

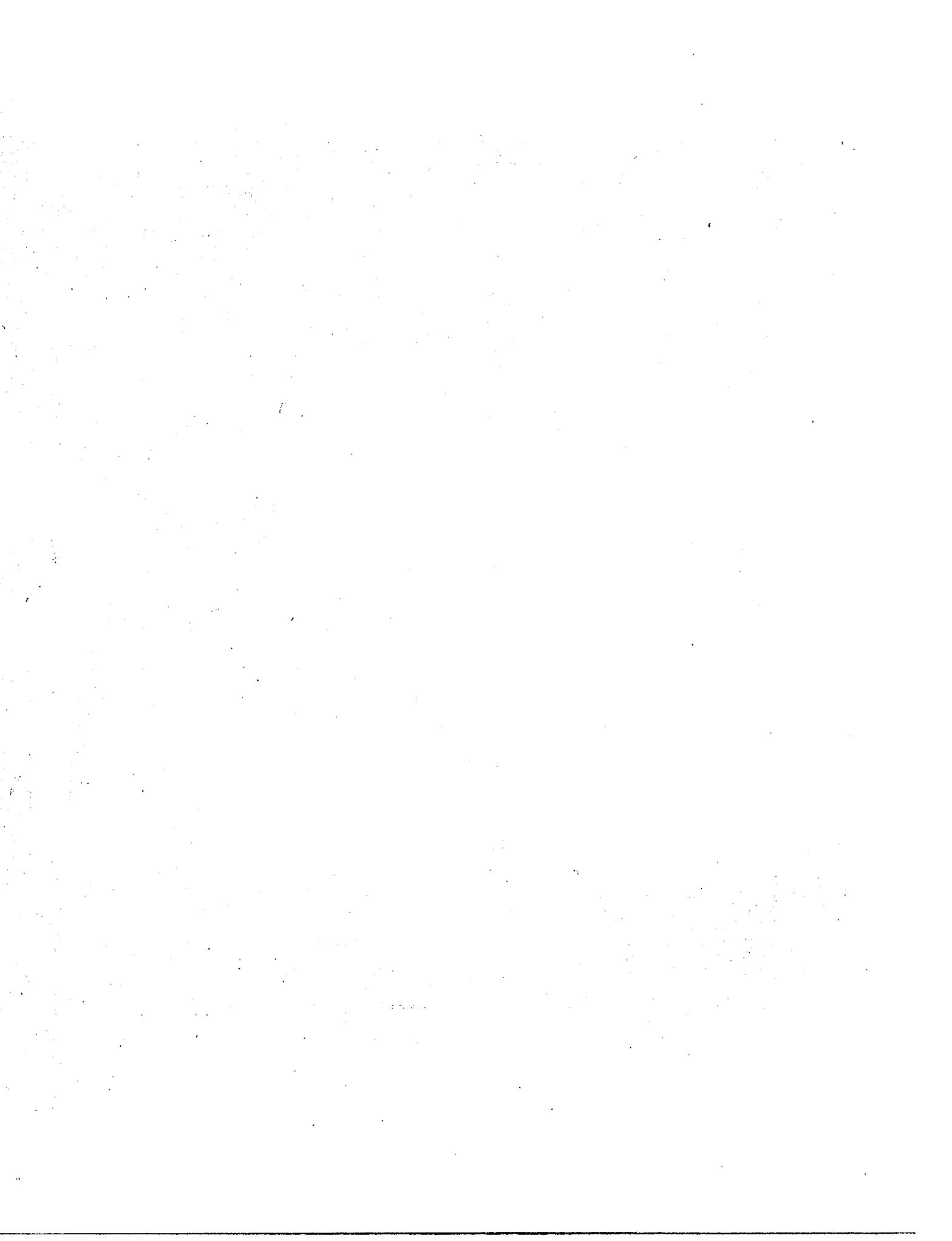
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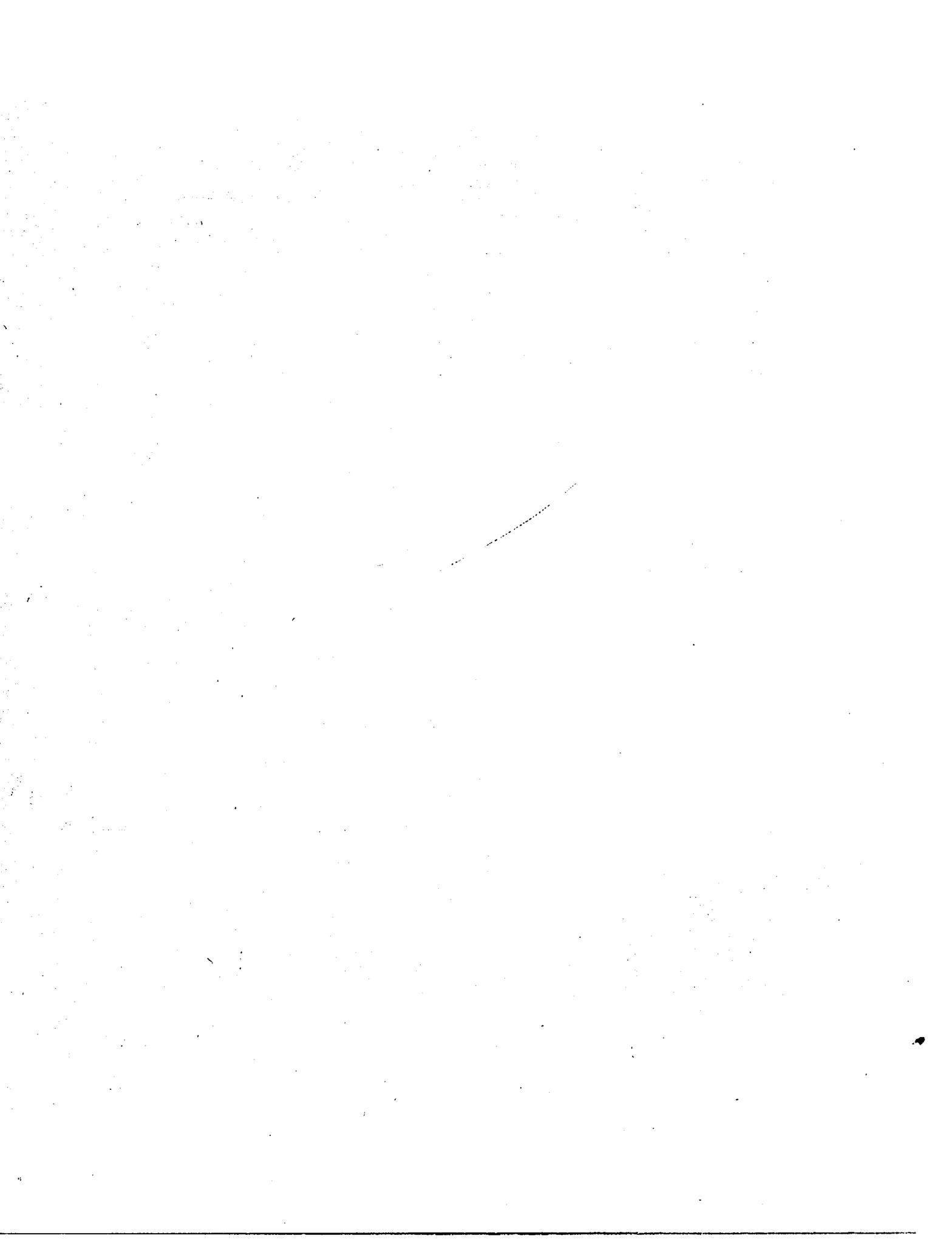
**Briggs, Marilyn Palmer**

**PERCEPTIONS OF CENTRAL OFFICE PERSONNEL ON THE ROLE OF THE  
PRINCIPAL AS CURRICULUM LEADER**

*The University of North Carolina at Greensboro*

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PERCEPTIONS OF CENTRAL OFFICE PERSONNEL  
ON THE ROLE OF THE  
PRINCIPAL AS CURRICULUM LEADER

by

Marilyn Palmer Briggs

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APPROVAL PAGE

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BRIGGS, MARILYN PALMER. Perceptions of Central Office Personnel on the Role of the Principal as a CURRICULUM Leader. (1986)  
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The purpose of this study was to investigate the perception of central office persons concerning the role of principals as CURRICULUM leaders. This investigation considered the independent variables of central office persons' prior experience as principal, involvement in professional curriculum organizations, awareness of current literature in curriculum and instruction through up-to-date reading, and the perception central office persons hold toward their own role in the central office.

Data were obtained from a sample of 110 responses to a questionnaire mailed to the total population of 141 central office persons responsible for curricular and instructional programs in the local school system. Data were analyzed according to five questions asked by the study regarding perceptions of the total number of central office persons on the role of principals with whom they work and principals across North Carolina, and correlations of the four independent variables on the dependent variable. A chi square test was conducted for each set of data and variables significant at the .01 confidence level were determined.

The findings suggested that three variables were significant in determining the perception of central office persons on the role of the principal. These include central office persons' prior experience as principal, involvement in professional curriculum organizations, and awareness of current literature in curriculum and instruction through up-to-date reading. The perception of central office persons toward

their own role in the central office was not significant in determining the perception of central office persons toward the role of the principal.

As North Carolina continues to implement the Effective Teaching Training Program and the Career Development Program, the implications for leadership as a major correlate of school effectiveness will influence the roles of central office personnel and principals. Greater attention should be given to the relationship between principals and central office persons, especially with regards to curriculum issues.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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CHAPTER I  
INTRODUCTION

Background of the Problem

The nation is experiencing a revitalization of educational programs in its public schools. In the first five years of this decade, over 30 national reports and 250 other reports have been prepared, each looking at the school organization, goals, and practices. Enhanced by Peters and Waterman's book In Search of Excellence (1982), educational reform issues are centering on the search for excellence in education.

