation
to principals’ leadership actions was .53. According to Cohen (1988) this was a medium effect size. The effect size of .53, equated to a 33.0% non-overlap of the perception of principals’ leadership actions between the principals and teachers.

**Summary of Findings**

This study examined survey results from a sample of 78 principals and 1876 teachers in a large, Florida school district. Survey results were analyzed by descriptive statistics and correlation analyses—Pearson’s Product Moment ($r$) and ANOVA. Results indicated a positive, statistically significant relationship between principals’ perceptions of their reading knowledge and principals’ perceptions of the actions they take to support reading instruction. An even stronger positive, statistically significant relationship was found between teachers’ perceptions of their principal’s reading knowledge and teachers’ perceptions of leadership actions principals take to support reading instruction. A statistically significant but weak relationship was also found between teachers’ years of experience and teachers’ perceptions of the leadership actions their principals take to support reading instruction. Non-significant relationships were found for all other research questions: two (a), three (a), five (a), seven, and eight. Table 17 summarizes the findings for each research question.
Table 17

Summary of findings for each research question

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Correlation #</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Sample (n)</th>
<th>Correlation (r) or ANOVA (F)</th>
<th>p-value</th>
<th>Statistically significant?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Is there a relationship between principals’ perceptions of their reading knowledge and principals’ perceptions of the leadership actions they take to support reading instruction?</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>.510 (r)</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Is there a difference between principals’ perceptions of their reading knowledge and the type of school they lead?</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>.055 (F)</td>
<td>.946</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2a.</td>
<td>Is there a relationship between principals’ perceptions of their reading knowledge and their years of experience?</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>-.086 (r)</td>
<td>.519</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Is there a difference between principals’ perceptions of the leadership actions they take to support reading instruction and the type of school they lead?</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>.138 (F)</td>
<td>.871</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3a.</td>
<td>Is there a relationship between principals’ perceptions of the leadership actions they take to support reading instruction and their years of experience?</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>.105 (r)</td>
<td>.392</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Is there a relationship between teachers’ perceptions of principals’ reading knowledge and teachers’ perceptions of leadership actions principals take to support reading instruction?</td>
<td>1665</td>
<td>.801 (r)</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Is there a difference between teachers’ perceptions of their principal’s reading knowledge and the type of school where the teachers work?</td>
<td>1665</td>
<td>3.485 (F)</td>
<td>.031</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5a.</td>
<td>Is there a relationship between teachers’ perceptions of their principal’s reading knowledge and teachers’ years of experience?</td>
<td>1619</td>
<td>.042 (r)</td>
<td>.091</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Is there a difference between teachers’ perceptions of the leadership actions principals take to support reading instruction and the type of school where the teachers work?</td>
<td>1671</td>
<td>4.347 (F)</td>
<td>.013</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6a.</td>
<td>Is there a relationship between teachers’ perceptions of the leadership actions principals take to support reading instruction and teachers’ years of experience?</td>
<td>1627</td>
<td>.084 (r)</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Is there a relationship between principals’ perceptions of their reading knowledge and teachers’ perceptions of their principal’s reading knowledge?</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>-.145 (r)</td>
<td>.275</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Is there a relationship between principals’ perceptions of the leadership actions they take to support reading instruction and teachers’ perceptions of the leadership actions their principal takes to support reading instruction?</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>-.103 (r)</td>
<td>.399</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The study found that principals’ perceptions of their own reading knowledge and leadership actions taken to support reading correlated to each other and teachers’ perceptions of their principal’s reading knowledge and leadership actions their principal takes to support reading instruction correlated to each other, but there was no correlation linking the principals’ views to the teachers’ views. Chapter 5 will provide a summary of the results of this study including conclusions, their significance, and their connection to previous research. The chapter will also discuss implications for practice and provide suggestions for future research.
Chapter 5 Summary and Discussion

Introduction

Principals in this era of high accountability, high stakes testing, and increasing academic rigor are being asked more than ever before to be the instructional leader of their school. While generic leadership theories (e.g. transformational, transactional, situational, etc.) provide principals with strategies on how to influence the individuals under their purview, these leadership theories do not provide principals with what the focus of the influence should be. “It is the research base on student and teacher learning and on effective teaching in particular, that can give content to an otherwise abstract leadership process” (Robinson, 2006, p. 63). Instructional leaders with knowledge connecting subject matter, learning, and teaching to acts of leadership are connected to the very process they were designed to lead—the instructional program of their school (Stein & Nelson, 2003). “The skills and knowledge that matter in leadership are those that can be connected to, or lead directly to, the improvement of instruction and student performance” (Elmore, 2004, p. 58). Leadership content knowledge, a combination of subject matter knowledge and effective leadership practices, is a relatively recent construct viewing the role of principal as that of instructional leader in its truest sense.

Summary of Findings

The purpose of this quantitative study was to examine the relationship between a principal's perception of their reading knowledge and a principal’s perception of the
leadership actions they take to support reading instruction. This study analyzed additional aspects of that relationship including principals’ years of experience and the type of school principals lead. This study also examined the relationship from teachers’ points of view. All of these aspects were investigated to ascertain whether the amount of knowledge a principal has about reading influences the leadership actions they take to support reading instruction at their schools. The research questions that guided this study were:

1. Is there a relationship between principals’ perceptions of their reading knowledge and principals’ perceptions of the leadership actions they take to support reading instruction?

2. Is there a difference between principals’ perceptions of their reading knowledge and the type of school where they work: Title I, Renaissance or non-Title I?

2a. Is there a relationship between principals’ perceptions of their reading knowledge and their years of experience?

3. Is there a difference between principals’ perceptions of leadership actions they take to support reading instruction and the type of school where they work: Title I, Renaissance or non-Title I?

3a. Is there a relationship between principals’ perceptions of the leadership actions they take to support reading instruction and their years of experience?

4. Is there a relationship between teachers’ perceptions of their principal’s reading knowledge and teachers’ perceptions of the leadership actions principals take to support reading instruction?
5. Is there a difference between teachers’ perceptions of their principal’s reading knowledge and the type of school where the teachers work?

5a. Is there a relationship between teachers’ perceptions of their principal’s reading knowledge and teachers’ years of experience?

6. Is there a difference between teachers’ perceptions of the leadership actions principals take to support reading instruction and the type of school where the teachers work?

6a. Is there a relationship between teachers’ perceptions of the leadership actions principals take to support reading instruction and teachers’ years of experience?

7. Is there a relationship between principals’ perceptions of their reading knowledge and teachers’ perceptions of their principal’s reading knowledge?

8. Is there a relationship between principals’ perceptions of the leadership actions they take to support reading instruction and teachers’ perceptions of the leadership actions their principals take to support reading instruction?

In order to gain an overall perspective of a principal’s perceived reading knowledge and leadership actions, both principals’ and teachers’ perceptions of principals’ knowledge and leadership actions were examined using the Principal’s Support for Reading Instruction – Principal Survey (PSRI-PS) and the Principal’s Support for Reading Instruction – Teacher Survey (PSRI-TS). The elementary (K-5) principals and teachers that were invited to participate in this study were all from one large, central Florida school district; one of the ten largest school districts in the nation. The elementary schools (N = 144) in this district included non-Title I (40%), Title I non-
Renaissance (28%), and Title I Renaissance (32%). The schools were both traditional and magnet, in rural, urban, and suburban settings. The sample frame included 78 principals (response rate of 54%) and 1,876 teachers (response rate of 22%). For research questions examined at the school level (7 and 8) the only teacher surveys used were those whose principal had also responded. For all other research questions not at the school level, all teacher surveys were used in order to maximize the amount of usable data.

Pearson’s product moment correlation \((r)\) was used to establish the strength and direction of the relationships and statistical significance among variables. The results of the survey instruments indicated that there was a significant, positive relationship \((r = .510, p < .001)\) between a principal’s perceived reading knowledge and the perceived leadership actions they take to support reading instruction at their school (research question 1). Results also demonstrated a significant, positive relationship \((r = .801, p < .001)\) between teachers’ perceptions of their principal’s reading knowledge and teachers’ perceptions of the leadership actions their principals take to support reading instruction (research question 4). There were statistically significant but weak correlations for questions 5, 6, and 6(a). All other correlations for research questions 2, 2(a), 3, 3(a), 5(a), 7, and 8 were found to be statistically not significant.

The following subtopics are addressed in Chapter 5: a summary of the results of this study including conclusions, their significance, and their connection to previous research. The chapter also discusses limitations of this study, implications for practice, and suggestions for future research.
Discussion of the Research Questions

Research Questions One and Four

Research questions one and four are presented first as they are inextricably linked and the crux of this study. Research question one asked: Is there a relationship between principals’ perceived reading knowledge and the perceived actions principals take to support reading instruction? There was a significant, positive correlation ($r = .510, p < .001$) between principals’ perceptions of their reading knowledge and principals’ perceptions of the actions they take to support reading instruction. Research question four asked: Is there a relationship between teachers’ perceptions of their principal’s reading knowledge and teachers’ perceptions of leadership actions principals take to support reading instruction? There was a significant, positive correlation ($r = .801, p < .001$) between teachers’ perceptions of their principal’s reading knowledge and teachers’ perceptions of the actions their principals take to support reading instruction.

This study purported the “central idea” (Harris, 2003; Spillane, 2004) of leadership was instructional improvement. According to Quint et al. (2007) by increasing principals’ knowledge through leadership training principals learn about quality instruction and actions to support their teachers. Principals then find ways to support their teachers in content and pedagogy, as well as provide materials, time to talk and collaborate with other professionals. All of these actions of the principal help teachers improve instruction. The findings that evolved from research questions one and four—that principals who know more about reading act in ways that support teachers in teaching reading, support Quint et al.’s findings from both a principal and teacher perspective.
Scores from the PSRI-PS showed principals perceived themselves as very knowledgeable in reading (M = 91.61, maximum score 105) and also perceived themselves as very supportive of reading instruction as evidenced by the leadership actions they take (M = 67.65, maximum score 75). Similarly, scores from the PSRI-TS showed teachers also perceived their principals to be knowledgeable about reading (M = 48.92, maximum score 75) but not to the same extent as principals perceived themselves. Likewise, teachers also perceived their principals to be supportive of reading instruction (M = 56.11, maximum score 75) but not to the same extent as principals perceived themselves.

