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Research indicates that reflective practice has the potential to create a culture of continuous improvement and lead to lasting school change when it becomes the collective cultural norm in a school. However, few studies have examined how elementary principals strategically promote and sustain reflective practices from the individual level to school-wide reflective practices.

The purpose of this study was to examine, through a multiple case study approach, how two elementary principals in the North Carolina Piedmont intentionally implemented and sustained reflective practices in their schools. The research questions investigated were: "How do elementary principals strategically promote and sustain effective reflective practices in their schools?"; "What are the reflective practices and structures used in these schools?"; and "What is the relationship between individual reflection and collective reflection in the school?" Participants included an administrator and five teachers at each school site. Data were collected through two structured interviews with each participant.

Findings indicate that the following practices were effective at leading school-wide reflective practice: administrator modeling of reflective questioning; providing individual differentiated opportunities for building teacher reflection capacity; administrator support of Professional Learning Community reflection on standards; encouraging reflection on the relationship between data and instruction; administrator support of school-wide reflection with standards, data, and instruction; and the role of

trust and relationships in reflective opportunities. Key findings from the case studies

found that principals in both cases utilized reflective questioning, examination of

instructional practices as well as analyzed student data with individual teachers, PLCs,

vertical teams and at the school level. This reflective mindset requires a paradigm shift

from acceptance of established practices to questioning and digging deeper with

reflection on data and content

HOW TWO SUCCESSFUL NORTH CAROLINA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

PRINCIPALS EFFECTIVELY IMPLEMENT REFLECTIVE SCHOOL

PRACTICES AND STRUCTURES

by

Leslie Eldreth

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Rick Reitzug_____
Committee Chair

This work is dedicated to my family for their patience, love and understanding as I have completed this journey.

This dissertation, written by Leslie Eldreth, has been approved by the following committee of the Faculty of The Graduate School at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

Committee Chair   Rick Reitzug _____

Committee Members   Craig Peck _____

Carl Lashley _____

Ann Davis _____

_____
Date of Acceptance by Committee

_____
Date of Final Oral Examination

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

Principals across North Carolina use the North Carolina teacher evaluation system as a tool to build teacher reflection and capacity. As part of the process, teachers complete self-assessments of instructional practices and develop individual growth plans with the support of their principals. These plans are intended to support their professional learning and growth. In addition, principals engage in pre- and post-observation conversations with teachers aimed at promoting reflection on their teaching practices. The goal of these reflective practices is to improve the instruction of individual teachers. Individual reflective practice is a powerful tool in changing the practices of individual teachers. However, York-Barr, Sommers, Ghere, and Montie (2006) propose that the "greatest potential for reflective practice to improve schools lies within the collective inquiry, thinking, learning, understanding and acting that result from school-wide engagement" (p. 23). It is important that all members of the learning organization are involved with learning that is reflective of the goals and mission of the school context.

North Carolina Context

It is important for principals to consider the larger educational context when planning to implement school-wide reflective practices. On October 2, 2008, the NC State Board of Education approved a new policy for teacher evaluation. They adopted the Rubric for Evaluating North Carolina Teachers and the Teacher Evaluation Process as

part of the requirements of acceptance of a federal Race to the Top Grant. In 2010, North

Carolina began using the new teacher evaluation system. The purpose of the new system

was to assess a teacher's performance in relation to the North Carolina Professional

Teaching Standards and to assist teachers in continued professional growth. The intention

was for both the principal and their teachers to participate in the evaluation process.

Currently as part of the North Carolina teacher evaluation system school

principals must evaluate how well teachers reflect on their practice. The teacher

evaluation instrument defines teacher reflection in three areas: how teachers analyze

student learning, how they link professional growth to their professional goals, and how

they function in a dynamic environment. The instrument can be accessed at

http://www.dpi.state.nc.us/docs/effectiveness-model/ncees/instruments/teach-eval-

manual.pdf, and it further breaks the section on how teachers analyze student learning

down into three additional areas including:

> Teachers think systematically and critically about student learning in their
> classrooms and schools, why it happens and what can be done to improve
> achievement. Teachers collect and analyze student performance data to improve
> school and classroom effectiveness. They adapt their practice based on research
> and data to best meet the needs of students. Teachers link professional growth to
> their professional goals. Teachers participate in continued, high quality
> professional development that reflects a global view of educational practices;
> includes 21st Century skills & knowledge; aligns with the State Board of
> Education priorities; and meets the needs of students and their own professional
> growth. (McRel, 2015, p. 12)

Relatedly, the North Carolina educator evaluation system evaluates principals on

eight standards, including two that are of particular interest for this study—instructional

leadership and human resources leadership. These standards complement the teacher

evaluation standards and form the foundation for attention to teacher reflection. The

standards related to promoting reflection are Standards II and IV of the North Carolina