The national reports cited by Duke (1985) associate the quest for excellence with quantitative rather than qualitative factors. According to Stedman and Smith (1985), the reports propose simplistic recommendations. Finn (1983) observes that efforts to improve educational quality are universalistic, scholastic, and cognitive; unabashedly assuming that everyone can and should learn the same things, at least up to a point, and that point should be the same for everyone in a school, a community, or an entire state. Thus, attention is given to curriculum standards, teaching and testing with students completing a common core of prescribed subjects. These specific recommendations tend to equate curriculum with specific subjects to be studied.

The former Secretary of Education, Terrel Bell, released a summary of school reform that was being implemented in all 50 states. The summary, entitled A Nation Responds, tells of more courses, more testing,

and more teacher preparation which makes up the majority of initiatives that are centrally imposed by state educational agencies (Boyer, 1985). Of the 20 school improvement categories listed, only 2 directly supported the renewal of educators and educational administrators.

Boyer reminds the critics that education is a human enterprise and that the much needed renewal must take place in the heads and hearts of people. School renewal also means renewal of the principal, therefore, it is the school's leadership that will take the recommendations of the reports concerning effective schools and apply them to their unique settings.

The leadership of the principal has been cited by most effective schools research (Brookover and Lezotte, 1977; Edmonds, 1979; and Rutter, 1979) as a major correlate. Further studies take the leadership role of the principal and identify different conceptions of the principalship, that is, the role of the principal as being one of managerial functions, instructional functions, or administrative functions.

The leadership role of the principal is perceived differently among the faculty, students, parents, community, and central office persons who coordinate, direct, and/or supervise the district's curricular and instructional programs. These perceptions, whether accurate or not, influence the outcomes of school reform for individual schools and for the district as a whole.

## Statement of the Problem

### Purpose

This study will focus on the effectiveness of the principal's role as a CURRICULUM leader as perceived by central office persons who work with principals in curricular and instructional programs.

The purpose of the study is three-fold:

1. To determine if there is a correlation between the perceptions of central office persons who have had previous experience as a principal and their perception of the principal as a CURRICULUM leader.

2. To determine if active involvement by central office persons in professional organizations and receiving/reading current literature in curriculum has an impact on their perception of the principal as a CURRICULUM leader.

3. To determine how central office persons view their own role in the central office.

### Specific Questions

Several questions will be specifically addressed in the study:

1. What is the central office persons' perception of the role of the principals with whom they work and their perception of principals across North Carolina?

2. Is there a correlation between central office persons who have had prior experience as a principal and their perception of principals with whom they work?

3. Is there a correlation between central office persons who are involved with professional curriculum organizations and their perceptions of principals with whom they work?

4. Is there a correlation between central office persons who subscribe to and read current professional literature in curriculum and instruction and their perception of principals with whom they work?

5. Is there a correlation between perceptions of central office persons toward their own role as CURRICULUM leaders and the role of the principals with whom they work as CURRICULUM leaders?

#### Research Methodology

The questions above will be summarized according to responses on a questionnaire distributed among central office personnel during the fall of 1985. These persons have been designated by the State Department of Public Instruction as the local contact persons responsible for the direction, coordination, and/or supervision of curriculum and instruction for the 141 local school systems in North Carolina.

All 141 contact persons made up the total population of the study. Due to the small number in the population, sampling was not attempted. All persons were asked to respond to the questionnaire. The diverse geographic locations of the 141 districts also determined that a closed-form questionnaire would be more feasible than personal interviewing.

The questionnaire required data from the respondents concerning previous experience as a principal, involvement in professional organizations, and the reception of professional literature in the areas of curriculum and instruction.

A more detailed discussion of research procedure may be found in Chapter Three.

### Definition of Terms

In order to maintain consistency throughout the study, the following terms and phrases require definition and/or clarification:

1. Local school system - May be used interchangeably with local school district
2. Principal - The officially or legally appointed administrative head of a school
3. Central office person - Coordinators, directors, and/or supervisors who are the contact person for curriculum and instruction in the local school district and who work with principals in the areas of curriculum and instruction
4. Conception - A "paradigm, a pattern of thinking" as defined by Brubaker and Simon's research on the principalship (1985), also defined as role of the principal
5. Curriculum - A course of study
6. CURRICULUM - When in upper-case letters, this refers to "what persons perceive they experience in a setting" as defined by Brubaker (1982) [CURRICULUM encompasses but is more than curriculum.]
7. School effectiveness - Part of a recent movement in education which is encouraged by reports on needed school reform; Edmonds (1979) determines that a school is effective if an equal percentage of its highest and lowest social classes are brought to minimum mastery of educational objectives as measured by standardized achievement tests.
8. Leadership - Influencing others to do what you want them to do
9. Perception - Interpretation of one's understanding of reality

## Propositions and Limitations

### Propositions

Several propositions are offered regarding this study but they are subject to change as a result of research.

The propositions are:

1. Central office persons tend to perceive the principals with whom they work differently than principals in general across North Carolina.
2. Central office persons with prior experience as a principal tend to perceive the principals with whom they work differently than central office persons without prior experience as a principal.
3. Central office persons who actively participate in professional curriculum organizations and keep informed of current literature in curriculum and instruction are more likely to perceive the principals with whom they work differently than central office persons who do not participate in professional curriculum organizations or keep informed of literature in curriculum and instruction.
4. This study is worth doing and will make a unique contribution to the study of the principalship.

### Limitations

The major limitation to this study involves research on the role of central office personnel in helping establish school effectiveness. The majority of the studies on effective schooling center on the individual school, its leadership, faculty, and programs. Very little attention is given to the role central office persons play in helping schools and principals become more effective.

### Significance of the Study

Limitation cited in the previous section indicates there is a need for a study of the role central office persons play in helping nurture school effectiveness. The support central office personnel give, with regard to developing a significant framework for curriculum development as a conception of the principalship, will find value as effective leadership retains its prominent place on the national agenda for school reform.

In determining the influence of central office persons who direct, coordinate, and/or supervise the curricular and instructional programs of the district and who work closely with the principals, four variables concerning central office persons can be identified. The first independent variable is previous experience as a principal before assuming the central office position. Having been in the position as a school's instructional leader may have an influence on the perception of the principalship when this person becomes part of the central office.

The second independent variable is the participation of central office persons in a professional organization that works specifically for curriculum development. A third independent variable concerning central office persons is the pursuit of a curriculum knowledge base by subscribing to and reading current literature in curriculum and instruction. The final independent variable is the perception central office persons hold toward their own role in the central office.

Two independent variables, professional organizations and current literature, are related to each other and may be difficult to determine

accurately due to varying degrees of activity by the people involved. It will be presumed that those involved in professional organizations and keep abreast of current literature actually do so.

All four independent variables influence the perception of central office persons toward the principal as an effective leader. This perception, the dependent variable, is the outcome of previous experience, participation in professional organizations, receiving and reading current literature, and the perception of central office persons toward their own role.

#### Summary

One correlate of school effectiveness is the principal. The conception of the principal as a CURRICULUM leader is enhanced by the perception of the central office person in charge of curriculum and instruction with whom the principal works. The perception of the principal as a CURRICULUM leader may be influenced by the independent variables of the central office persons' previous experience as a principal, active participation in professional curriculum organizations and the reading of current professional literature, as well as the perception of central office persons toward their own role.

A review of the literature will help determine the correlation of the independent variables with central office persons' perception of the principal as a CURRICULUM leader. Chapter Two will contain an examination of curriculum and leadership on the development of a framework for CURRICULUM leadership in effective schools. Chapter Three will describe the population, design, procedures, and the

instrument used in the study. Chapter Four will report the results of the analysis. The conclusions drawn from these findings will be presented in Chapter Five. Recommendations will be made for further study of the role central office personnel play in nurturing the CURRICULUM leadership of principals.

CHAPTER II  
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The purpose of this study is to investigate the perception of central office personnel who are responsible for their system's curricular and instructional program concerning the role of the principal as a CURRICULUM leader. This investigation will consider the variables of prior experience of central office persons as a principal, their involvement in professional curriculum organizations and awareness of current curriculum literature, and the perception central office persons hold regarding their own role in the central office.

With this purpose in mind, the review of literature and research included in this chapter is organized into the following three topics: (a) curriculum, (b) leadership, and (c) the principal as CURRICULUM leader in effective schools.

Curriculum

Definitions for curriculum are as varied as the number of people who are involved in its development and implementation. In the previous chapter, curriculum was identified as having two meanings. When written in lower-case letters, curriculum was defined simply as "a course of study," a meaning which has originated from the Latin word "currere" meaning "a course, race to run." Most dictionaries define curriculum as a course of study in universities and schools, and recent reform reports perpetuate that definition by equating curriculum with subjects to be studied (Passow, 1984).

These reports, with a linear, sequential approach to covering material, provide the rationale for quantitative measures. In A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform (1983), the National Commission on Excellence in Education advocated the "Five New Basics": English, mathematics, science, social science, and computer literacy. Standards and expectations, met by both teacher and student, were joined with time-on-task behaviors and teacher preparation programs. Identifying such goals and objectives and activities by which goals and objectives can be met is reminiscent of Ralph Tyler's Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction written in 1949. Tyler's four-step linear, sequential process of selecting and behavioralizing objectives, selecting activities, organizing activities, and evaluating them are similar to the recommendations suggested by many of the reform reports. Curriculum thus becomes involved in academic goals, with objectives that can be measured and evaluated against a standard set down by authorities at the national, state, and local level.