Examining the survey results of principals and teachers, the two variables (perceived reading content knowledge and perceived leadership actions) tended to trend together. More explicitly, the more a principal was perceived to know about reading the more likely they were perceived as taking actions to support reading instruction; conversely, the less a principal was perceived to know about reading the less likely they were perceived as taking actions to support reading instruction. This was true of both principal and teacher perceptions. These correlations substantiated findings in the literature review that purported the more knowledge a principal has the more likely they are to take specific leadership actions to organize the instructional program to support effective teaching (Quint, et al., 2007; Stein & Nelson, 2003; McGhee & Lew, 2007; Elmore, 2004; Cobb & Smith, 2007; Fink & Resnick, 2001).

Given that principals’ and teachers’ perceptions in this study were such that when principals were knowledgeable about reading they tended to also take actions to support reading instruction, what does that mean for principals as instructional leaders in a
broader sense? These perceptions support the idea of including training on content knowledge, instructional practices, and pedagogy into principal preparation and educational leadership programs as well as continuing education from a district level. Because the level of leadership content knowledge principals bring to their role can vary from no classroom content area teaching experience in core academic areas (e.g., P.E. or music teacher), to many years in the classroom, to content area specialists (e.g., Reading Coach); this study’s results implied that ongoing leadership content training must occur. This implication was also revealed as a theme in the open-ended responses of the PSRI-PS, where principals stated that workshops were a place to build their reading knowledge.

**Research Questions Seven and Eight**

Although principals’ perceptions of their reading knowledge and the leadership actions they take to support reading instruction were statistically significant and teachers’ perceptions of their principal’s reading knowledge and leadership actions their principals take to support reading instruction were also statistically significant, examining the relationship of the two variables (principals’ perceived reading knowledge and leadership actions to support reading instruction) between principals and teachers yielded non-significant correlations.

Research question seven asked: Is there a relationship between principals’ perceptions of their reading knowledge and teachers’ perceptions of their principal’s reading knowledge? There was a non-significant correlation ($r = -.145, p < .275$) between principals’ perceptions of their reading knowledge and their teachers’ perceptions of their reading knowledge but a large effect size of .89 between the two groups. Research question eight asked: Is there a relationship between principals’
perceptions of the leadership actions they take to support reading instruction and their teachers’ perceptions of the leadership actions they take to support reading instruction?

There was a non-significant correlation ($r = -.103, p < .399$) between a principal’s perception of the leadership actions they take to support reading instruction and their teachers’ perceptions of the leadership actions they take to support reading instruction. There was a medium effect size of .53 between the two groups.

The two non-significant correlations and the medium and large effect sizes pointed to a difference in perception between principals and teachers regarding the degree of principals’ reading knowledge and actions they take to support reading instruction. Differences in perception have the potential to lead to problems for principals and their teachers working towards a common goal such as increased teacher effectiveness or student achievement in literacy (Thomas, 2010; Booth & Roswell, 2007). Reeves (2008) posited that part of the challenge to implementing change to increase school effectiveness and/or student achievement is that principals and teachers do not have a common understanding of the essential elements of effective literacy instruction. In order to have a common understanding of the essential elements of effective literacy instruction, a common knowledge base between principals and teachers must be established. When principals and teachers work from differing levels of knowledge and ideas of what actions a principal should take to support reading instruction, school progress can be stymied. Significant differences in perception between principals and teachers were discovered as principal and teacher responses to individual questions and open ended responses on the PSRI-PS and PSRI-TS were examined.
This study found several examples of differences between how principals perceived their reading knowledge and leadership actions taken to support reading instruction and how teachers perceived their principal’s reading knowledge and the leadership actions their principals take to support reading instruction. To explore these differences and what they meant for the district under study, the following sections discuss: the number of questions that had varying degrees of difference between principals’ and teachers’ perceptions; specific questions that had large differences in relation to principals’ perceived reading knowledge; grade level specific questions; questions that revealed principals’ depth of knowledge; overall perceptions of principals and teachers in relation to principals’ perceived reading knowledge; and differences in perceptions of principals’ leadership actions taken to support reading instruction.

**Discussion of differences in principal and teacher perception of principals’ knowledge.**

Based on the results from the PSRI-PS, principals perceived themselves as having a high level of reading content knowledge as evidenced by all of their responses (n = 78) falling in the upper right quadrant of the research question one (principal to principal correlation) scatterplot (Figure 4 in Chapter 4). Even though the overall scores for the perceived reading knowledge variable on the PSRI-PS were extremely high, some principals did respond with “disagree” for 12 of the 22 (54%) reading knowledge questions, even though the answer of “disagree” demonstrated less perceived reading knowledge. The percentage of principals that responded with “disagree”, however, was never larger than 23% for any of the twelve questions. This means 77% of principals responded with “agree” or “strongly agree” for all questions where “agree” or “strongly
agree” was the response demonstrating more perceived reading knowledge. This was a clear indication principals perceived themselves to be knowledgeable in reading.

Teachers, on the contrary, responded “disagree” or “strongly disagree” for 13 out of 16 (81%) of the PSRI-TS reading knowledge questions where the answer “disagree” or “strongly disagree” demonstrated they perceived their principal to have less reading knowledge. The range of the percentage of teachers responding with “disagree” on these questions was as small as 5.5% to a high of 54%, while the average fraction of teachers marking “disagree” on the 13 questions was 34.5%. This meant that on average 34.5% of teachers responded with “disagree” or “strongly disagree” for 81% of the principals’ perceived reading knowledge questions. These discrepancies pointed to a strong difference in perception of a principal’s reading knowledge. Principals perceived they had more reading knowledge than their teachers perceived them to have. Once again, the difference in perception of a principal’s reading knowledge can lead to adverse effects on the literacy instructional program and consequently student achievement in literacy regardless if the perception from principals or teachers is accurate (Booth & Roswell, 2007; Lofton, 2009; Reeves, 2008).

**Numbers of questions that resulted in large, medium, and small differences between principal and teacher perceptions for each variable on the PSRI-PS and PSRI-TS.**

The differences between principals’ and teachers’ perceptions of principals’ reading knowledge and leadership actions to support reading instruction were evident when individual questions on the PSRI-PS and PSRI-TS were compared (Table 15 in Chapter 4). Parameters were established to define the size of the difference in
perceptions between principal and teacher responses. Any response difference greater than 40% was characterized as a large difference. Any response difference from 20-40% was characterized as a medium difference, and response differences less than 20% were characterized as small differences. The variable of principals’ perceived reading knowledge had the greatest number of questions with large differences (8 total questions) compared to the variable of principals’ perceived leadership actions to support reading instruction which had only two questions with large differences.

Conversely, the variable of principals’ perceived leadership actions to support reading instruction had the greatest number of questions with medium differences (9 total questions) compared to the variable of principals’ perceived reading knowledge which had only 5 questions with medium differences. Questions resulting in small differences were few. The variable of principals’ perceived reading knowledge had three questions with small differences and the variable of principals’ perceived leadership actions to support reading instruction had four questions with small differences.

The following section examines the questions in the principals’ perceived reading knowledge section of the PSRI-PS and PSRI-TS that resulted in large differences.

*Questions that resulted in large differences in perception of principals’ reading knowledge.*

Closer examination of the differences between responses of principals and teachers in relation to a principal’s perceived reading knowledge revealed that the greatest discrepancies revolved around grade level specific constructs and principals’ depth of knowledge. Specifically, the eight questions with large differences in relation to
principals’ perceived reading knowledge were (Questions are numbered as they are listed on the PSRI-TS; see Appendix E):

3. My principal talks with me about phonemic awareness.

4. My principal provides specific examples of phonemic awareness instruction when talking to me.

7. My principal talks with me about phonics instruction.

8. My principal provides specific examples of phonics instruction when talking to me.

11. My principal provides specific examples of vocabulary instruction when talking to me.

12. My principal talks with me about fluency instruction.

13. My principal provides specific examples of fluency instruction.

15. My principal provides specific examples of comprehension instruction.

There are at least two possible explanations behind the large differences between principals’ and teachers’ perceptions on these questions: (1) the majority of teachers who answered the questions may not have had a need to discuss with their principal the particular reading construct asked about; or (2) principals’ depth of knowledge was not as strong as they perceived it to be. The next two sections discuss the two possible explanations behind the large differences in perception.

*Grade level specific questions.*

Six of the eight questions with large differences in perception between principals and teachers (1, 2, 3, 4, 6, and 7) were grade level specific and are discussed in this section. (The remaining two questions are discussed in the next section titled *Principals’ depth of knowledge.*) For example, questions one and two asked about phonemic
awareness. Phonemic awareness is a literacy construct taught to emergent readers typically found in kindergarten and early first grade classrooms. Only 18.6% of the teachers that responded to the survey were kindergarten or first grade teachers. Including the teacher category of “others” which included Academic Intervention Specialists and Exceptional Student Education teachers who may have been working with students in this grade level; the total percentage of teachers that responded to the questions of phonemic awareness that had contact with students where phonemic awareness would be taught was 34.7%. This meant that 65.3% of the teachers who responded to the survey did not have a need for their principal to talk about phonemic awareness with them nor provide specific examples of phonemic awareness instruction. The specific difference in principal and teacher perceptions for the two questions was 56.9% (principal talks about phonemic awareness) and 48.8% (principal provides specific examples of phonemic awareness). The fraction of teachers that did not work with the grade level of students who needed phonemic awareness could have accounted for the difference in principal and teacher perception regarding this construct.

The remaining grade level specific questions regarding phonics and fluency can be looked at in the same way as the phonemic awareness example. The large differences in principals’ and teachers’ answers may have been caused by teachers who did not have the need to talk to the principal about that particular reading construct which may have resulted in those teachers answering “disagree” or “strongly disagree.” Table 18 provides the reading construct focus of the six grade level specific questions (phonemic awareness, phonics, and fluency), typical grade levels in which the construct found in each of the six questions are taught, the percentage of teachers from that grade level who participated in
the survey, the percentage of teachers in all other grade levels who participated in the survey, and the specific difference in principal and teacher responses.