Evaluation Instrument for Principals. Standard II is focused on instructional leadership

and emphasizes the principal's ability to encourage and challenge staff to reflect deeply

on and define what knowledge, skills and concepts are essential to the complete

educational development of students. Standard IV is focused on human resources

leadership. This is categorized as the ability of principals to evaluate staff with a focus on

improvement of instructional practices. This is further quantified by ranking the ability of

principals to create processes to provide formal feedback to teachers concerning the

effectiveness of their classroom instruction. This includes communicating ways to

improve their instructional practices, as well as how principals analyze the results of staff

evaluations holistically to direct professional development opportunities in the school

(McRel, 2015).

Darling-Hammond (2013) states,

improving the skills of individual teachers will not be enough: We need to create and sustain productive, collegial working conditions that allow teachers to work collectively in an environment that supports learning for them and their students. In short, what we really need in the United States is a conception of teacher evaluation as part of a teaching and learning system that supports continuous improvement, both for individual teachers and for the profession as a whole. Such a system should enhance teacher learning and skill, while at the same time ensuring that teachers who are retained and tenured can effectively support student learning throughout their careers. (pp. 248–249)

Darling-Hammond argues that teacher evaluation systems should be reflective of teaching and learning and should both provide "strength and support." She acknowledges that good evaluation systems should have the following elements, "Common statewide standards for teaching and learning, performance based assessments guiding state functions and licensing, local evaluation systems aligned to state standards, aligned professional learning opportunities and support structures" (p. 128).

Principal Instructional Leadership Role

Throughout history, the role of the instructional leader has shifted to mean many things. Hallinger (2000) proposed a three-dimensional view of instructional leadership, suggesting it involves defining the mission of the school, directing instruction, and establishing a learning environment. While the principal focuses on building the capacity of staff, it is not productive for the principal to be the sole individual responsible for directing and constructing all the knowledge of the organization. School communities build capacity when all members are involved in constructing knowledge and building the professional learning of the organization.

Currently principals use techniques such as instructional coaching, observations, professional learning community meetings, data analysis meetings, and walkthroughs to strengthen teacher reflection and develop the instructional capacity of the school. As school leaders conduct walkthroughs and observations in classrooms, they are able to see effective educational practices, including the differentiation of learning. As they collect data over time, they can look for trends and patterns in the instructional practices of teachers. They can then share this data with teachers and create time to reflect on the

practices. Using this data can allow instructional leaders to uncover hidden inequities in classroom practices, which is essential to providing all students with a top quality education. Teachers can more accurately reflect on whether they are providing equitable access to all learners and take action to enhance instruction when they have data.

It is essential that instructional leaders prioritize time for professional learning communities to work together to examine student assessment data. As part of this examination, teachers step back and look at their practices and then make needed adjustments to instruction. Instructional leaders work to identify various aspects of student performance, track data, and help their teachers to understand the data. Once teachers are able to understand this data, principals can bring professional learning communities together to adjust their practices to ensure students are learning to their maximum capacity. Research has shown a positive relationship between collaboration and teacher reflection (Glazer, Abbott, & Harris, 2004). DuFour and Mattos (2013) state, "The most powerful strategy for improving both teaching and learning is to create a collaborative culture and collective responsibility of a PLC" (p. 37). This means instructional leaders need to create structures that ensure there are opportunities for teachers to work collaboratively with others. It is through this collaborative work that teachers will learn the process of reflection.

Principals beginning the process of implementing school-wide reflective practices must make many decisions regarding the design of school-wide structures to encourage reflective practice. Principals should consider the purpose of the reflective practice, who

it will engage, the resources necessary to support the practice, the educational context in which it will occur and clarify criteria for successful implementation.

Blase and Blase (2004) provide evidence of principal behaviors that foster teacher reflection and benefit teachers. The principal behaviors recognized in their study have important implications for evidences I will investigate as I study elementary principals who are effectively implementing reflective practices at the school level. Behaviors such as "modeling, classroom observation, dialogue, suggestion and praise" (p. 95) help teachers become more reflective. Blase and Blase (2004) additionally note that principal behaviors such as "providing professional reading materials, encouraging teachers to attend staff development opportunities and encouraging collaboration" (p. 98) enhance reflective behaviors. While many elementary principals engage in the behaviors Blase and Blase (2004) refer to in their study, I could not find any research that chronicles how elementary principals intentionally and effectively plan for coordinated school-wide reflective structures in the era of Common Core implementation.