Goodlad broadens the definition of curriculum to include "explicit" and "implicit" interpretations (1984). In A Place Called School, he refers to "explicit" curriculum as curriculum guides prepared for teachers, the course of study, resource materials and tests, and extra-curricular activities such as band, chorus, and track. Objectives to be learned are also included in the definition. The "implicit" curriculum, however, is more difficult to measure. Goodlad uses "implicit curriculum" to include all those teachings that are conveyed by the ways the "explicit" curriculum is presented. Emphasis in the

"explicit" curriculum is placed on acquiring facts or solving problems. Individual performances or collaborative activities, the kinds of rules to be followed, and the variety of learning styles encouraged make up the "implicit" curriculum which also includes the messages transmitted by the physical setting and the kinds of social and interpersonal relationships that tend to characterize the instructional environment (Goodlad, 1984).

Others equate curriculum with all learning opportunities that the school provides (Gress, 1978), or the total of experiences that students may have in a school (English, 1983). This frame of reference expands the definition beyond coursework with goals and objectives to be measured. This study is concerned with the broader interpretation of the word curriculum. As previously defined in Chapter I, CURRICULUM written in upper-case letters refers to what persons perceive they experience in a setting and includes not only coursework but all interactions among persons as well as the interactions between persons and their physical environment (Brubaker, 1981).

This definition of CURRICULUM is what Passow (1984) found to be missing in the recent reform reports. No where could he find a meaningful discussion of the intrinsic worth of education. Intrinsic worth was interpreted to mean more than an accumulation of studies and coursework. It was also the interpersonal relationships, the formal and informal learning opportunities, and the pleasures that one derives from a learning society. CURRICULUM that considers "how shall we live together?" (Macdonald, 1977) sees beyond the classroom.

The hours spent in interactions among and between people in the total school community, the time spent alone valuing, judging, and making decisions are directly related to the experiences one received during the hours spent in any setting. Wasserman (1984) reports that these experiences should include the elevation and nurturing of children's feelings, the promotion of interpersonal skills, the promotion of higher-order cognitive skills, the nurturing of creativity and imagination, and the development of moral integrity. Thus, CURRICULUM should be congruent with and reflect the total life experiences of the child. This interpretation of CURRICULUM corresponds with the "human agenda" platform that sees learners becoming their own aesthetic product, continuously producing something new in the process of becoming (Macagnoni, 1979).

It is interesting to note that the discussion of curriculum and CURRICULUM to this point has centered around the student as learner. This study sees the learner as every person involved in creating settings whether those involved are students, teachers, lunchroom workers, or school administrators. Although curriculum may contain a body of knowledge that one person can teach to another (as teacher to student), CURRICULUM involves all persons and what they experience in any setting. Setting is defined by Sarason (1972) to be any instance when two or more people come together in new and sustained relationships to achieve certain goals. These relationships are not contained within the classroom walls but extend into the principal's office, the lunchroom, hallways, and playground.

An educator who is perceived as a CURRICULUM leader is aware of all settings in the school community and the history and culture of each one. Sarason (1972) notes that by studying the history and culture an educator becomes more appreciative of the values contained within the setting. An awareness and acceptance of these values can provide a foundation upon which future learning opportunities can be created. Wasserman (1984), in her article "What Can Schools Become?", notes that in any vision of the future, all projections are deeply influenced by the ingrained values and beliefs of the visionary. The history and culture that are part of every school setting must be considered as an integral part of the curriculum and CURRICULUM by the educator who wishes to create experiences that enhance the educational and interpersonal relationships among persons involved in that setting.

This section has attempted to clarify the meanings of curriculum and CURRICULUM as perceived by various leaders in the field. All meanings of curriculum and CURRICULUM represent different dimensions of educational thinking and practice. The search for a definition has been noted by Oliver (1978) to be a search for a concept that is emerging rather than predetermined. Tanner and Tanner (1975) also point out that the definition of curriculum should be sufficiently broad in its scope to accommodate the several views which may be held in the field and therefore should be a beginning rather than an ending point. With this in mind, the present study views CURRICULUM in its broadest sense to mean what persons perceive they experience in cooperatively creating learning settings (Brubaker, 1984).

The investigator feels that many and diverse definitions of curriculum are an asset rather than a liability. Such definitions stimulate much needed dialogue that brings to the surface tacit assumptions and philosophical underpinnings of those interested in curriculum and CURRICULUM.

The next topic "Leadership" will discuss aspects of the educator as a CURRICULUM leader.

### Leadership

Chapter I defines leadership as "influencing others to do what you want them to do." Competent leadership is defined by Sergiovanni (1983) as the mastery and articulation of basic management routines and leadership skills to influence an individual or a group toward achievement of goals. Brubaker (1976) sees leadership as influencing the actions of others to behave in what she or he considers to be a desirable direction. A commonality of all three of these definitions is the word "influence." If "influence" is seen as power to control others by authority, persuasion, or example, then the question of how to achieve this "influence" requires much consideration.

Leadership is contextual says Jordan (1983). Influencing others to work toward common goals involves a combination of forces. Sergiovanni (1984) believes that technical, human, educational, symbolic, and cultural forces determine leadership and excellence in schooling. Technical skills involve management--the coordinating, supervising, and directing tasks that mark any person as an administrator.

The human force includes interpersonal relationships, group dynamics, listening skills, and the ability to resolve conflict between and among members of a group or an organization.

Another leadership force, educational, involves the pedagogy of teaching and learning. This force considers a knowledge of classroom organization, instructional materials and textbooks, time-on-task, motivation, student involvement and achievement, optimum use of test scores. . .all the attributes that are part of the effective teaching process. These three forces, technical, human, and educational, could stand alone for effective leadership, but an extra dimension is needed to move leadership from being merely effective to leadership that is in the realm of excellence.

Optimum influence toward excellence is identified in Sergiovanni's fourth and fifth forces, symbolic and cultural. Other authorities have designated these forces as having the capacity for vision, inspiration, and values (Jordan, 1983; Rhodes, 1985). Not only does Rhodes speak of "perspective" as a key element but he also labels perspective as "the missing metaphor." Peters and Waterman (1982) call the lack of any feeling for the whole as a missing perception that bars leadership from effectiveness and excellence. Whatever and however these forces affect the nature of leadership, the influence exerted in the leadership process combines the science of technical, human, and pedagogical skills with the art of applying leadership principles. The art of leadership application is enhanced through an awareness of cultural setting, the institutional symbolic values, and the vision of what can become.

The remainder of this section will examine the forces of culture, symbolism, values, and vision and how they influence leadership. The influence of these factors on change and conservation will also be explored.

#### Culture, Symbolism, Values, and Vision

Leadership involves the knowledge of the history and culture of the setting and the people who inhabit the setting. As defined earlier in this chapter, a setting is created when two or more people come together in new and sustained relationships to achieve certain goals (Sarason, 1972). Leadership in the educational setting considers the history and culture of the population and environment. It is caring deeply about the system's structure and conduct, its history and its future security. Caring extends to the people involved in the system (Vaill, 1981). It is recognizing that the setting existed prior to the entrance of a person into the leadership role. On the individual school level, recognition of "what has gone on before" as it pertains to school functioning enables the leader (principal) to consider the best way to influence needed change. Leaders who become a part of the central office need to be aware of many individual cultures and settings, and how best to influence these cultures and settings in order to work together toward common goals for the school district. Ignorance of individual differences in educational settings is similar to instruction that ignores the individual differences of students. The consequence is the same, ineffectiveness in the classroom and in the school system.

Appreciation of the culture and history of a setting is not just a process involving the awareness of past experiences. Maintaining an awareness of current and future cultural considerations moves a leader toward excellence.

Understanding the culture and history of a particular school setting can be likened to a teacher's acknowledgement of individual abilities of students. A component of the effective teaching process is facilitating instruction through the use of diagnostic information to develop and/or revise objectives. Effective leadership uses similar diagnostic information. While the teacher may use test data and other assessment procedures to learn the capabilities and interests of pupils, school leadership may obtain diagnostic information of the school setting by studying its history and culture. Awareness of the history and culture of the school is important to the principal as leader; similar awareness is important to the central office leader in the school district.

The symbolic force cited by Sergiovanni (1984) combines knowledge with commitment to core institutional values. Peters and Waterman (1982) also emphasize the management of the values of the organization and extend valuing to include the human potential--developing and nurturing creativity. This is achieved by providing a healthy climate for learning, providing time for exploring new concepts, and maximizing the talent of the individuals within the organization. Experts in leadership, according to Giammatteo (1981), are the people who know how to release the creative talents of those with whom they work. Therefore, the challenge is to release the talents of self and others while trying to influence them in what you, the leader, perceive to be a desirable direction.

The art of applying leadership principles becomes a part of the art of institutional building, and the reworking of human and technological materials to fashion an organism that embodies new and enduring values. The institutional leader sees his or her role as one that fosters the promotion and protection of values (Selznick, 1957). The commitment to the values of the organization reflects the appreciation of its cultural and historical setting and projects a vision of what can be. According to Saphier and King (1985), giving shape and direction to the culture of a school should be a clear and articulate vision of what the school stands for, a vision that embodies core values and purposes.

Twelve norms of school culture have been identified by Saphier and King (1985). They include collegiality among the professional staff; experimentation with new ideas and techniques; high expectations of both teachers and students; trust and confidence; and tangible support. Another norm, reaching out to the knowledge base, also requires an awareness of current events and issues in education. The professional staff is encouraged to belong to professional organizations and familiarize themselves with professional literature. This particular norm becomes important when considering the CURRICULUM experiences of the school. The remaining six norms, appreciation and recognition; caring, celebration, and humor; involvement in decision-making; protection of what's important; traditions; and honest, open communication combine to create a climate that is inviting for everyone involved in the school setting.