Table 18

*Differences in principal and teacher responses attributed to grade level discrepancies*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus of question and reading construct</th>
<th>Typical grade level where construct is taught</th>
<th>Percentage of teachers from grade level participating in the survey</th>
<th>Percentage of teachers in remaining categories</th>
<th>Specific difference in principal and teachers responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Talks about Phonemic Awareness</td>
<td>Kindergarten, First</td>
<td>18.6%</td>
<td>81.4%</td>
<td>56.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides examples of Phonemic Awareness</td>
<td>Kindergarten, First</td>
<td>18.6%</td>
<td>81.4%</td>
<td>48.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talks about Phonics</td>
<td>Kindergarten-Second</td>
<td>29.5%</td>
<td>70.5%</td>
<td>56.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides examples of Phonics</td>
<td>Kindergarten-Second</td>
<td>29.5%</td>
<td>70.5%</td>
<td>44.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talks about Fluency</td>
<td>Second-Fifth</td>
<td>45.2%</td>
<td>54.8%</td>
<td>46.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides examples of Fluency</td>
<td>Second-Fifth</td>
<td>45.2%</td>
<td>54.8%</td>
<td>48.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although there is no way to know definitively if the difference in principals’ and teachers’ perceptions of grade level specific questions was due to large numbers of teachers outside those grade levels having answered the questions, it is a reasonable conclusion worth considering.
Principal’s depth of knowledge.

The large differences in perception between principals and teachers in relation to principals’ reading knowledge might also be explained by a difference in the perception of the depth of a principal’s reading knowledge. The PSRI-PS and PSRI-TS included two different types of questions to gauge the depth of principals’ perceived knowledge: (1) asking principals to specify grade levels they were talking to when they discussed certain reading constructs; and (2) asking principals if they provided specific examples of reading constructs when talking to teachers.

The PSRI-PS included six questions requiring a principal to select the grade level to which they were typically talking when they discussed the following reading constructs: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, and the Gradual Release of Responsibility. These questions were designed to assess if principals knew the grade level(s) where these reading constructs were typically taught. The percentage of principals answering these questions correctly ranged from 51.0 to 94.5%. Three of the questions (vocabulary, fluency, comprehension) had an over 90% accuracy rate by principals (see Table 10 in Chapter 4 for specific accuracy percentages). This demonstrated that principals’ perceptions of their knowledge of reading may have been accurate to a certain degree, at least when it came to knowing at what grade levels these constructs were taught.

To further gauge the depth of principals’ perceived reading knowledge there were 12 total questions on both surveys asking if principals talked about or provided specific examples of six reading constructs: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, and the Gradual Release of Responsibility. Theoretically, a principal
who talks about certain reading constructs holds some knowledge about the construct. Moreover, if a principal can provide specific examples of how to teach or what to teach in relation to those constructs, one may assume that principal has even more knowledge about the construct.

While phonemic awareness, phonics, and fluency are grade level specific (results of these questions are found in Table 18 of this chapter), vocabulary, comprehension, and the Gradual Release of Responsibility are reading constructs found in all grade levels. If principals’ and teachers’ perceptions regarding the depth of principals’ reading knowledge were going to match, it would be expected they would match on the reading constructs found at all grade levels as teachers at all grade levels would be represented in the survey results. There were two questions for each of the three constructs that spanned all grade levels, for a total of six questions that included teachers in grades kindergarten through fifth. All six questions either had a large difference (> 40%) in perception between principals and teachers or a medium difference (20-40%). This discrepancy in perception may be attributed to a lack of depth of knowledge regarding those specific constructs as teachers at all grade levels were represented in the responses. This indicates that principals’ perceptions of their reading knowledge in this study may have been inaccurate, in particular when it came to talking about or giving examples for these constructs.

There are some large differences that may be explained through errors in survey construction, but not all of them. In particular, principals perceived they had high levels of knowledge in reading in all areas, but the results demonstrated they were inaccurate in at least some areas of reading (e.g., talking about or providing examples for vocabulary,
comprehension, and Gradual Release of Responsibility). This discussion highlighted actual differences between principals’ and teachers’ perceptions of principals’ reading knowledge. It is essential principals have broad knowledge of several areas of literacy in order to best support teachers and work with them to improve the literacy program of their school (Thomas, 2010).

Based on the review of literature it is beneficial for principals to know about phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension as these were the five constructs identified by the National Reading Panel and other literacy experts (Allington, 2009; Allington & Cunningham, 2002; Beck, 2002; Boulware-Gooden, et al., 2007; Cunningham, 2009; Duke & Pearson, 2002; Langer, 2002; Lehr et al., 2004; National Reading Panel, 2000; Pearson, 2004) as instrumental to the reading process. While these five do not encompass everything a principal must know in relation to reading they are virtually unanimously accepted among reading researchers as significant to any reading instructional program. Principals who do not have a solid understanding of these constructs may have trouble supporting reading teachers and leading the reading program of their schools. Principals can, do, and should distribute leadership and support of reading to reading experts in the school. Principals with limited reading knowledge in these constructs, though, may find it challenging to know when the recommendations of the experts are sound.
Discussion of differences in relation to leadership actions.

Differences in perception of principal leadership actions taken to support reading instruction.

Quint, et al. (2004) found that the acquisition of reading knowledge by principals led to principals supporting their teachers to improve their classroom practices in reading (p. iii). Overall, Quint’s finding was supported in this study, as both principals and teachers perceived principals to be both knowledgeable and supportive towards reading instruction. There were differences, however, in the principals’ and teachers’ perceptions of how supportive. There were fifteen total questions on the PSRI-PS and PSRI-TS to determine the leadership actions principals take to support reading instruction. Compared to the reading knowledge variable there were far fewer large differences (i.e., > 40%) in the perception between principals and teachers in relation to the perceived leadership actions principals take to support reading instruction.

Only two questions: (1) I/My principal regularly discusses reading data; and (2) I/My principal regularly discusses student progress; out of the fifteen perceived leadership action questions had differences greater than 40%. A similar question was asked in the principals’ perceived reading knowledge section with a much smaller difference. The reading knowledge question that pertained to data asked principals and teachers to respond to “I/My principal can read and interpret data from reading assessments.” There was only a small difference in perception (14.4%) between principals and teachers which indicated that most likely principals in this study had knowledge about reading and interpreting data from reading assessments.
The differences in principals’ and teachers’ perceptions in regard to discussing the data could suggest that principals perceived they discussed data and student progress more often than teachers perceived this to be true. It could also point to differences in how the word “regularly” was interpreted by the participants. If a principal, for example, interpreted “regularly” to mean twice during a nine-week period, but teachers interpreted “regularly” to mean weekly, the difference in perception would have appeared large. Asking this question without the qualifier of “regularly” may have resulted in smaller differences in perception or may have been improved if the qualifier was defined for the participants.

There were nine questions in the perceived leadership actions to support reading instruction sections on the PSRI-PS and PSRI-TS that resulted in small sized (>20%) differences (questions are numbered as they are listed on the PSRI-TS and PSRI-PS; see Appendices D and E).

2. I provide/ My principal provides reading resources beyond the district purchased resources.

4. I / My principal communicate(s) about reading to parents.

6. I/My principal communicate(s) expectations of the K-5 reading plan to teachers.

9. I/My principal ensure(s) professional development.

11. I/My principal visit(s) classrooms during the reading block.

12. I/My principal discuss(es) reading block observations with teachers.

13. I/My principal identify/identifies teacher leaders in reading.

14. I/My principal encourage(s) teacher leaders to take on leadership roles.
15. I/My principal read(s) and pass(es) on reading articles to teachers.

There were four questions in the perceived leadership actions to support reading instruction sections that resulted in medium sized (20-40%) differences (questions are numbered as they are listed on the PSRI-TS and PSRI-PS; see Appendices A and B).

1. I/My principal provide(s) a 90-minute uninterrupted reading block.

3. I/My principal incorporate(s) reading into school events.

5. I/My principal ensure(s) our school has a K-5 reading assessment plan.

10. I/My principal create(s) time for collaborative discussion of reading.

The items with small differences were more global in nature and are established either before school begins or at the beginning of the school year. For example, the 90-minute block would require time created in the master schedule. The master schedule is created before students begin the school year. The same is true for finding time for collaborative discussion of reading. This time often takes place during professional learning communities or grade level meetings. Both of these opportunities are created by designing the master schedule to allow teachers at a grade level to have common planning time.

In contrast, many of the items with medium sized differences (and the two large difference items) were ongoing in nature and required more of a principal’s time throughout the school year. For example, in order for a principal to discuss observations made during the reading block, they are required to not only visit classrooms during the day but to also find the time after students are dismissed to meet with teachers to discuss the observations. Time is perhaps one of the biggest factors in the difference between
principals’ and teachers’ perceptions regarding leadership actions taken to support reading instruction. Close to a third of teachers in the sample who also responded to the open-ended questions spoke of the lack of time for principals to be able to do many of the things asked about in the survey. The topic of time will be discussed more in the next section.

Overall there were fewer large and medium sized differences in perception of the leadership actions to support reading instruction section than in the perceived reading knowledge section. This may mean that regardless of a principal’s knowledge in reading, principals were able to support reading instruction. Principals may have relied on other members of the organization to provide the knowledge while they ensured the support pieces (e.g., creating time to collaborate, providing resources, etc.) were established. In this sample, a number of teachers responded in the open-ended question that much of the knowledge and many of the actions asked about came from individuals other than the principal. Further discussion on this topic is found in the next section.

**Open ended responses from principals and teachers.**

The PSRI-PS and PSRI-TS included one open-ended question for teachers and principals to provide additional thoughts regarding a principal’s perceived reading knowledge and the perceived leadership actions principals take to support reading instruction. Both principals (38%) and teachers (35%) responded, revealing themes that were found in both populations and themes unique to each population. The following section discusses those themes and provides examples of principal and teacher responses representing those themes.
Similar themes found in both principal and teacher responses.