Building the norms of school culture is the present, everyday business of school leadership. The way leaders handle the business

both forms and reflects the school culture (Saphier and King, 1985). Consequently, leaders bring their awareness of cultural norms to their daily interactions while maintaining and creating CURRICULUM experiences compatible with the cultural and symbolic values of each school setting.

The final force, vision, considers the past and present while preparing for the future. Samuel Johnson supposedly once said, "The business of life is to go forward." The same holds true for leaders who want to inspire their organization to move forward toward new horizons. The ability to look beyond the immediacy of short-term goals and objectives and to utilize the knowledge gained from the school setting's culture and history and the present values and purposes is a vital force of creative leadership in the educational setting.

Brubaker (1982) writes of efficacy and intentionality when referring to visions of what is desirable and possible to accomplish. Visions become enhanced when coupled with an attitude that says "I can make a difference; I can make it happen." This sense of efficacy nurtures the intentions of one who envisions; in short, dreams can become realities, but they must be dreams first.

Rhodes (1985) notes that leaders who are visionary look in a positive upward direction. These leaders are concerned with what is possible and desirable for them and others to achieve with an eye on the significance of what they are presently doing (Sergiovanni, 1980). Peters and Waterman (1982) write that good leaders must have vision, articulate that vision, and make that vision their own. It must also be noted that the vision must be shared if it is to be realized.

Sharing the vision requires a leader to be people-oriented in his or her thinking and actions. Shared decision-making contributes to a shared vision. Defining the school's vision and articulating the ideological stance (Lightfoot, 1983) involved may be the responsibility of the principal but the faculty is responsible for making the vision a reality.

The notion of a leader being visionary perpetuates the idea of change, and whether or not change is needed to move toward excellence. Sergiovanni (1980) notes that leadership emphasizes newness (vision) and change. A leader having vision is said to shape ideas rather than respond to them. Leaders are pro-active instead of reactive and their vision requires that they adopt a personal and positive attitude toward goals. If leadership is to help change the way people think about what is desirable, possible and necessary, then much consideration needs to go into the nature of change, strategies involving change, and whether or not change is really desirable and necessary.

#### Conservation and Change

According to Hatley (1979) education is always experiencing change and innovation. With the passing of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act by Congress in 1965, a massive funding source for school experimentation was created. New programs, new curriculums, and new techniques for teaching began to emerge from universities and lab schools. "Accountability" became an important word in educational jargon as educators and parents began to take stock of their neighborhood schools and compare them to other schools of similar size and magnitude. New

math, expanded vocational programs, foreign language, and sex and health education crept into the curriculum with the intent of turning out graduates who were well prepared for the demands of President Johnson's Great Society.

Implications for leadership at the school level were great. According to Pendergrass and Wood (1979) the principal who wished to be efficient and effective had to keep in mind that leadership involved the pursuit of change and that without change as an essential force there was no need for leadership. Principals were also made aware of the responsibility they, as leaders, assumed above and beyond that of followers. Being merely involved in the change process did not make a leader, whereas taking the initiative did. Finally, principals needed to distinguish instructional change from other kinds of change. Instructional change, then, became synonymous with instructional leadership.

The two decades since the passing of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act have seen education swing its pendulum of change through the innovations of traditional and alternative programs. Only recently, however, has the emphasis shifted from programmatic concerns to personnel concerns.

Promoting change, notes McIntyre (1979), is a more complex process than simply and systematically planning the change of a curriculum, school philosophy, or staff utilization. One must take into account not only what is to be changed but also who is to change. In all likelihood, the vision inspiring a change belongs to the principal, but the realities of changing belong to the professional staff.

In referring to strategies of implementing change, Hatley (1979) talks of the need to give as much attention to the development of professional and human competence as other supportive and enabling aspects of education. This creates a long-term strategy whereby focus is placed on the development of human resources and the change of attitude and behavior. Such was the nature of a project initiated in 1979 by the Appalachian Regional Commission for 17 school systems in North Carolina bordering the Appalachian Mountains (Briggs, 1982). The project centered on staff development for teachers of grades four through eight. Emphasis was placed at these grade levels because other existing programs which were implemented throughout the state were not reaching teachers or students in grades four, five, six, seven, and eight. There was the Early Childhood Program for kindergarten through grade three and the Competency Remediation Program for grades 9 through 12, which left the middle grades without needed attention. This concern for the middle grades, expressed by teachers, parents, administrators, and consultants, led to the development of the Appalachian Regional Commission Model Classroom Project for Teachers of Grades Four through Eight.

The goal of the project was to bring about an attitude change of the teachers toward the developmental and intellectual nature of the students who were in the transition years between childhood and adolescence. Teachers volunteered to attend a week-long workshop during which time learning centered around the disciplines of reading, communication skills, and math. Liberally sprinkled among the academic disciplines were the teacher concerns of preadolescent development, time-on-task, assertive discipline, thinking skills, and teaching strategies.

Before the workshop, teachers were asked to complete a survey identifying their concerns and needs according to their classroom organization and instructional presentation. The workshop format was built around the responses to this survey.

This project was an example of how teachers manage change by being part of its conception and implementation; that is, they "own" the change. The Model Classroom Project made an investment in the professional development of individual teachers when teachers became involved in the project's intent and planning process. A follow-up was done by two Appalachian State University evaluators several months after the workshops to see if change of attitude and behavior had actually taken place. Results of pre and post assessment, which included a questionnaire and the Rokeach Dogmatism Scale, indicated that change had been accomplished and maintained several months after the workshop experience.

This project came about because of an identified need perceived by some educators located within the parameter of the Appalachian Regional Commission. Projects, such as the one described, or any innovation or program will be successful today if the current population concerned feels there is justification for the change.

Hatley's 1979 study points out that professional educators must serve in a variety of roles concerning change. Whether they are innovation developers, change agents, change facilitators, or change deterrents; whether they seek to discover change, to promote change, or to say "no" to change is tremendously dependent on the time and place,

specific conditions, as well as the various identified needs of the local education setting.

The need for change often goes hand in hand with the need for some things to remain the same (Brubaker, 1984). The call is for a balanced view whereby conservation (if it works; don't fix it) and change exist compatibly side by side. Needed change will come about if there is a shared vision between the principal (change agent or facilitator) and the professional staff (change implementers or deterrents). Shared vision implies shared decision-making. The interactive process of leadership considers all these forces and consequences as the gradual move toward excellence in leadership and education transpires.

The third and final topic focuses on leadership in effective schools with additional focus upon implications for principals as CURRICULUM leaders.

#### CURRICULUM Leadership for Effective Schools

The effective schools movement had its beginnings in 1979 with the research of Edmonds, Lezotte, Brookover (1979) and Rutter (1980). The momentum of the movement began to increase when the national reform reports of the early 1980's cited declining test scores, discipline problems, poor teacher preparation, and low morale as plaguing the nation's public school systems.

The research on effective schools seemed to offer some remedy for the ills uncovered by the reform reports, especially when definite characteristics of effective schools were identified. Edmonds (1979) listed these characteristics or correlates as (1) strong instructional

leadership of the principal, (2) clear instructional focus, (3) positive school climate conducive to teaching and learning, (4) teacher behaviors which conveyed high expectations, and (5) program improvements based on measurement of student achievement.

The first correlate, strong instructional leadership of the principal and the conception of the principal as a CURRICULUM leader, will be the focus of this final section.

Effective schools are characterized by an equal percentage of high and low social classes brought to minimum mastery of educational objectives as measured by standardized achievement tests. Effective schools research (Edmonds, Brookover, Lezotte, 1979 and Rutter, 1980) indicates that the key factor in effective schools is the leadership provided by the principal. According to their research, effective leadership requires the principal to assume an assertive instructional role, to be well organized, and to be goal and task-oriented. The effective principal conveys high expectations for students and staff. Frequent classroom visits enable the principal to maintain high visibility and availability to students and staff. Policies endorsed by the school district and the school are well-defined and communicated to the school population. The effective principal gives strong support to the teaching staff and is adept at parent and community relations (Edmonds, 1979). A more recent report by Edmonds (1982) further delineates the role of the principal concerning his or her assertiveness in instructional matters and the strong support to teaching staff.

Frequent principal-teacher discourse focused on diagnosing and solving instructional problems in the classroom means the principal has the needed knowledge base of effective techniques regarding classroom management and instruction and is well-prepared for discussions of classroom management and instruction with teachers.

These characteristics of effective leadership are also endorsed by Finn (1984) who writes that the attributes of a principal should combine prowess in instructional leadership with mastery of purposeful school improvement schemes. Here again, when the challenge of school improvement comes shrouded in the cloak of change, it falls upon the principal to help staff and community, through collegiality and mutual trust, come to a consensus on key goals of the school (Day, 1985).

Leadership has not always been defined in instructional terms. Brubaker (1985) cites the development of the principalship through five conceptions, from a Principal Teacher to a CURRICULUM Leader.

A conception was defined in Chapter I as a "paradigm, a pattern of thinking." Educators who support a conception make assumptions based on several beliefs constituting a platform. Emerging from one's platform for the principalship are the parameters of one's vision as to what the principal can be and do. Horizon is the term curriculum theorists use to describe these parameters of vision (Macdonald, 1983).