Reading is an important area for principals to know about and lead.

Principals spoke frequently about the importance of the principal being knowledgeable in reading. This theme corresponded with the principals’ perceptions of themselves as both highly knowledgeable and highly supportive. An example of a principal’s response illustrating this theme was, “It is important for the leader of a school to stay informed and up to date on reading instruction.” This theme supported the literature in that when a principal receives professional development and increases their knowledge they are more likely to understand how to better support teachers (McGhee & Lew, 2007; Stein & Nelson, 2003; Quint et al., 2007). Therefore, if a principal’s work is to support teachers and improve instruction, their work will include knowledge about subject matter and pedagogy as well as knowing how to lead their teachers towards the common goals of the organization, and managing the processes of the school.

Based on their open-ended responses, teachers spoke more often than principals about the need for their principal to know about reading in order to support instruction. Just as teachers’ perceptions on the PSRI-TS covered the entire range of scores (15-75), statements from teachers ranged from principals being highly knowledgeable and highly supportive to principals having no knowledge and offering no support. An example of the teacher responses characterizing their principal as highly knowledgeable and highly supportive of teaching reading was, “My principal is very knowledgeable, active and involved in developing interventions for individual students and classes.” An example of the teacher responses that were favorable of their principal’s reading knowledge and leadership actions taken to support reading instruction but to a lesser degree than the
above statement was, “My principal is a wealth of knowledge and can point us in the direction we need to go at any time.” These responses supported the quantitative data showing that in general teachers perceived their principals as both knowledgeable in reading and taking actions to support reading instruction.

Although many of the 659 open-ended teacher responses were favorable, a little less than half of teacher responses reflected a perception that either the principal did not have reading knowledge or did not take leadership action to support reading instruction. An example of the teacher responses characterizing their principal as lacking reading knowledge was:

Unfortunately my principal has never spoken to me directly about specific reading strategies, interventions, or the latest research. I have witnessed the administrator receive questions from parents about reading instruction and the questions were referred to another professional, I believe, because the administrator could not speak to the specifics of the reading curriculum. The 90-minute reading block is not, and never has, been kept free of interruptions at my current school. Students are routinely pulled during the 90-minute block for resource, tutoring, guidance groups, etc.

The range of narrative responses from teachers mirrored the range of quantitative scores on the PSRI-TS. Like the results of the PSRI-TS, overall the teacher responses were favorable but the range of responses showed some teachers thought their principals were knowledgeable and supportive while others thought their principals were neither knowledgeable nor supportive. Schools where principal and teacher perceptions are aligned may have a greater chance at increasing the effectiveness of the instructional program as similar perceptions on the part of both principals and teachers are crucial to implementing improvement (Lofton, 2009). Unfortunately, drilling down to the individual school level by name was not an option due to the guarantee for anonymity of the participants; however, based on this study’s results individual principals may want to
survey their own school to determine whether their own perceptions are aligned with their teachers’ perceptions.

_Distributed leadership/relying on others._

A theme also revealed in both principal and teacher responses was how principals relied on others to ensure teachers received both knowledge and support in the area of reading. Principals mentioned reading coaches, reading resource teachers, and classroom teachers as the personnel they relied on for support. Teachers also mentioned both reading coaches and resource teachers many times. An example of a principal’s response depicting this theme was, “I rely heavily on my reading coach to provide me with the latest in reading. We meet regularly to discuss strategies and which teachers specifically need help with the reading block.” A teacher response representing this theme was, “All of the things listed in the survey so far are handled by our Reading Coach.”

There was one considerable difference between the principals’ and teachers’ open-ended responses in relation to distributed leadership. Only one principal mentioned their assistant principal as the person they relied on to ensure their teachers received reading knowledge and support for reading instruction, “Although as principal I may not always speak to teachers concerning the major components of reading instruction, I always monitor that it is taking place through my Assistant Principal, Reading Coach, or Reading Resource.” Teachers, on the other hand, mentioned their Assistant Principal as much as the Reading Coach or Reading Resource teacher as the person they relied on for reading knowledge and support. Many of the responses stated plainly, “The AP plays the bigger role in reading instruction,” and “I have not had much chance to experience my
principal’s leadership with reading, as our AP has spearheaded everything within this aspect of reading.”

From the collective responses of the teachers, it appeared that principals relied on others through distributed leadership to ensure that teachers received the knowledge and support needed to increase the effectiveness of the school’s reading program. This result supported Hallinger and Heck’s (2010) finding that collaborative leadership and school improvement were found to be positively and statistically significantly related \((r = .39, p < .05)\). Also demonstrated through the open-ended responses was the lack of a common understanding between principals and teachers as to who should be performing the role of instructional leader in relation to reading—principal, assistant principal, reading coach, reading resource teacher, or teacher leaders. While there was clear evidence of distributed or collaborative leadership to support the teachers, there was not a clear understanding of who was leading the charge.

These results suggested that there was an informally designated team of individuals at the school level who supported teachers in the teaching of reading. Broad (2007) purported that when a principal formally designates various school leaders (assistant principal, literacy coaches, teachers) to work towards the task of improving literacy instruction and communicates the efforts, successes, and challenges involved in the task, everyone involved seeks common understanding of how to achieve the task (p. 71). Schools that are instructionally effective are characterized by principals who articulate student achievement goals and staff responsibilities for achieving those goals leading to teachers who share a common language of teaching and learning (Murphy, 2004). If the theme revealed in this study is accurate, principals, teachers and ultimately
students would benefit from the principal formally assigning roles and responsibilities in relation to the literacy goals of the school and discussing those goals often (Fink & Resnick, 2001; Quint et al., 2007; Stein & Curtis, 2010). Benefits for principals would include a team of educators who could attend common training, meet on a regular basis, decide on a formal course of action in relation to the literacy plan, and continually discuss school progress toward the goal of increased literacy achievement for all students. This team of educators would benefit teachers as they could support the classroom teacher in both understanding the literacy plan, implementing effective instructional practices working towards the goal of increased literacy, and ensuring that the goal of increased literacy achievement of all students remained at the forefront. As a result, students would benefit through having a teacher who continually was working towards the goal of increasing their literacy achievement. When principals leave the roles and responsibilities of increasing literacy achievement to chance, a common understanding of how to do the latter is less likely to occur and the goal of increasing student achievement is jeopardized.

**Unique themes found among the principal and teacher responses.**

*Principals relying on staff development as the means to build their reading knowledge.*

Although not a major theme, several principals mentioned the importance of staff development opportunities as their way of staying abreast of current reading knowledge. “I appreciate being invited to workshops, speakers, etc., by district staff in order to build my current knowledge of reading instruction. I am always welcomed at the reading in-services my teachers take.” This is an interesting theme as 78% of principals on the
PSRI-PS reported they read articles and journals about reading but no principal remarked on this as a way of gaining knowledge. This theme has implications for school districts to ensure that staff development for principals is offered on a regular basis to enable principals to stay up to date on effective instructional practices.

*No time for principals to be the instructional leader of the school.*

A recurring theme throughout the 687 teacher responses was “there is no possible way a principal could do everything listed in the survey,” as there was not enough time. Most often the lack of time was attributed to the district’s new evaluation system. Possible implications of a principal’s lack of time to complete certain instructional leadership tasks were examined further by comparing principal and teacher perceptions on the leadership actions sections of the PSRI-PS and PSRI-TS.

Reviewing the questions from the principal’s perceived leadership actions taken to support reading instruction section of the PSRI-PS and PSRI-TS, eleven of the questions had large or medium differences between the principals’ and teachers’ perceptions of the actions principals take to support reading instruction. If eleven of the leadership actions to support reading instruction were difficult for principals to accomplish, at least in the minds of teachers, then perhaps the next logical question is what part of a principal’s job can be or should be delegated.

Elmore (2004) called for principals to focus leadership on instructional improvement and define everything else as instrumental to it. If principals have no time to focus their leadership on instructional improvement the instructional program may suffer as the leader is consumed with activities not revolving around the true purpose of schooling—student achievement. Although ambitious, Stein & Curtis (2010) offered
several suggestions to begin the systemic change needed to focus all levels of the system toward learning: (1) identify work that could be eliminated at both the school and central office level without adversely affecting students and their learning; (2) focus accountability at the central office on each department’s responsibility to make principals’ work easier and save them time; (3) consider organizing the roles of the other administrators and teachers in schools differently to allow principals to focus on instructional improvement; and (4) define the appropriate role of principals’ supervisors as one of creating conditions for accelerated and sustained learning (pp. 105-108). Only when a systemic view of the role of principal as the instructional leader is considered by all levels of an organization (state, district, school) will the necessary changes be put in place to allow principals to focus primarily on instruction and learning to increase student achievement.

The challenge of focusing leadership on increasing student achievement and diminishing distractions to that focus cannot be overestimated. Efforts at school reform are time consuming and difficult. Rowan, Barnes and Camburn (2004) offered recommendations for local school personnel, district personnel, and state personnel as they support principals in successful school change. For schools implementing instructional reform, a needs assessment of the school must be conducted, the goal of increased student achievement must be defined, and a research based model to effect change chosen. Then the local school community (principals, teachers, support personnel) must unite around the plan and over a period of years learn to implement the model in the context of their own school. District level personnel must provide a stable supportive environment while allowing the necessary time for change to occur. Schools
have an increased chance in succeeding at school change when the district allows as much freedom as possible from regulations regarding scheduling, transportation, discipline and curriculum (Rhim, Kowal, Hassel & Hassel, 2007).

Finally, state level support must complement, not compete, with the identified model of change. Datnow and Stringfield (2000) found “demands from the state level related to standards and accountability, specifically standardized testing, constrained or increased the tension of school reform” (p. 17). The researchers found in all of the schools they studied where high stakes testing was a part of the state requirements, test preparation activities took the place of any reform initiative. In order to successfully implement school reform focused on increased student achievement, state level support must be sensitive and adapt, without academic compromise, to the model of reform adopted and the school level players involved with that reform. Increasing the achievement of all students takes all levels of the school system (local, district, state) working together toward a common identified goal in order to be actualized.

**Research Questions Two, Two(a), Three, and Three(a)**

Research questions two, two(a), three, and three(a) are discussed together as they examine variables focused on principal perception and demographics including: principals’ perceptions of their own reading knowledge and leadership actions they take to support reading instruction, the type of school they lead, and their years of experience. All relationships among the variables were found to be statistically non-significant.

Regardless of their years of experience or the types of schools they led, principals had positive perceptions of their knowledge and the actions they take to support reading instruction. This constant, positive self-perception pointed to high levels of self-efficacy
held by administrators participating in this study. Bandura (1995) defined self-efficacy as the belief in one’s ability to successfully manage a particular situation (p. 2). Individuals with high levels of self-efficacy are more likely to engage in challenging tasks as they have the belief they can accomplish those tasks. In this study, the perception of principals was that they were highly knowledgeable and supportive regardless of their years of experience or type of school they led. This may point to principals who were more likely to engage in the challenging tasks involved with literacy leadership.

Csikszentmihalyi (1997) proposed that the ‘optimum’ level of self-efficacy is slightly above actual ability, which encourages people to tackle challenging tasks and gain valuable experience (p. 21). This study did not address if principals’ perceptions of their reading knowledge and actions taken to support reading instruction were above their actual knowledge and level of support. It was demonstrated in this study, however, that overall, principals’ perceptions of the two variables were larger than teachers’ perceptions of the two variables. If the difference in perceptions of principals’ reading knowledge and support for reading instruction pointed to principals with levels of self-efficacy slightly above actual ability, then the principals at the schools represented in the study were at what Csikszentmihalyi defined as the optimum level of self-efficacy. This would mean that the principals at these schools would have been more likely to take on the challenging tasks and work to gain the knowledge necessary to improve literacy instruction school wide.
Principals' scores on the PSRI-PS disaggregated by school type.

This study also examined if the principals at the three types of schools—Title I non-Renaissance, Title I Renaissance, and non-Title I—scored differently on the PSRI-PS. The mean scores for each of the variables (principals’ perceived reading knowledge and leadership actions to support reading instruction) on the PSRI-PS were disaggregated by type of school. For the perceived reading knowledge variable on the PSRI-PS there was only a four point difference between the mean scores of principals at any of the types of schools. For the perceived leadership actions to support reading instruction variable on the PSRI-PS, there was less than a one point difference between the mean scores of principals at any of the types of schools.

Additionally, this study disaggregated by type of school, principals’ scores on the six questions requiring principals to specify the grade level to which they are typically talking when they discuss various reading constructs (questions 5, 8, 11, 15, 18, and 22 on the reading knowledge section of the PSRI-PS). Principals of Non-Title I schools had the highest percentage of principals that scored correctly on four out of the six questions. Principals of Title I non-Renaissance schools had the highest percentage of principals that scored correctly on one question as did the principals of Title I Renaissance schools. Although this may seem a significant finding, when examining the actual percentages (see Table 10 in Chapter 4) there was a ten percent or less difference for four of the questions. Only one question (Gradual Release of Responsibility) had a 20% difference between the principals at the three types of schools. As most of the principals’ scores resulted in very little difference regardless of the type of school they led, this result suggested that there was no relationship between the type of school principals led and
their perceived reading knowledge or the leadership actions they take to support reading instruction.

This study found no relationship between a principal’s perceived reading knowledge, perceived leadership actions a principal takes to support reading instruction, their years of experience or the type of school they led. This was not surprising as principals in the district where the study was conducted were not consistently placed in schools because of their reading knowledge or years of experience. For example, in some cases educators with little experience in teaching reading, such as physical education teachers and guidance counselors, were promoted to principal. Likewise, in some cases first year principals were placed at Renaissance schools where the majority of the student population was at least one grade level below level.

It appeared that regardless of the type of school they led or the length of administrative experience, principals perceived themselves to be highly knowledgeable and supportive of reading instruction at their schools. The perception of the principals in this study demonstrated high levels of self-efficacy or belief in their reading knowledge and actions to support reading instruction at their schools. Since individuals with high self-efficacy are more likely to make more of an effort and persist longer than those with low efficacy (Schunk, 1990), the principals who participated in this study may have been more willing to do whatever it takes to ensure the literacy instructional program at their school was effective for all children.

Alternatively, principals scoring themselves high on both reading knowledge and leadership actions to support reading instruction may have also demonstrated principals feeling they needed to answer in a positive manner. Even though the survey was
anonymous, principals may have recognized the researcher was employed by the reading department of the district being studied. Consequently, the principals in the sample may have felt the need to project themselves as highly knowledgeable and supportive of reading instruction or face consequences from admitting a lack of knowledge or support. Further research that examines a principal’s actual reading knowledge and leadership actions is warranted to determine if perceptions and reality match.

**Research Questions Five, Five(a), Six, and Six(a)**

Research questions five, five (a), six, and six (a) are discussed together as they examined four variables from teachers’ perspectives: teachers’ perceptions of their principal’s reading knowledge and leadership actions their principals take to support reading instruction, the type of school in which they teach, and their years of teaching experience. Three of the four correlations (5, 6, and 6a) were found to be statistically significant but weak. The fourth correlation (5a) was found to be statistically non-significant.

The weak correlations between teachers’ perceptions of their principals’ reading knowledge and support for reading instruction and teachers’ years of experience or type of school where they taught is not surprising for at least three reasons. First, teachers in the district being studied were not placed in schools because of their perception of their principal. In order to have seen a relationship between teachers’ perceptions of their principal’s reading knowledge or leadership actions to support reading instruction and the type of school where teachers work, teachers’ perceptions of either principal variable would have had to demonstrate a cluster by type of school. In other words, teachers at each type of school would have had to score their principal’s reading knowledge and
leadership actions similarly. That said, the data showed that teachers’ perceptions of their principal’s knowledge and leadership actions actually spanned the possible range of responses (see Figures 10 and 12 in Chapter 4). Because teachers are not placed in schools because of their perception of their principal’s reading knowledge or leadership actions, it is rational to expect that teachers of varying backgrounds and experiences, regardless of type of school, would perceive their principal’s knowledge and support in varying ways.

Similarly, in order for a strong correlation to have existed between teachers’ perceptions of the two principal variables and teachers’ years of experience, the results would have had to show that as teachers increased in longevity their perceptions of their principals would have become increasingly positive or increasingly negative. There is no legitimate reason to expect that to be the case. One might presume that being a teacher for some length of time may make a teacher a better judge of a principal’s amount of knowledge or level of action, and therefore one may expect a correlation between years of experience and accuracy of their perception. This study did not examine the accuracy of either teacher or principal perception; it only examined the perception in and of itself. There is no evidence to support simply being a teacher for a longer period of time would bias a teacher’s perception towards strongly positive or strongly negative views of their principal. Therefore, there is no reason to expect a correlation between teachers’ perceptions of their principal’s knowledge or support and a teacher’s years of experience.

Lastly, none of the four principal correlations that examined their own perception of their reading knowledge, support for reading instruction, their years of experience, and type of school they led were statistically significant. As discussed in the previous
section, principals in this district were not consistently placed in schools because of their reading knowledge, leadership actions to support reading, or their years of experience. Therefore, depending on the positive or negative experiences and interactions between the principal and the teachers working for that principal, it is conceivable that some teachers would have had a positive overall perception of their principal and some teachers would have a negative overall perception of their principal. It is further conceivable that this overall perception may have influenced their specific perceptions of their principal’s reading knowledge and leadership actions. For this reason, the perception of the teachers working for any one principal might be expected to cover the full range of scores. If principals in the studied district had been placed in schools because of their reading knowledge, one may have expected to see a stronger relationship in relation to teachers’ perceptions of their principal’s reading knowledge and varying types of schools. Likewise, if principals had been placed in schools because of high levels of support for reading instruction, one may have expected to see a stronger correlation between the two variables. Since this was not the case for the district studied, no correlations for these variables were observed.

**Teachers’ scores on the PSRI-TS disaggregated by school.**

The above discussion was examined further by disaggregating teachers’ scores on the PSRI-TS by varying types of schools. Mean scores for each of the variables (principals’ perceived reading knowledge and leadership actions to support reading instruction) on the PSRI-TS were disaggregated by type of school. For the perceived reading knowledge variable on the PSRI-TS there was only a two point difference between the mean scores of teachers at any of the types of schools. For the perceived
leadership actions to support reading instruction variable on the PSRI-TS there was also a two point difference between the mean scores of teachers at any of the types of schools. Once again, it was not surprising that the correlations between the teachers’ perceptions and the demographic variables of type of school and years of experience demonstrated weak or no correlations. The teachers in the district being studied were not placed in schools due to their perceptions of their principal’s knowledge or leadership actions. Similarly, principals were not consistently placed in schools because of their reading knowledge, leadership actions or years of experience. This lack of purposeful placement based on reading knowledge and support for reading instruction among principals and teachers may have resulted in a wide range of perceptions across all school types which translated into weak or no correlations.

The weak or no correlations might also be related to a principal’s leadership style or the culture of the school established by the principal. Specifically, if the principal had a leadership style amenable to the teachers at a school, there may have been a greater likelihood of those teachers responding favorably to the survey even though the survey was asking about reading and not leadership in general. Conversely, if the teachers at the school viewed the leadership style of the principal unfavorably, there may have been an increased likelihood of those teachers responding negatively on the survey.

Additionally, if the principals in the study demonstrated high self-efficacy as discussed earlier, the teachers at the school may have responded favorably regardless of actual reading knowledge or support demonstrated by the principal since leadership self-efficacy has been related directly to gaining followers’ commitment (Chemers et al.,
If the teachers in the study were committed to their principals they may have responded favorably regardless of their reading knowledge or support.