The conceptual framework of the principalship identified by Brubaker (1985) consists of assumptions regarding history and culture of school settings; values; politics or strategies for allocating resources; aesthetics or judgements as to what should be appreciated for its beauty; and last, spiritual or religious dimensions which give attention to what

is ultimate and meaningful in the deepest sense as to what it means to be human. All these combine to set the parameters of vision or horizon for principals operating within each of the five conceptions.

A description of the five conceptions follows:

(1) Principal Teacher: Routinely engages in classroom teaching for a portion of each school day; also responsible for daily school routines and clerical duties; does not believe special training is needed to be an effective principal

(2) General Manager: Is the official liaison between the school and the central office; spends the majority of time on clerical duties; relies upon common sense and reacts to problems as they arise; has the right to give and enforce orders to teachers; implements the curriculum as mandated by the state and local school board

(3) Professional and Scientific Manager: Spends more time in classroom supervision than routine administrative duties; uses test data as a basis for planning, implementing, and evaluating instruction; is accustomed to the bureaucratic command/compliance organizational system; is interested in efficiency and the use of time to meet management goals and objectives

(4) Administrator and Instructional Leader: Recognizes that his/her role encompasses both governance functions through the bureaucratic organizational structure; handles instructional leadership functions through collegial organizational structure; expects and accepts some friction between governance and instructional leadership functions; treats teachers as professionals; gives them significant input into

staff hiring, scheduling, evaluation, procurement of materials, selection of objectives, methods, and so forth

(5) CURRICULUM Leader: Views the curriculum in very broad terms to mean more than a course of study and what each person experiences in cooperatively creating learning settings; believes that the role of the principal is too complex to reduce to simple technical procedures; does not attempt to dichotomize administrative and instructional functions, realizing that all tasks impact on what is learned; believes that the learning of adult educators is as important as the learning of children and youth

This study is concerned with the perception of central office personnel on the principal who operates within the fifth conception, that of a CURRICULUM leader. These principals live their definition of curriculum in the school setting and everything they do reflects their definition. As stated in an earlier section, the CURRICULUM leader's definition of CURRICULUM is what persons perceive they experience in cooperatively creating learning settings.

#### Summary

This chapter has focused on the three topics: curriculum, leadership, and the principal as CURRICULUM leader in effective schools. CURRICULUM has been defined as what persons perceive they experience in cooperatively creating learning settings.

Leadership has been defined as influencing others to do what you want them to do through contextual forces involving technical, interpersonal, and pedagogical skills combined with an artful

appreciation of the culture and history of the setting, shared symbolism and values, and a vision of what might be possible to achieve.

The principal has been cited as a correlate of effective schools, and Brubaker's 1985 study further defines the role of the effective principal as one that involves the conception of the principal as a CURRICULUM leader.

The assumptions underlying the platform of the principal as a CURRICULUM leader include history and culture of school settings, politics, aesthetics, values, and spiritual/religious dimensions. All of these assumptions reflect various norms of school culture (Saphier and King, 1985) and the forces on leadership identified by Sergiovanni (1984).

The effective schools research and the reform reports of the 1980's speak to effective leadership on the individual school level. Very little attention, if any, is given to the needed involvement of central office personnel on school and district wide effectiveness. Honig (1985) does mention the need for a common vision among educators in the central office, the same vision for principals and teachers; and Wood (1985) speaks to staff development for board members, superintendents, and central office personnel as essential for school improvement.

Central office persons do have an important role in effective school leadership. Vann's 1979 study concluded that principals set their priorities in accordance with the priorities they perceived to be held by their superiors. Principals who viewed curriculum as important did so in accordance to the perception of central office superiors and not

from their own views of importance. Vann's study further indicates that the relationship between principals and central office personnel should be given greater attention.

Perceptions of roles may influence the performance of those persons in the roles. This study is concerned with the perception of central office persons regarding the role of the principal as a CURRICULUM leader. The perception held by central office persons may be influenced by the following independent variables: central office persons' prior experience as a principal; their involvement in professional organizations and reading of current literature on curriculum, and the central office persons' perception of their own role in the central office.

These independent variables were part of the questionnaire distributed to 141 central office contact persons for curriculum and instruction. A description of the research methodology, population, procedure, and instrument used to gather the data are given in the following chapter.

## CHAPTER III

## PROCEDURES

This study is concerned with the perception of central office persons who are responsible for their school system's curricular and instructional program toward the role of the principal as a CURRICULUM leader. Four independent variables concerning central office persons have been identified: (1) prior experience as a principal, (2) involvement in professional curriculum organizations by attending meetings regularly, (3) awareness of current curriculum issues through up-to-date reading, and (4) the perception held by central office personnel toward their own role in the central office.

Data were obtained from a sample of 110 responses to a questionnaire sent to the total population of 141 central office contact persons for curriculum and instruction in all the school districts in North Carolina.

This chapter is a description of the research methodology, population, and instruments of the study.

Research Methodology

Survey research was used as a method of data collection to determine whether a relationship existed between the dependent variable, perception of central office contact persons toward the principalship, and each of the four independent variables. A two-page questionnaire was designed and mailed to the total population of 141 contact persons for curriculum and instruction in all the school systems in North Carolina. The development of the questionnaire was guided by Nachmias and Nachmias (1981) and Scheaffer, Mendenhall, and Ott (1979).

This is a correlational study. Multiple relationships exist in correlational studies, and these independent variables often contribute to the prediction of the dependent variable. This study is concerned with the relationship of the independent variables concerning the central office person's (1) prior experience as a principal, (2) involvement in professional organizations by attending meetings regularly, (3) knowledge of current literature in curriculum and instruction through up-to-date reading, and (4) perception of own role in the central office on the dependent variable, perception of central office personnel on the role of the principal as a CURRICULUM leader.

#### Instrument

A two-page questionnaire was used to gather data concerning central office personnel and their perception of the principalship. Along with the questionnaire was a cover letter explaining the study. A separate page describing the five conceptions of the principalship was also enclosed.

The first part of the questionnaire concerned the five conceptions of the principalship and was adapted from a questionnaire developed by Brubaker and Simon (1985) for a study of the principalship and how North Carolina principals viewed themselves and other principals throughout the state. During the school year 1985-86, Brubaker and Simon's study asked 370 principals and assistant principals representing 94 of the 141 systems in the state the following questions: (1) What is your present leadership role? (2) What leadership role would you like to have? (3) What leadership role do the three principals you know best assume? and (4) What leadership role do most principals in North Carolina play?

This part of the questionnaire was adapted to fit the perceptions of central office persons toward the role of the principals in their system. Respondents were asked to indicate the number of principals in their school system that fit the description of each conception and to check the conception that most accurately described where the respondent thought those principals should be. Next, the respondents were asked to check the conception that they felt most accurately described most of the principals in North Carolina and the conception where they felt most of those principals should be. Last, respondents were asked to examine their own role in the central office, check the conception that most accurately described what they were doing in that role, and check the conception that most accurately described what they felt their role should be.

The second part of the questionnaire concerned personal data regarding the following:

- ( 1) position currently held
- ( 2) number of years in that position
- ( 3) prior experience as a principal
- ( 4) number of years as a principal
- ( 5) highest degree completed
- ( 6) sex
- ( 7) age
- ( 8) affiliation with professional organizations
- ( 9) regular attendance at professional meetings
- (10) receiving of professional literature
- (11) up-to-date reading concerning curriculum development

This completed the collection of data for the study.

Although a questionnaire was used to obtain the needed data for this study, the investigator wishes to emphasize that many questions were open-ended. Information concerning the perceptions of the principalship and the role of the central office person that was noted on the questionnaire could be compared to Goodlad's (1984) "explicit" curriculum. Specific information was obtained, but many responses contained additional remarks or "implicit" meanings which were more subjective in nature. Several respondents attempted to clarify their responses by saying they did not perceive principals nor did they view their roles in the central office as fitting any particular conception (explicit). Instead, respondents found that all conceptions were justified according to the time, place, people, and situation involved. Just as the "implicit" curriculum cannot be accurately measured, neither can the "implicit" perceptions of principals and the role of self in the central office be measured.

#### Population

North Carolina's public school system is comprised of 141 districts or systems located within eight regional education districts throughout the state. Each system employs a person who works in the central office and who has been designated by the State Department of Public Instruction as the contact person responsible for directing, coordinating, and/or supervising the curricular and instructional programs in his or her school system.

The questionnaire asked respondents to give the title of their current position. It should be noted that for 104 responses to this

question, there were 22 different titles for persons responsible for curricular and instructional programs in the school systems. Two of the systems designated the Superintendent as the contact person, 13 of the systems designated the Associated Superintendent, and 41 systems had as their contact person for curriculum and instruction the Assistant Superintendent. The remaining 48 systems used one of the other 19 titles given.

This indicates that there may be a lack of definition for the role of central office persons who are responsible for curriculum and instruction which may influence the perceptions of the role held by central office persons. According to the 1985 North Carolina Public School Profile, there are 1,969 principals in North Carolina. The largest system is Charlotte/Mecklenburg Schools with 103 principals; the smallest system is Tryon City with one principal. Both of these systems, along with every other system in North Carolina, work with the central office in developing and implementing curricular and instructional programs.

The designated contact person in each system who is responsible for directing, coordinating, and/or supervising the curricular and instructional programs comprises the total population of the study. Because of the small number of the population, sampling was not attempted. All contact persons for curriculum and instruction were asked to respond to the questionnaire.

The first mailing was in mid-December, 1985; a second mailing occurred the first of January, 1986, which provided enough responses for a high confidence level. A return rate of 78 percent was achieved.