**Limitations of the Study**

Although every attempt was made to conduct this research with fidelity and accuracy, it is necessary to address the limitations of this study as there were flaws, some unavoidable, in the design of this research. Perhaps the largest limitation of this study was that it was limited to one large, Central Florida school district where the researcher was employed as a district resource teacher for reading. Because the research was limited to one school district the findings are not generalizable to other districts. Additionally, because the researcher was employed as a district resource teacher for reading in the district where the study was conducted, participants, particularly principals, may have perceived the need to respond positively to the survey questions—even though the survey was anonymous. This perception could potentially skew the results, offering an inaccurate view of principals’ and teachers’ perceptions of principals’ perceived reading knowledge and leadership actions to support reading instruction.

Additional limitations revolved around the survey instruments used in the research study. Although the final survey instruments yielded each section (principals’ perceived reading knowledge, principals’ perceived leadership actions to support reading instruction) of the PSRI-PS and PSRI-TS reliable, the possibility that respondents misinterpreted the wording of questions remains. Any ambiguity or misinterpretation of the questions on the survey may have increased the likelihood of inaccurate results.

Finally, the surveys used in the study asked principals and teachers for their *perception* of principals’ reading knowledge and leadership actions taken to support
The surveys were not designed to ascertain the actual reading knowledge of the principal or the actual leadership actions they take. These self-reporting instruments may not have reported actual practices occurring at the school. The potential for teachers to negatively score their principals because they did not like their principal or because they received a poor evaluation existed. Conversely, the potential for teachers to positively score their principals on each of the variables because they liked their principal or because they have a favorable relationship with the principals also existed.

**Implications for Practice**

The purpose of this research study was to examine the relationship between principals’ perceived reading knowledge and perceived leadership actions taken to support reading instruction. The two variables were also examined through teachers’ perceptions of their principals as well as in relation to the demographic variables of years of experience and type of school (non-Title-I, Title I non-Renaissance, Title I Renaissance) where principals and teachers worked. Based on the results of this study there was a positive, statistically significant relationship between principals’ perceptions of their reading knowledge and their perception of the leadership actions they take to support reading instruction. There was a strong, positive, and statistically significant relationship between teachers’ perceptions of their reading knowledge and teachers’ perceptions of the leadership actions their principals take to support reading instruction. There was not, however, a statistically significant relationship between principals’ and teachers’ perceptions of principals’ reading knowledge or leadership actions principals take to support reading instruction. These findings are of particular importance to
principals, district leaders, and leaders of principal preparation programs. Several recommendations for practice grew out of this study.

Based on the positive, statistically significant relationship found between principals’ perceived reading knowledge and leadership actions taken to support reading instruction, continued training in content areas should be a part of principals’ education. Principal preparation programs and ongoing district-level training once principals are hired should include a content area focus for core instructional areas found at that level of schooling. For principals at the elementary level this would include instruction in effective practices and required state or district content in reading, writing, math and science. Training in reading and interpreting data to monitor student progress as well as how to monitor and evaluate teacher performance in relation to student achievement should also be included in principal professional development.

A primary theme from the teacher responses to the open-ended question was that principals have little to no time to devote to supporting the reading instructional program of the school. Implications from this theme indicated districts should examine the work load and responsibilities of the principal to determine what can be taken away from principals’ responsibilities to ensure they have time to focus on the instructional program at their school.

Another primary theme revealed through the principal and teacher open-ended responses was that of distributed leadership. Both principals and teachers stated they relied on various colleagues for support in teaching reading but there was no agreement as to who was responsible for what role. The implication for practice based on this theme is the need for discussion at the school site as to who is responsible for the various roles
in instructional leadership. It is impossible for a principal to fulfill every role necessary to sustain the instructional program at the school site. Principals need to establish and communicate the goals of the instructional program and identify who is responsible for supporting teachers and staff in working towards those goals.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

This study found a statistically significant, moderate correlation \( r = .510, p = .001 \) between principals’ perceptions of their reading knowledge and the leadership actions they take to support reading instruction. Results of the study also demonstrated a statistically significant, strong correlation \( r = .801, p = .001 \) between teachers’ perceptions of their principal’s reading knowledge and the leadership actions their principals take to support reading instruction. The study did not find statistically significant correlations when looking at the same variables between principals and teachers. In the course of the research, the following suggestions were identified for potential further study:

1. Replicating the study with several school districts to increase generalizability.

This study was conducted in one large Central Florida school district; therefore the results can only be viewed in relation to the district where the research was conducted. Including principals and teachers from school districts in various states, settings, with varying student population sizes, and varying student demographics would add to the literature regarding the relationship between principals’ reading content knowledge and the leadership actions they take to support reading instruction.
2. Replicating the study in other content areas, e.g., math, science, writing, etc.

Although this study argued that in an elementary school setting it is important for a principal to know about and support reading as it is the gateway to learning all other subjects, it does not diminish the importance of other subjects.

3. Conducting a study in which a principal’s actual reading knowledge in relation to the actual actions they take to support reading instruction is examined. This may allow researchers to determine if content knowledge truly did affect the actions principals take to support instruction. A study of this nature may also allow researchers to investigate if the real challenge facing schools is principals lacking content knowledge or differences in perceptions between principals and teachers. Being able to study the perceptions of teachers when a principal’s actual reading knowledge and leadership actions they take to support reading instruction are known may allow researchers to determine if the perceptions of teachers in regard to their principal’s content knowledge are accurate.

4. Conducting case studies of schools where the perception of teachers was as high as the principals and vice-versa when the perception of teachers was not as high as the principals to determine how the knowledge and support of the principal is communicated. Researchers could investigate if the principal at schools where the principal/teacher perception is similar actually know and do more than the principals at schools where the principal/teacher perception is dissimilar. Specific actions of principals could be observed and articulated.
Conclusion

At the time of this study education and educators are under attack like never before. In the national, state, and local media principals and teachers are looked at as causing the problems in the educational system, not as part of the solution. Principals and teachers in the school district where the research was conducted will, for the first time in the district’s history, be evaluated and paid according to student achievement. This is an era in which education is characterized by ever increasing accountability and demand for student achievement to be accelerated. Regardless of one’s philosophical or political beliefs about the type of reform the educational system in this country needs, there is one common mandate from all sides of the debate—we need educators who are knowledgeable to improve our schools.

This study examined the relationship between principals’ perceived reading knowledge and the perceived actions those principals take to support reading instruction. Danielson (2009) proffered that school improvement efforts are centered around the principal even as the principal’s job continues to grow more and more cumbersome. Although it is impossible for a principal to know about every detail of the curriculum, they must have command of the big ideas and they must retain their focus uncompromisingly on issues of student learning (p. 19). This study argued that for an elementary school principal reading is the big idea as reading is the gateway to all other content areas, and that principals need to be the leaders when it comes to implementing that big idea.

This study found that, at least as far as perceptions are concerned, principals who knew more about reading tended to take more action in support of reading instruction,
thus in order for principals to successfully implement the instructional program of their schools and work towards increasing student achievement in literacy, principals must have a solid understanding of effective literacy practices and pedagogy. Having principal preparation programs that include training in teaching and learning as a focus for the theories of leadership that are typically taught in these programs would begin to provide principals the knowledge to fulfill the role of instructional leader. To ensure continued competency in creating a sound instructional program, districts must provide ongoing training for principals in curriculum and instruction.

Additionally this study found a misalignment of perception between principals and teachers in relation to a principal’s knowledge of reading. This misalignment was observed in the differences in teacher and principal responses when principals and teachers were asked questions revealing the depth of principals’ knowledge. It was also observed in the overall scoring of a principal’s reading knowledge when the mean scores of principals and teachers were compared. This difference in perception has the potential to stymie efforts of the principal to create a successful literacy program. When teachers perceive the instructional leader of the school to have little knowledge in reading, the teachers will look to others for guidance and support. These others may or may not understand the vision of the principal and may cause additional challenges to realizing that vision. The district under study may want to investigate the causes of these misperceptions to mitigate any unintended barriers to student achievement in reading.

It is this researcher’s hope that the findings of this study will in some way impact students and educators; those in the present and those to come. The quest to create schools where all children become highly and critically literate is not merely to silence
the cries of the media. It is to ensure that all children have the ability to choose their future because they have the ability to read and explore their options. Maya Angelou once said, “Do the best you can until you know better. Then when you know better do better.” We, as educators, know better. It is time to do better.
References


Appendix A: Original Principal Survey

Principal's Support for Reading Instrument-Principal's Survey (PRSI-PS)

My name is Angela Butler and I am a doctoral student at the University of South Florida in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies. I am conducting research on Leadership Content Knowledge in reading; specifically, I am interested in the relationship between principals’ reading knowledge and the leadership decisions they make to support reading instruction in their schools. I know how busy you are, but the information only you can provide as an elementary principal is invaluable. Please take about 15 minutes to answer 28 questions relating to reading content knowledge and leadership actions supporting reading instruction. The responses are ANONYMOUS; there is no way to trace back survey responses to individual principals or schools. I appreciate your time and opinion. Thank you!

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. I have been a principal for the following number of years (please answer with numbers):

2. I have been a principal at my current school for the following number of years (please answer with numbers):
3. I am the principal at the following type of school:

non-Title I
Title I
Renaissance

READING CONTENT KNOWLEDGE

4. I can read and interpret data from reading assessments to assist teachers in making decisions about classroom instruction.

Strongly Agree
Agree
Undecided
Disagree
Strongly Disagree

5. The reading assessment(s) I feel most comfortable interpreting is/are:

6. I talk with my teachers about phonemic awareness instruction.

Strongly Agree
Agree
Undecided
Disagree
Strongly Disagree
7. I provide specific examples of phonemic awareness instruction when talking to my teachers.

Strongly Agree
Agree
Undecided
Disagree
Strongly Disagree

8. I talk with my teachers about Reader's Workshop.

Strongly Agree
Agree
Undecided
Disagree
Strongly Disagree

9. I provide specific examples on the individual components of the Reader's Workshop when talking to teachers.

Strongly Agree
Agree
Undecided
Disagree
Strongly Disagree

10. I talk with my teachers about phonics instruction.

Strongly Agree
Agree
Undecided
Disagree
Strongly Disagree
11. I provide specific examples of phonics instruction when talking to my teachers.