The questionnaire was completed by central office personnel during the Winter of the 1985-86 school year. This was a significant time as North Carolina had just begun a heavy focus on Effective Teaching in 16 systems that were piloting a Career Development Program. The research by Edmonds, Brookover, Lezotte (1979) and Rutter (1980) provided the basis for the design of the North Carolina Effective Teaching Training Program. By July, 1985, selected principals, administrators, and teachers from the 16 pilot units had been trained in the program. By October, 1985, representatives from the other 125 systems had been trained. By December, 1985, all contact persons for curriculum and instruction should have had exposure to the research on effective schools and the effective leadership role of the principal.

#### Summary

This is a correlational study with multi-variate analysis. The two-page questionnaire sent to the 141 contact persons for curriculum and instruction was adapted from a questionnaire that had been field-tested with 370 principals and assistant principals representing 94 of the 141 systems in North Carolina. One hundred ten central office persons responded to the questionnaire. Responses provided the variable data concerning the perceptions of central office persons on the principalship. Analysis of the data will be reported and interpreted in the following chapter.

CHAPTER IV  
ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to investigate the perception of central office persons concerning the role of principals as CURRICULUM leaders. This investigation considered the independent variables of prior experience as a principal, involvement in professional curriculum organizations, awareness of current literature in curriculum and instruction through up-to-date reading, and the perception central office persons hold toward their own role in the central office.

Data were obtained from a sample 110 responses to a questionnaire sent to the total population of 141 central office persons responsible for curricular and instructional programs in the local school systems.

Several questions were specifically addressed in this study:

1. What is the central office persons' perception of the role of the principals with whom they work and their perception of principals across North Carolina?
2. Is there a correlation between central office persons who have had prior experience as a principal and their perception of principals with whom they work?
3. Is there a correlation between central office persons who are involved with professional curriculum organizations and their perception of principals with whom they work?

4. Is there a correlation between central office persons who subscribe to and read current professional literature in curriculum and instruction and their perception of principals with whom they work?

5. Is there a correlation between perception of the central office persons toward their own role as CURRICULUM leaders and the role of principals with whom they work as CURRICULUM leaders?

Each of the above questions will be addressed in turn.

#### Question One

What is the central office persons' perception of the role of principals with whom they work and their perception of principals across North Carolina?

Central office persons were asked to indicate the number of principals with whom they work that fit the description of each conception or role of the principalship. The five conceptions or roles were:

1. Principal Teacher
2. General Manager
3. Professional/Scientific Manager
4. Administrative/Instructional Leader
5. CURRICULUM Leader

A total of 1,456 principals within 110 school systems in North Carolina were categorized as fitting one of the five conceptions or roles. This represented 74% of the total number of principals in the 141 school systems in North Carolina. The responses are reported in Table 1.

Table 1 shows the number of observed frequencies and the percentage of principals within each conception. The 110 respondents perceive two percent of the principals with whom they work as Principal Teachers.

Table 1

Perceptions of 110 Central Office Persons Toward the Role of Principals  
With Whom They Work

| Role of Principal | Observed<br>Frequencies | Percentage |
|-------------------|-------------------------|------------|
| Principal Teacher | 34                      | 2%         |
| General Manager   | 564                     | 39%        |
| Prof/Sci Manager  | 239                     | 16%        |
| Admin/Inst Leader | 508                     | 35%        |
| CURRICULUM Leader | 111                     | 8%         |
| Total             | 1456                    | 100%       |

The other principals are perceived as either managers or leaders. The largest percentage, 39%, are perceived as General Managers. The second largest percentage, 35%, are perceived as Administrative/Instructional Leaders. Only eight percent of the 1,456 principals are perceived as CURRICULUM Leaders.

Another question asked respondents to indicate the conception or role that most accurately described most of the principals across North Carolina. The responses are reported in Table 2.

Table 2 shows 103 responses. The largest percentage, 72%, perceived principals in North Carolina to be General Managers. Two other conceptions, Professional/Scientific Manager and Administrative/Instructional Leader, respectively received 15% and 13% of the remaining responses. No central office person perceived any principal as being a Principal Teacher or a CURRICULUM Leader. There is a clear correlation between the perception of one's own principal and the principals across North Carolina in general. That perception is that, by and large, principals are managers and administrative leaders and not teachers or CURRICULUM Leaders.

Several comments were made by the respondents regarding the role of the principals with whom they work and across North Carolina. For some central office persons it was difficult indicating the conceptions where these principals fit. One respondent wrote the following note:

This questionnaire is very difficult to complete with any accuracy since each principal can be placed in only one conception. Also, it is impossible to complete, in my opinion, with accuracy since the duties, functions, requirements, and other activities require principals to be at various times all or most of each conception. Neither conception is exclusive of any of the others. A principal, perforce has to be some of all of the conceptions.

Table 2

Perceptions of 110 Central Office Persons Toward the Role of Principals  
Across North Carolina

| <u>Role of Principal</u> | <u>Observed</u><br><u>Frequencies</u> | <u>Percentage</u> |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Principal Teacher        | 0                                     | 0                 |
| General Manager          | 74                                    | 72%               |
| Prof/Sci Manager         | 16                                    | 15%               |
| Admin/Inst Leader        | 13                                    | 13%               |
| CURRICULUM Leader        | 0                                     | 0                 |
| Total                    | 103                                   | 100%              |

These remarks serve to point out a well understood idea--that most social roles are made up of a complex set of requirements to fit the variety of situations under which these roles are carried out. By asking central office persons to share their perceptions, a picture of the most dominant and visible aspects of the role of principals is being painted. By analogy, just as a painting is not a reproduction of reality but an idea about reality, so are these perceptions of central office persons regarding the role of principals.

#### Question Two

Is there a correlation between central office persons who have had prior experience as a principal and their perception of principals with whom they work?

Of the total 110 responses to the questionnaire, six respondents did not complete the question concerning prior experience as a principal. Of the 104 responses to the question, 52 central office persons had prior experience as a principal and 52 had no prior experience as a principal. These data are summarized in Table 3 below.

Table 3 shows that central office persons with prior experience perceive the greatest percentage (63%) of principals with whom they work as being Professional/Scientific Managers (18%), Administrative/Instructional Leaders (38%), and CURRICULUM Leaders (7%). The conception, or role, of General Manager involved 38% of the principals and only two percent of the principals were perceived as Principal Teachers.

Table 3

Perceptions of 104 Central Office Persons Toward the Role of Principals  
With Whom They Work by Prior Experience as Principal

| Role of Principal | Prior Experience |      |
|-------------------|------------------|------|
|                   | Yes              | No   |
| Principal Teacher | 2%               | 3%   |
| General Manager   | 35%              | 43%  |
| Prof/Sci Manager  | 18%              | 15%  |
| Admin/Inst Leader | 38%              | 30%  |
| CURRICULUM Leader | 7%               | 1%   |
| Total             | 100%             | 100% |
| Total Perceptions | 809              | 559  |

$$x^2=15.398$$

$$df=4$$

With a  $df=4$ , a  $x^2$  of 15.398 indicated a significant difference at the  $p .01$  in the perceptions of those central office persons with prior experience as principals and those without prior experience.

Central office persons without prior experience perceived almost half (43%) of the principals with whom they work as General Managers. Fifteen percent were perceived as Professional/Scientific Managers, and 30% as Administrative/Instructional Leaders. Three percent were perceived as Principal Teachers and only one percent were perceived as CURRICULUM Leaders.

Table 3 also shows that although there was an equal number of central office persons who had prior experience as principals as those without prior experience, the number of principals is larger among those with prior experience. One can assume that these central office persons are located in the larger school systems and work with a larger number of principals. The size of the school system was not a variable being tested in this study but it appears that central office persons in larger school systems are more likely to have had prior experience as principals before moving into the central office position.

### Question Three

Is there a correlation between central office persons who are involved with professional curriculum organizations and their perception of principals with whom they work?

There were 100 responses to the questions regarding memberships of central office persons in professional organizations. Seventy-five percent of the respondents listed membership in Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development and its North Carolina affiliate, 64% listed membership in North Carolina Association of School Administrators, and 42% listed membership in Phi Delta Kappa, a professional fraternity in education.

Seventy-two percent of all respondents indicated active involvement by regularly attending meetings of the professional organizations in which they held membership. The remaining 28% indicated they did not attend meetings with any regularity although many indicated membership in one or more professional organizations. Responses to the question regarding regular attendance at meetings of these professional organizations are reported in Table 4 below.

Table 4 shows 72% of central office persons who actively participate in professional organizations perceive a majority of the principals with whom they work (73%) as being either General Managers (39%) or Administrative/Instructional Leaders (34%). The remaining 28% of central office persons who do not participate nor regularly attend meetings of professional organizations also perceive a majority of principals with whom they work as either General Managers (35%) or Administrative/Instructional Leaders (38%).

#### Question Four

Is there a correlation between central office persons who subscribe to and read current professional literature in curriculum and instruction and their perception of principals with whom they work?

There were 101 responses to the question regarding central office persons keeping informed of current literature in curriculum and instruction. Ninety-four of the 101 responses indicated "yes" or "no" to the question regarding up-to-date reading. The remaining seven respondents made comments such as ". . .at least I try," ". . .not nearly as much as I would like," ". . .impossible," and "I never seem to reach my goal, I have the resources. Time to read is a real problem."