Strongly Agree
Agree
Undecided
Disagree
Strongly Disagree


Strongly Agree
Agree
Undecided
Disagree
Strongly Disagree

13. I talk with my teachers about vocabulary instruction

Strongly Agree
Agree
Undecided
Disagree
Strongly Disagree

14. I provide specific examples of vocabulary instruction when talking to my teachers.

Strongly Agree
Agree
Undecided
Disagree
Strongly Disagree
15. I talk with my teachers about fluency instruction

Strongly Agree
Agree
Undecided
Disagree
Strongly Disagree

16. I provide specific examples of fluency instruction when talking to my teachers.

Strongly Agree
Agree
Undecided
Disagree
Strongly Disagree

17. I encourage my teachers to use a wide variety of reading materials.

Strongly Agree
Agree
Undecided
Disagree
Strongly Disagree

18. I talk with my teachers about comprehension instruction.

Strongly Agree
Agree
Undecided
Disagree
Strongly Disagree
19. I provide specific examples of comprehension instruction when talking to my teachers.

Strongly Agree
Agree
Undecided
Disagree
Strongly Disagree

LEADERSHIP ACTIONS

20. I provide time in the master schedule for an uninterrupted 90-minute reading block.

Strongly Agree
Agree
Undecided
Disagree
Strongly Disagree

21. I provide materials and resources beyond the district purchased resources for my teachers to teach reading (e.g., books for classroom libraries, magazines, etc.)

Strongly Agree
Agree
Undecided
Disagree
Strongly Disagree
22. I celebrate literacy in my school by incorporating reading into school events and programs.

Strongly Agree
Agree
Undecided
Disagree
Strongly Disagree

23. I communicate with parents and stakeholders about reading instruction in my school.

Strongly Agree
Agree
Undecided
Disagree
Strongly Disagree

24. I meet with teachers to discuss reading data and student progress in reading.

Strongly Agree
Agree
Undecided
Disagree
Strongly Disagree

25. I provide professional development in reading based on teacher need.

Strongly Agree
Agree
Undecided
Disagree
Strongly Disagree
26. I create time for teachers to meet collaboratively to discuss reading content, instruction and data.

   Strongly Agree
   Agree
   Undecided
   Disagree
   Strongly Disagree

27. I visit classrooms during the reading block, take notes about what I see, and discuss those observations with teachers.

   Strongly Agree
   Agree
   Undecided
   Disagree
   Strongly Disagree

28. What else would you like to say about the topic of a principal's reading knowledge and leadership actions taken to support effective reading instruction?
Appendix B: Original Teacher Survey

Principal's Support for Reading Instruction: Teacher Survey (PSRI-TS)

My name is Angela Butler and I am a doctoral student at the University of South Florida in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies. I am conducting research on Leadership Content Knowledge in reading; specifically, I am interested in the relationship between principals’ reading knowledge and the leadership decisions they make to support reading instruction in their schools. I know how busy you are, but the information only you can provide as an elementary teacher is invaluable. Please take about 15 minutes to answer 28 questions relating to your principal's reading content knowledge and leadership actions supporting reading instruction. The responses are ANONYMOUS; there is no way to trace back survey responses to individual teachers, principals or schools. I appreciate your time and opinion. Thank you!

Demographic Information

1. I have been a teacher for the following number of years (please answer with numbers):
2. I have worked for my current principal for the following number of years:

less than 1 year
1-3 years
4-6 years
7-9 years
10 or more years

3. I am a:

Primary Teacher (Kindergarten-2nd grade)
Intermediate Teacher (3rd-5th grade)
Content Area Coach or Resource Teacher (Reading, Science, Math, etc.)
Specials Area Teacher (Art, Music, PE, etc.)
Supportive Services Provider (Guidance, Social Work, Psychologist, etc.)
other:

Reading Content Knowledge

4. My principal can read and interpret data from reading assessments to assist teachers in making decisions about classroom instruction.

Strongly Agree
Agree
Undecided
Disagree
Strongly Disagree

5. The reading assessment(s) my principal most frequently interprets or uses is/are:
   Strongly Agree
   Agree
   Undecided
   Disagree
   Strongly Disagree

7. My principal provides specific examples of phonemic awareness instruction when talking to teachers.
   Strongly Agree
   Agree
   Undecided
   Disagree
   Strongly Disagree

   Strongly Agree
   Agree
   Undecided
   Disagree
   Strongly Disagree

9. My principal provides specific examples about the individual components of the Reader's Workshop when talking with teachers.
   Strongly Agree
   Agree
   Undecided
   Disagree
   Strongly Disagree
10. My principal talks with teachers about phonics instruction.

   Strongly Agree
   Agree
   Undecided
   Disagree
   Strongly Disagree

11. My principal provides specific examples of phonics instruction when talking with teachers.

   Strongly Agree
   Agree
   Undecided
   Disagree
   Strongly Disagree


   Strongly Agree
   Agree
   Undecided
   Disagree
   Strongly Disagree


   Strongly Agree
   Agree
   Undecided
   Disagree
   Strongly Disagree
14. My principal provides specific examples of vocabulary instruction when talking with teachers.

Strongly Agree
Agree
Undecided
Disagree
Strongly Disagree

15. My principal talks with teachers about fluency instruction.

Strongly Agree
Agree
Undecided
Disagree
Strongly Disagree

16. My principal provides specific examples of fluency instruction when talking with teachers.

Strongly Agree
Agree
Undecided
Disagree
Strongly Disagree

17. My principal encourages teachers to use a variety of reading materials.

Strongly Agree
Agree
Undecided
Disagree
Strongly Disagree
18. My principal talks with teachers about comprehension instruction.

Strongly Agree
Agree
Undecided
Disagree
Strongly Disagree

19. My principal provides specific examples when talking with teachers about comprehension instruction.

Strongly Agree
Agree
Undecided
Disagree
Strongly Disagree

LEADERSHIP ACTION

20. My principal provides time in the master schedule for an uninterrupted 90-minute reading block.

Strongly Agree
Agree
Undecided
Disagree
Strongly Disagree
21. My principal provides materials and resources beyond the district purchased resources for teachers to teach reading (e.g., books for classroom libraries, magazines, etc.)

Strongly Agree
Agree
Undecided
Disagree
Strongly Disagree

22. My principal celebrates literacy in my school by incorporating reading into school events and programs.

Strongly Agree
Agree
Undecided
Disagree
Strongly Disagree

23. My principal communicates with parents and stakeholders about reading instruction at our school.

Strongly Agree
Agree
Undecided
Disagree
Strongly Disagree
24. My principal meets with teachers to discuss reading data and student progress in reading.

Strongly Agree
Agree
Undecided
Disagree
Strongly Disagree

25. My principal provides professional development in reading based on teachers' need.

Strongly Agree
Agree
Undecided
Disagree
Strongly Disagree

26. My principal creates time for teachers to meet collaboratively to discuss reading content, instruction, and data.

Strongly Agree
Agree
Undecided
Disagree
Strongly Disagree
27. My principal visits classrooms during the reading block, takes notes about what she/he sees, and discusses those observations with me.

Strongly Agree
Agree
Undecided
Disagree
Strongly Disagree

28. What else would you like to say about the topic of a principal's reading knowledge and leadership actions taken to support effective reading instruction?
Appendix C: Test-Retest Emails

Administrators,

You are invited to participate in a pilot survey designed to explore the relationship between a principal’s perceived reading knowledge and the leadership decisions a principal makes to support reading instruction at their schools. This pilot survey will be used solely to establish the reliability of my survey instrument by utilizing a test-retest method. The test-retest method involves asking participants to answer the same survey at different moments of time. Essentially, I will ask you to answer my survey today, and then ask you to answer the same survey approximately two weeks from now when I will send you one additional email. There are 28 questions and the survey should take no more than 12 minutes to complete.

In order to match your original survey results with your second survey results while remaining anonymous to me, question 29, will ask you to enter your first and last initials and your birth year (e.g.- AB1973). Once again, the data collected will NOT be included in the final research; it will only be used to establish test-retest reliability. Your assistance and feedback is greatly, greatly appreciated. Please click on the link below to begin the survey.

http://survey.acomp.usf.edu/survey/entry.jsp?id=1282614246184

Angela Butler Schroden

Doctoral Candidate

USF Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies
Teachers,

You are invited to participate in a pilot survey designed to explore the relationship between a principal’s perceived reading knowledge and the leadership decisions a principal makes to support reading instruction at their schools. This pilot survey will be used solely to establish the reliability of my survey instrument by utilizing a test-retest method. The test-retest method involves asking participants to answer the same survey at different moments of time. Essentially, I will ask you to answer my survey today, and then ask you to answer the same survey approximately two weeks from now when I will send you one additional email. There are 28 questions and the survey should take no more than 12 minutes to complete.

In order to match your original survey results with your second survey results while remaining anonymous to me, question 29, will ask you to enter your first and last initials and your birth year (e.g.- AB1973). Once again, the data collected will NOT be included in the final research; it will only be used to establish test-retest reliability.