Table 4

Perceptions by 100 Central Office Persons Toward the Role of Principals  
With Whom They Work by Participation in Professional Organizations

| Role of Principal | Participation |      |
|-------------------|---------------|------|
|                   | Yes           | No   |
| Principal Teacher | 2%            | 4%   |
| General Manager   | 39%           | 35%  |
| Prof/Sci Manager  | 18%           | 12%  |
| Admin/Inst Leader | 34%           | 38%  |
| CURRICULUM Leader | 7%            | 11%  |
| Total             | 100%          | 100% |
| Total Perceptions | 1063          | 271  |

$$X^2=15.05$$

$$df=4$$

With a  $df=4$ , a  $X^2$  of 15.05 indicates a significant difference at the  $p .01$  in the perception of those central office persons who actively participate by regularly attending meetings of professional organizations in which they hold membership and those central office persons who do not participate nor attend meetings of professional organizations.

Seventy-seven percent of all respondents indicated they kept informed of current literature in curriculum and instruction. The remaining 23% indicated they did not keep informed of current literature.

Responses to the question regarding central office persons reading current literature in curriculum and instruction are reported in Table 5 below.

Table 5 shows 77% of central office persons who read professional literature perceive a greater majority (61%) of principals with whom they work as Professional/Scientific Managers (18%), Administrative/Instructional Leaders (35%), and CURRICULUM Leaders (8%). The remaining 23% of central office persons who do not read professional literature perceive the majority (52%) of principals to be General Managers. There was a one percent difference between the groups regarding the conceptions, or role, of Principal Teacher and CURRICULUM Leader.

#### Question Five

Is there a correlation between perceptions of central office persons toward their own role as CURRICULUM leaders and their perception of principals with whom they work as CURRICULUM leaders?

There were 100 responses to the question concerning the perception central office persons hold regarding their role in the central office. Nineteen percent perceived themselves as CURRICULUM Leaders, 81% did not perceive themselves as CURRICULUM Leaders.

Responses to the question concerning perceptions of central office persons toward their own role in the central office as CURRICULUM Leaders and their perception toward principals with whom they work as CURRICULUM Leaders are reported in Table 6 below.

Table 5

Perceptions of 101 Central Office Persons Toward the Role of Principals  
With Whom They Work by Reading Professional Literature

| Role of Principal | Read |      |
|-------------------|------|------|
|                   | Yes  | No   |
| Principal Teacher | 3%   | 2%   |
| General Manager   | 36%  | 52%  |
| Prof/Sci Manager  | 18%  | 11%  |
| Admin/Inst Leader | 35%  | 27%  |
| CURRICULUM Leader | 8%   | 7%   |
| Total             | 100% | 100% |
| Total Perceptions | 1088 | 232  |

$$X^2=22.548$$

$$df=4$$

With a  $df=4$ , a  $X^2$  of 22.548 indicates a significant difference at the  $p .01$  in the perception of those central office persons who read current professional literature in curriculum and instruction and those central office persons who do not read current professional literature in curriculum and instruction.

Table 6 shows that the 19% of central office persons who perceived themselves as CURRICULUM Leaders perceive only seven percent of the principals with whom they work as CURRICULUM Leaders and 93% not as CURRICULUM Leaders. Eighty-one percent of central office persons who did not perceive themselves as CURRICULUM Leaders perceived only eight percent of the principals with whom they work as CURRICULUM Leaders and 92% of principals not as CURRICULUM Leaders.

#### Summary

The purpose of this study was to investigate the perception of central office persons on the role of principals. Four independent variables concerning central office persons were identified: (1) prior experience as a principal, (2) involvement in professional curriculum organizations, (3) awareness of current curriculum literature through up-to-date reading, and (4) the perception of central office persons toward their own role in the central office.

The questions presented at the beginning of the chapter are summarized below:

1. Central office persons were more likely to view the principals with whom they work as being General Managers or Administrative/ Instructional Leaders. Central office persons overwhelmingly view principals across North Carolina as being General Managers. This indicates a clear correlation between the perception of principals with whom central office persons work and their perception of other principals.

Table 6

Perceptions of 100 Central Office Persons Toward the Role of Principals  
With Whom They Work as CURRICULUM Leaders by Perception of Own Role as  
CURRICULUM Leaders

| Perception of Principal<br>as CURRICULUM Leader | Perception of Self<br>as CURRICULUM Leader |      |
|---|--|------|
|   | Yes  | No   |
| Yes   | 7%   | 8%   |
| No  | 93%  | 92%  |
| Total   | 100%                                       | 100% |
| Total Perceptions                               | 307  | 1149 |

$$x^2 = .115$$

$$df = 1$$

With a  $df=1$ , a  $x^2$  of .115 does not indicate a significant difference at the  $p .01$  in the perception of central office persons who perceive themselves as CURRICULUM Leaders towards the role of principals with whom they work as CURRICULUM Leaders.

2. There is a correlation between central office persons who have had prior experience as a principal and their perception of principals with whom they work. Central office persons who have had prior experience as a principal are more likely to view principals with whom they work as Professional/Scientific Managers, Administrative/Instructional Leaders, and CURRICULUM Leaders.

3. There is a correlation between central office persons who are involved with professional organizations and their perception of principals with whom they work. There were three times as many central office persons who indicated involvement in professional organizations as those who did not. Those who did indicate involvement were more likely to perceive principals as being General Managers and Professional/Scientific Managers. Central office persons who did not indicate participation in professional organizations were more likely to perceive principals with whom they work as Administrative/Instructional Leaders and CURRICULUM Leaders.

4. There is a correlation between central office persons who subscribe to and read current professional literature in curriculum and instruction and their perception of principals with whom they work. There were three times as many central office persons who indicated they read current literature in curriculum and instruction as those who indicated they did not read current literature in curriculum and instruction. Those central office persons who did were more likely to perceive principals as Professional/Scientific Managers, Administrative/Instructional Leaders and CURRICULUM Leaders. Those central office persons who did not read were more likely to view principals as General Managers.

5. There is no correlation between perceptions of central office persons toward their own role as CURRICULUM Leaders and their perception of principals with whom they work as CURRICULUM Leaders. The data shows no significant difference between perceptions of one's own role in the central office and that of principals with whom they work.

CHAPTER V  
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS  
FOR FURTHER STUDY

Introduction

This study focused on the principal's role as CURRICULUM Leader as perceived by central office persons who work with principals in curricular and instructional programs. Several questions were addressed regarding perceptions of central office persons toward principals across North Carolina and principals with whom they work. Four specific variables concerning central office persons were identified. They included prior experience as a principal, involvement in professional curriculum organizations, awareness of current literature in curriculum and instruction through up-to-date reading, and the perception central office persons hold regarding their own role in the central office.

In this chapter, a summary of the study, conclusions, and recommendations for further study will be presented.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to determine whether any of four independent variables (prior experience as principal, participation in professional curriculum organizations, read current literature, and perception of own role in the central office) made a significant difference in the dependent variable, the perception of central office persons toward the conception, or role, of principals with whom they work.

The population included 141 contact persons for curriculum and instruction in the school systems across North Carolina. Data were obtained from 110 responses to a questionnaire.

The first part of the questionnaire was concerned with the five conceptions, or roles, of the principalship and the perceptions of central office persons toward the principals with whom they worked, toward principals across North Carolina, and towards their own role in the central office. The second part of the questionnaire provided data for the four independent variables.

Data were analyzed according to five questions asked by the study regarding perceptions of the total number of central office persons on the role of principals with whom they work and principals across North Carolina, and correlations of the four independent variables on the dependent variable. A chi square test was conducted for each set of data and variables significant at the .01 confidence level were determined.

The findings based upon the analysis of data are as follows:

1. There is a significant difference in the perception of central office persons toward the role of the principals with whom they work and principals across North Carolina.

2. There is a significant difference in the perceptions of those central office persons with prior experience as a principal and those without prior experience toward the role of principals with whom they work.

3. There is a significant difference in the perception of those central office persons who actively participate in professional

organizations by regularly attending meetings and those central office persons who do not participate in professional organizations toward the role of principals with whom they work.

4. There is a significant difference in the perception of those central office persons who keep current in reading professional literature in curriculum and instruction and those central office persons who do not keep current in reading professional literature toward the role of principals with whom they work.

5. There is no significant difference in the perception of central office persons who perceive themselves as CURRICULUM Leaders towards the role of principals with whom they work as CURRICULUM Leaders.

#### Conclusions

The findings of this study were reported in the previous chapter. The purpose of this section is to discuss the major conclusions of this study.

The study focused on the perception of central office persons concerning the role of principals as CURRICULUM leaders, one of five of the identified conceptions, or roles, of the principalship. A study involving perceptions really looks at interpretations based on a variety of concepts held by the individual whose perceptions are being studied. To perceive is to become aware through understanding. Perceptions then become interpretations of one's understanding of reality. But understanding also differs from person to person. What one person may understand about an idea or concept may differ from another person's understanding. In this study, central office persons were asked to

interpret their understanding of reality concerning the way principals go about their work in the schools. The purpose of this study was to determine if perceptions, or interpretations, could be influenced by the identified variables of central office persons having prior experience as a principal, attending professional meetings, reading current professional literature, and how central office persons perceive their own role in the central office.

Three of the four variables were found to be significant and one variable was found not to be significant in the perceptions of central office persons toward the role of principals with whom they work. The final conclusions of this study are as follows:

1. Central office persons were more likely to perceive principals across North Carolina in a lesser light than they perceive the principals with whom they work. This leads to the conclusion that central office persons may see themselves as having more influence on the principals with whom they work, thus providing central office persons with a greater ownership in demonstrated leadership in their system.

2. Prior experience as a principal does make a difference. Central office persons with prior experience as principals are more likely to perceive principals as being more involved in instructional and curriculum concerns than central office persons without prior experience. It can be concluded that having been in the school leadership position influences the perception held toward other principals. Prior experience as a principal indicates the central office person may have a greater understanding of the diversity of the principal's role.