Your assistance and feedback is greatly, greatly appreciated. Please click on the link below to begin the survey.

http://survey.acomp.usf.edu/survey/entry.jsp?id=1286753222337

Angela Butler Schroden

Doctoral Candidate

USF Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies
Appendix D: Principal Survey

Demographic Information

1. I have been a principal for the following number of years:
   a. [select from drop-down menu]

2. I have been a principal at my CURRENT school for the following number of years:
   a. [select from drop-down menu]

3. I am the principal at the following type of school:
   a. Non-Title 1
   b. Title 1

4. I am the principal at a Renaissance school.
   a. Yes
   b. No

Reading Content Knowledge

1. I can read and interpret data from reading assessments to assist teachers in making decisions about classroom instruction.
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. Undecided
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly Disagree
2. The reading assessment(s) I most frequently interpret is/are (please select all that apply):
   a. FAIR
   b. FCAT
   c. SAT-10
   d. DRA2
   e. Running Records
   f. CIM
   g. Other (please specify)
      i. [free-form response field]

3. I talk with my teachers about phonemic awareness instruction.
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. Undecided
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly Disagree

4. I provide specific examples of phonemic awareness instruction when talking to my teachers.
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. Undecided
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly Disagree

5. When I discuss phonemic awareness instruction with my teachers, I typically am talking to teachers in the following grade levels:
   a. Kindergarten – 2nd
   b. 3rd – 5th
   c. All grade levels

6. I talk with my teachers about the Gradual Release of Responsibility:
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. Undecided
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly Disagree
7. I provide specific examples on the individual components of the Gradual Release of Responsibility when talking to teachers:
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. Undecided
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly Disagree

8. When I discuss the gradual release of responsibility, I typically am talking to teachers in the following grade levels:
   a. Kindergarten – 2nd
   b. 3rd – 5th
   c. All grade levels

9. I talk with my teachers about phonics instruction.
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. Undecided
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly Disagree

10. I provide specific examples of phonics instruction when talking to my teachers.
    a. Strongly Agree
    b. Agree
    c. Undecided
    d. Disagree
    e. Strongly Disagree

11. When I discuss phonics instruction with my teachers, I typically am talking to teachers in the following grade levels:
    a. Kindergarten – 2nd
    b. 3rd – 5th
    c. All grade levels

    a. Strongly Agree
    b. Agree
    c. Undecided
    d. Disagree
    e. Strongly Disagree
13. I talk with my teachers about vocabulary instruction.
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. Undecided
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly Disagree

14. I provide specific examples of vocabulary instruction when talking to my teachers.
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. Undecided
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly Disagree

15. When I discuss vocabulary instruction with my teachers, I typically am talking to teachers in the following grade levels:
   a. Kindergarten – 2nd
   b. 3rd – 5th
   c. All grade levels

16. I talk with my teachers about fluency instruction.
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. Undecided
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly Disagree

17. I provide specific examples of fluency instruction when talking to my teachers.
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. Undecided
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly Disagree

18. When I discuss fluency instruction with my teachers, I typically am talking to teachers in the following grade levels:
   a. Kindergarten – 2nd
   b. 3rd – 5th
   c. All grade levels
19. I encourage my teachers to use a wide variety of reading materials.
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. Undecided
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly Disagree

20. I talk with my teachers about comprehension instruction.
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. Undecided
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly Disagree

21. I provide specific examples of comprehension instruction when talking to my teachers.
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. Undecided
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly Disagree

22. When I discuss comprehension instruction with my teachers, I typically am talking to teachers in the following grade levels:
   a. Kindergarten – 2\textsuperscript{nd}
   b. 3\textsuperscript{rd} – 5\textsuperscript{th}
   c. All grade levels

**Leadership Actions**

1. I ensure every teacher has an uninterrupted 90-minute reading block.
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. Undecided
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly Disagree
2. I provide materials and resources beyond the district purchased resources for my teachers to teach reading (e.g., books for classroom libraries, magazines, etc.).
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. Undecided
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly Disagree

3. I celebrate literacy in my school by incorporating reading into school events.
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. Undecided
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly Disagree

4. I communicate with parents about reading instruction in my school.
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. Undecided
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly Disagree

5. I ensure my school has a K-5 reading assessment plan to monitor student progress.
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. Undecided
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly Disagree

6. I communicate my expectations to teachers in regard to my school's reading assessment plan.
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. Undecided
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly Disagree
7. I meet with teachers regularly to discuss reading data.
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. Undecided
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly Disagree

8. I meet with teachers regularly to discuss student progress in reading.
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. Undecided
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly Disagree

9. I ensure professional development in reading happens at my school based on teachers' needs.
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. Undecided
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly Disagree

10. I create time for teachers to meet collaboratively to discuss reading content.
    a. Strongly Agree
    b. Agree
    c. Undecided
    d. Disagree
    e. Strongly Disagree

11. I visit classrooms during the reading block.
    a. Strongly Agree
    b. Agree
    c. Undecided
    d. Disagree
    e. Strongly Disagree
12. After observing teachers during their reading block, I discuss my observations with those teachers.
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. Undecided
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly Disagree

13. I identify teacher leaders in reading.
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. Undecided
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly Disagree

14. I encourage teachers who are leaders in reading to take on leadership roles outside the classroom.
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. Undecided
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly Disagree

15. I read articles (e.g. research, journals) in relation to reading and pass the information along to teachers.
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. Undecided
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly Disagree

16. What else would you like to say about principals' reading knowledge and leadership actions principals' take to support reading instruction?
   a. [free-form response field]
Appendix E: Teacher Survey

Demographic Information

1. I have been a teacher for the following number of years:
   a. [select from drop-down menu]

2. I have worked for my current principal for the following number of years:
   a. [select from drop-down menu]

3. I am a:
   a. Kindergarten Teacher
   b. First-Grade Teacher
   c. Second-Grade Teacher
   d. Third-Grade Teacher
   e. Fourth-Grade Teacher
   f. Fifth-Grade Teacher
   g. Content Area Coach or Resource Teacher (Reading, Science, Math, etc.)
   h. Specials Area Teacher (Art, Music, PE, etc.)
   i. Supportive Services Provider (Guidance, Social Work, Psychologist, etc.)
   j. Other (please specify)
      i. [free-form response field]

4. I teach reading:
   a. Yes
   b. No

Reading Content Knowledge

1. My principal can read and interpret data from reading assessments to assist teachers in making decisions about classroom instruction.
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. Undecided
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly Disagree
2. The reading assessment(s) my principal frequently interprets or uses is/are (please select all that apply):
   a. FAIR
   b. FCAT
   c. SAT-10
   d. DRA2
   e. Running Records
   f. CIM
   g. Other (please specify)
      i. [free-form response field]

3. My principal talks with me about phonemic awareness instruction.
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. Undecided
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly Disagree

4. My principal provides specific examples of phonemic awareness instruction when talking to me.
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. Undecided
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly Disagree

5. My principal talks with me about the Gradual Release of Responsibility.
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. Undecided
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly Disagree

6. My principal provides specific examples about the individual components of the Gradual Release of Responsibility when talking to me.
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. Undecided
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly Disagree
7. My principal talks with me about phonics instruction.
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. Undecided
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly Disagree

8. My principal provides specific examples of phonics instruction when talking with me.
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. Undecided
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly Disagree

   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. Undecided
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly Disagree

10. My principal talks with me about vocabulary instruction.
    a. Strongly Agree
    b. Agree
    c. Undecided
    d. Disagree
    e. Strongly Disagree

11. My principal provides specific examples of vocabulary instruction when talking to me.
    a. Strongly Agree
    b. Agree
    c. Undecided
    d. Disagree
    e. Strongly Disagree
12. My principal talks with me about fluency instruction.
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. Undecided
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly Disagree

13. My principal provides specific examples of fluency instruction when talking to me.
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. Undecided
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly Disagree

14. My principal encourages me to use a wide variety of reading materials.
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. Undecided
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly Disagree

15. My principal talks with me about comprehension instruction.
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. Undecided
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly Disagree

16. My principal provides specific examples of comprehension instruction when talking to me.
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. Undecided
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly Disagree
Leadership Actions

1. My principal provides an uninterrupted 90-minute reading block for every teacher.
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. Undecided
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly Disagree

2. My principal provides materials and resources beyond the district purchased resources for me to teach reading (e.g., books for classroom libraries, magazines, etc.).
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. Undecided
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly Disagree

3. My principal celebrates literacy in my school by incorporating reading into school events.
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. Undecided
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly Disagree

4. My principal communicates with parents about reading instruction in my school.
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. Undecided
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly Disagree

5. My principal ensures my school has a K-5 reading assessment plan to monitor student progress.
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. Undecided
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly Disagree
6. My principal communicates his/her expectations to me in regard to my school's reading assessment plan.
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. Undecided
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly Disagree

7. My principal meets with me regularly to discuss reading data.
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. Undecided
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly Disagree

8. My principal meets with me regularly to discuss student progress in reading.
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. Undecided
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly Disagree

9. My principal ensures professional development in reading, based on teacher need, happens at my school.
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. Undecided
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly Disagree

10. My principal creates time for teachers to meet collaboratively to discuss reading content.
    a. Strongly Agree
    b. Agree
    c. Undecided
    d. Disagree
    e. Strongly Disagree
11. My principal visits my classroom during the reading block.
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. Undecided
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly Disagree

12. My principal observes me during my reading block and discusses her/his observations with me.
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. Undecided
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly Disagree

13. My principal identifies teacher leaders in reading.
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. Undecided
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly Disagree

14. My principal encourages teachers who are leaders in reading to take on leadership roles outside the classroom.
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. Undecided
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly Disagree

15. My principal shares information from articles (e.g. research, journals) with me.
   a. Strongly Agree
   b. Agree
   c. Undecided
   d. Disagree
   e. Strongly Disagree

16. What else would you like to say about your principal's reading knowledge and leadership actions taken to support effective reading instruction?
   a. [free-form response field]
Appendix F: Request for Participation Emails

Administrators,

Thank you for your time and consideration to participate in the Principal’s Support for Reading Instruction- Principal Survey: PRSI-PS (eIRB#2929). My name is Angela Butler and I am a doctoral student at the University of South Florida in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies. I have been an educator in Hillsborough County Public Schools for 13 years and I am excited for the opportunity to conduct this study.

The survey should only take 15-20 minutes to complete.

Participation in this study is voluntary and anonymous. No names or school names will be used. Again, at no time will I be using individual names or school names, nor will I know which principals and schools are participating. Participation will not result in penalty or loss of benefits and there is no cost to participate in the study. There are no foreseeable risks to participate and you may exit the survey at any time. Survey data will be collected and downloaded by a password-protected electronic database and deleted from the website.

The survey will be available from February 10, 2011, through February 24, 2011. Your candid responses and time are greatly appreciated.

Please click on the link below or cut and paste into your web browser.
Teachers,

Thank you for your time and consideration to participate in the Principal’s Support for Reading Instruction- Principal Survey: PRSI-PS (eIRB#2929). My name is Angela Butler and I am a doctoral student at the University of South Florida in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies. I have been an educator in Hillsborough County Public Schools for 13 years and I am excited for the opportunity to conduct this study.

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