3. Participation in professional organizations make a difference. Central office persons who are actively involved in professional organizations perceive the principals with whom they work as being more involved in managerial concerns than instructional/administrative/curricular concerns. The opposite was true of central office persons who did not involve themselves in professional organizations, therefore, the more central office persons become aware of professional concerns in curriculum and instruction, the less likely they are to perceive principals operating with equal concern in curriculum and instruction. It can also be concluded that the less central office persons are aware of these same educational concerns, the more likely they are to perceive principals operating within the conception of administrative/instructional/CURRICULUM Leadership.

4. Reading current literature does make a difference. Central office persons who keep current in reading professional literature are more likely to perceive principals with whom they work as being Professional/Scientific Managers, Administrative/Instructional Leaders, and CURRICULUM Leaders than those central office persons who do not keep current in their reading. This seems to be a contradiction with the previous variable of participation in professional organizations. In Chapter I of this study, it was presumed that the variables involving participation in professional organizations and reading current literature were related. The results of the data presented in the previous chapter indicate that these two variables may not be related at all.

5. Perceptions towards one's role in the central office does not make a difference. Central office persons who perceive themselves as CURRICULUM Leaders do not perceive principals with whom they work any differently than those central office persons who do not perceive themselves as CURRICULUM Leaders.

In conclusion, central office persons do not perceive the principals with whom they work or the principals across North Carolina as CURRICULUM leaders. Nor do central office persons perceive their own role in the central office as CURRICULUM leaders. The conception, or role, of CURRICULUM leader may not be fully understood by central office persons. Perceptions regarding CURRICULUM leadership are really interpretations of one's understanding of the definition of CURRICULUM leadership. Since the definition was qualitative and subjective, central office persons may have had a more difficult time determining if principals, or themselves, fit the conception.

#### Implications for Further Study

As previously stated in this study, North Carolina began implementing an Effective Teaching Training Program and a pilot Career Development Program during the 1985-86 school year. The implications for leadership as a major correlate of school effectiveness is evidenced by the research on school effectiveness reported in the Review of Literature of this study.

In addition to the Effective Teaching Training Program, the Career Development Program also speaks to the principals and central office persons as professionals who will be expected to comply with evaluation

procedures and to identify strengths and weaknesses for a professional development plan. The evaluation and professional development plan will enable principals and central office persons to increase their effectiveness in the leadership capacity.

These two programs combine to exert pressure on principals and central office persons to become more than "managers" of the educational process. The perception of central office persons toward principals should change as these two programs continue to be implemented. As part of continued and ongoing professional development, principals and central office persons may be required to join professional organizations and keep current on the latest educational trends and issues; and the career ladder may eventually require all central office persons to have prior experience as a principal in order to best meet the needs of the school system with regards to curricular and instructional programs.

Vann's 1979 study indicated that greater attention be given to the relationship between principals and central office persons, especially with regards to curriculum issues. To date, very little attention is given to the role central office persons play in nurturing the CURRICULUM leadership of principals.

Therefore, based upon the findings of this study, it is recommended that further research be conducted focusing on the influence of central office persons on effective schooling and effective school leadership. Some research considering the perceptions of central office persons toward principals should be conducted after the four-year pilot Career Development Program and the Effective Teaching Training Program is fully implemented in all school systems across North Carolina.

This research should follow both qualitative and quantitative avenues of inquiry. Implicit assumptions for each research methodology should be identified and discussed. One example would be a case study or a portraiture of the relationships between a particular central office person and one or more schools. The focus for this research would be the dynamics of leadership style used by the central office person. Another case study might focus on the transactional contexts or settings mutually created by central office persons and the principals with whom they work. One advantage of the case study methodology is its emphasis on the uniqueness of both settings and participants. Replication, predictability, and validity are not the interests of the case study scholar.

Additional quantitative studies, such as the present one, need to address the topic of this study; namely, perceptions of the principalship. However, these other studies may reach out to include superintendents, teachers, parents, and students. The methodology used in this study should act as a springboard that invites creative revision. It is only through the presentation of research that the impact of central office persons on the leadership role of the principal can be fully appreciated and endorsed.

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APPENDICES

**APPENDIX A**

**Letters to Contact Persons for  
Curriculum and Instruction**



# Montgomery County Schools

68

441 Page Street • Troy, North Carolina 27371

LARRY T. IVEY  
Superintendent

## MEMORANDUM

To: Contact Person for Curriculum and Instruction

From: Marilyn Palmer Briggs, Instructional Supervisor  
Director of Federal Programs

Date: November, 1985

Re: Study "Perceptions of Central Office Personnel on the Role of the Principal as a Curriculum Leader"

North Carolina has joined with many states in the revitalization of its educational focus through implementation of Effective Teacher Training and the Career Development Plan. Both programs consider strong leadership of the principal to be important.

The leadership role of the principal is perceived differently among the central office personnel who direct, coordinate, and/or supervise their district's curricular and instructional programs. These perceptions, whether accurate or not, often determine the outcome of school reform for the individual school and the district as a whole.

I am doing a study that will focus on the principal's role as an effective leader as perceived by the central office person who works with principals in curricular and instructional programs.

Would you please assist me in my study by completing the enclosed questionnaire and returning it in the stamped, self-addressed envelope before December 13, 1985? Your participation in this study is greatly appreciated.

Your name and the name of your local unit will not be used in the study and the data will not be cited in such a way as to imply either name.

I thank you in advance for your time.



# Montgomery County Schools

69

441 Page Street • Troy, North Carolina 27371

LARRY T. IVEY  
Superintendent

## MEMORANDUM

To: Contact Person for Curriculum and Instruction

From: Marilyn Palmer Briggs, Instructional Supervisor  
Director of Federal Programs

Date: December, 1985

Re: Study "Perceptions of Central Office Personnel on the Role of  
the Principal as a Curriculum Leader"

Hopefully you received a short questionnaire from me several weeks ago. If you have not already done so, please complete it and return it to me by Monday, January 6, 1986. Another is enclosed for your convenience.

Your cooperation and assistance will be greatly appreciated as I need the information in order to complete the study.

Thank you.

MPB/las

**APPENDIX B**

**Conceptions of the Principalship**

### Conceptions of the Principalship

1. **Principal Teacher:** Routinely engages in classroom teaching for a portion of each school day; also responsible for daily school routines and clerical duties; does not believe special training is needed to be an effective principal.

2. **General Manager:** Is the official liaison between the school and the central office; spends the majority of time on clerical duties; relies upon common sense and reacts to problems as they arise; has the right to give and enforce orders to teachers; implements the curriculum as mandated by the state and local school board.

3. **Professional and Scientific Manager:** Spends more time in classroom supervision than routine administrative duties; uses test data as a basis for planning, implementing and evaluating instruction; is accustomed to the bureaucratic command/compliance organizational system; is interested in efficiency and the use of time to meet management goals and objectives.

4. **Administrator and Instructional Leader:** Recognizes that his/her role encompasses both governance functions through the bureaucratic organizational structure; handles instructional leadership functions through a collegial organizational structure; expects and accepts some friction between governance and instructional leadership functions; treats teachers as professionals; gives them significant input into staff hiring, scheduling, evaluation, procurement of materials, selection of objectives, methods, etc.

5. **Curriculum Leader:** Views the curriculum in very broad terms to mean more than a course of study and what each person experiences in cooperatively creating learning settings; believes that the role of the principal is too complex to reduce to simple technical procedures; does not attempt to dichotomize administrative and instructional functions, realizing that all tasks impact on what is learned; believes that the learning of adult educators is as important as the learning of children and youth.

Note: This questionnaire is adapted from The Five Conceptions of the Principalship by Larry Simon and Dale Brubaker, 1983.

**APPENDIX C**  
**Questionnaire**

Central Office Personnel  
Perceptions of the Principalship

Instructions:

1. In column A, please indicate the number of principals with whom you work that fit the description of each conception. i.e.: an LEA has ten (10) principals. Five (5) may fit conception 2--General Manager; three (3) may fit conception 4--Administrator and Curriculum Leader; and two (2) may fit conception 5--Curriculum Leader.
2. In column B, please place a check beside the conception that most accurately describes where you think those principals should be.
3. In column C, please place a check beside the conception that you feel most accurately describes most of the principals across North Carolina.
4. In column D, please place a check beside the conception that most accurately describes where you think the principals in North Carolina should be.
5. In column E, please place a check beside the conception that most accurately describes what you are presently doing in your role in the central office.
6. In column F, please place a check beside the conception that most accurately describes what you feel your role in the central office should be.

A   B   C   D   E   F

| A | B | C | D | E | F |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|   |   |   |   |   |   | 1. Principal Teacher                      |
|   |   |   |   |   |   | 2. General Manager                        |
|   |   |   |   |   |   | 3. Professional and Scientific Manager    |
|   |   |   |   |   |   | 4. Administrator and Instructional Leader |
|   |   |   |   |   |   | 5. Curriculum Leader                      |

Please complete the following information:

1. Position you currently hold: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Number of years in this position: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Were you ever a principal? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Number of years as a principal: \_\_\_\_\_
5. Your highest degree completed:  
bachelor's \_\_\_\_\_ master's \_\_\_\_\_ 6th year \_\_\_\_\_ doctorate \_\_\_\_\_
6. Sex: Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_
7. Age: \_\_\_\_\_
8. In what professional organizations are you a member:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. Do you regularly attend meetings of these organizations?  
Yes \_\_\_\_\_  
No \_\_\_\_\_
10. What professional publications/journals do you receive:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
11. Do you feel that you keep up-to-date with readings concerning curriculum development?  
Yes \_\_\_\_\_  
No \_\_\_\_\_

Thank You