While there are components of the principal evaluation system that mirror some of the reflective structures that teachers need to enhance their professional practice, principals still need to plan to ensure reflective structures lead to actual reflective practices. Currently, administrators are required to assess teachers on how well they reflect on their practice. As both a researcher and an elementary school leader, I have always questioned what structures are in place to support teachers in their endeavors to become more reflective. It may seem simple to rate teachers, but in reality, it is sometimes unclear how school leaders are helping their staff to become more reflective.

To be most effective, principals must create a culture of reflection in schools in order for continuous improvement of educational practices to be the norm.

Reflective Practice

Many researchers have studied teacher reflection as a way to help teachers improve their instructional practices (Boud, 2001; Dewey, 1933; Loughran, 2002; Moon, 1999; Schön, l983; Valli, 1997). Reflection can occur as teachers are thinking about the past, the current reality, and as they anticipate what is to occur in the future. Valli (1997) asserts that a reflective person is "Someone who thinks back on what is seen and heard, who contemplates, who is a deliberative thinker" (p. 67). Valli (1997) explains reflection at the individual level but stresses the importance of developing reflective practices among the school culture. There is not a specific roadmap nor has there been research that is specific for elementary principals across North Carolina to refer to as they chart the course for implementation of reflective practices within and across diverse school cultures.

Reflection on teaching practice is critical to professional growth (Schön, 1983). According to York-Barr et al. (2006), creating intentional opportunities for educators to "pause" their practice in order to assess if their strategies are effective is critical. "There is a need to find, create, and intentionally choose opportunities to pause in today's teaching environments" (p. 9). Intentionally creating opportunities to reflect leads to the other elements included in York-Barr et al.'s (2006) Theory of Action for Reflective Practice, including openness to viewing situations from many angles, inquiry about

practices, active and deliberate thinking, learning from the reflection, and application to action that results in enhanced student learning.

The literature on reflection contains many definitions of reflection (Dewey, 1933; Moon, 1999; Schön, 1983; Valli, 1997; York-Barr et al., 2006). Knight describes reflective learning cycles, details how reflection is a mechanism for organizational learning, outlines conditions that foster reflection, and offers strategies for reflection. Among other things, the literature on educational leadership explores cultivating reflective practice as one of the functions of instructional leadership (Blase & Blase, 2004; Hallinger, 2003; Harvey & Holland, 2012; Marzano, Frontier, & Livingston, 2011; Marzano, McNulty, & Waters, 2005). Practicing principals must navigate the murky water of research on leadership and reflection when trying to implement reflective practices in their schools. The literature on reflective practice stresses the importance of reflection as a tool to build the capacity of schools in a theoretical sense and the literature on specific reflective structures explains how to implement them individually. Lassiter (2012) quotes Dennis Sparks (2004, p. 111),

> Teacher isolation is so deeply ingrained in the traditional fabric of schools that leaders cannot simply invite teachers to create a collaborative culture. They must identify and implement specific, strategic interventions that help teachers work together rather than alone. (p. 33)

Lassiter (2012) speaks to the challenge this poses to school principals who "typically observe instruction one classroom at a time, share feedback one teacher at a time and focus on the improvement of instruction one-on-one with each teacher" (pp. 33–34). It is the application of this research from the individual level to the school level that needs

further study. Application of reflective practice varies within each school building because it is dependent on the mission/vision of the school, culture, resources available, and general educational context. Studying elementary principals who effectively engage their schools in school-wide reflective practices would help bridge the gap between the theory versus the practical application of reflective structures in elementary schools.

Effectively implementing reflection at the school level requires structuring opportunities for the complete cycle of reflection to occur, providing opportunities for collaborative communication, and attending to relationships. York-Barr et al. (2006) state,

> Embedding reflective practice in education is about creating significant cultural change in schools. It is messy. It is complicated. There are no certain paths. The outcomes of reflective practice, can significantly and positively affect both educators and the students they serve. (p. 262)

Creating and sustaining reflective practices at a school-wide level requires deliberate and intentional planning for each phase of the reflective learning cycle including "pause, openness, inquiry, thinking, learning, and action" (p. 265). Whitaker (2013) argues that "Cultural change involves how we do things in an organization, a more challenging and complex undertaking by far. When we change the culture, we change the very soul and spirit of the group" (p. 404).

Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to examine, through a multiple case study approach, how two elementary principals in the North Carolina Piedmont effectively and intentionally implemented and sustained reflective structures and practices in their

schools. I want to understand how elementary school principals go about intentionally creating individual opportunities for reflective practice to occur. I also want to understand how these elementary school principals effectively move from encouraging individual teachers to engage in reflective practices to leading reflective practice on a large scale at the school-wide level. I will investigate the relationship between principal behaviors that encourage individual reflection versus those that encourage collective reflection. The research questions I will be investigating in this study are:

1. How do elementary principals strategically promote and sustain effective reflective practices in their schools?

2. What are the reflective practices and structures used in these schools?

3. What is the relationship between individual reflection and collective reflection in the school?

   This study will progress with a presentation of the literature that was reviewed in preparation for the research. The literature review will be followed by the methodology for how the case studies were conducted and data collected. The narrative data from each interview participant will be presented with a table of the reflective practices that they were engaged in during the study period. Following the presentation of both case studies, a cross case analysis will present the findings of both cases as they relate to the research questions investigated in this study. The study will conclude with the findings from the case studies, as well as implications and recommendations for sustaining reflective practices in elementary schools.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The focus of this literature study is the relationship between reflective practice and instructional leadership. In this literature review, I discuss the reflective learning process, as well as reflective practice at both the individual and school-wide levels. In the first section of this literature review, I discuss the components of the reflective process. Then I focus on each section of the reflective process including the initial teaching experience, the teacher analysis of the teaching actions, and the application of their new learning to teaching behaviors. I explore each subsection of the reflective learning process before moving to the implications this process has for planning for reflective practice.

In the second section of the literature review, I discuss contextual elements of reflective practice: the importance of effective communication and dialogue, building trust, and establishing good working relationships. Next, I examine the relationship between instructional leadership and leading school-wide reflective practice. Finally, I discuss the literature on leading school-wide reflective practice studies from a professional learning community perspective.

Reflective Learning Process

Many researchers have studied the process of reflection (Dewey, 1933; Schön, 1983; Killion & Todnem, 1991; Zeichner & Liston, 1987; Osterman & Kotthamp, 1993; Moon, 1999; Loughan, 2002; Jay & Johnson, 2002; York-Barr et al., 2006). Despite the differences, I have identified similarities in the literature with regard to how reflective learning occurs. There is agreement among many researchers that reflection begins with an experience. However, those that have created new evaluation measures aimed at growing educators' professional practice urge the reflective process begins even earlier as teachers are self-assessing their skills and doing reflective thinking as they plan their lessons. This begins the process to develop awareness and finally the application of new learning to future teaching.

Engaging in Practice

The first step of the reflective process focuses on the experience. For example, in a teaching experience, teachers are in the midst of the action of teaching. It is during the teaching experience that we see teachers as learners, engage in what Schön (1983) classifies as reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action. In this instance of reflection-in-action, teachers may be in the middle of teaching a lesson and see that a certain part of their lesson is not going well. It is during this time that teachers are monitoring for understanding that they may begin the internal thought process of how the lesson is going and how they need to make adjustments. Reflection-on-action involves reflection after the experience. In fact, Dewey (1933) explained this as learning that occurs over time because of the interaction of the experiences. As teachers experience both success and

failure in the classroom, they learn from these experiences. Many times teachers must reflect and adjust their teaching practices in the moment to attempt to meet the needs of their students. Teachers participate in reflection-in-action when they act as action researchers in their classrooms. Reflection-in-action is concerned with the reflective thinking that teachers engage in during teaching while reflection- on-action occurs as teachers are reflecting after the experience. Reflection-on-action may occur after the lesson individually or as teachers are discussing the lesson with an observer or colleague. Robinson (1997) expressed the importance of the experience as a tool to gain meaning about ourselves. Teachers must critically examine teaching practices to ensure they are benefiting students. As teachers and staff look closely at their practices, it becomes a tool to create awareness.

Analyzing Teaching Actions

The next step of the reflective process is analyzing the teaching actions that have taken place in the classroom. Throughout the literature, analysis of actions is noted as a significant part of the reflective process (Dewey, 1933; Jay & Johnson, 2002; Killion & Todnem, 1991; Loughran, 2002; Moon, 1999; Schön, 1983; York-Barr et al., 2006). This is often characterized as reflection-on-action by Schön (1983) or as reflection-for-action by Killion and Todnem (1991). Dewey (1933) expressed the importance of this part of the reflection process as being instructive for teachers as they are planning future instructional practices. As teachers reflect upon their teaching strategies and the responses of their students to that instruction, it begins the analysis of what they need to do differently in the future.

Killion and Todnem (1991) also consider analysis of teaching actions to be critical in the reflective process. In fact, Killion and Todnem (1991) argue for practicing "the art of analyzing actions, decisions, or products by focusing on our process of achieving them" (p. 15). Moon (1999) characterizes this part of the reflective process as experiential learning because it offers those involved in the reflective process the ability to conceptualize the action in an abstract manner before experimenting with an action for improvement.

Many school leaders engage in both cognitive and instructional coaching as a way to promote reflective thinking. This analysis portion allows the teacher and coach opportunities to discuss discrepancies between the goal and actual teaching behaviors. This reflective conferencing is a form of reflection-on-action. As teacher and coach analyze teaching actions, they are developing skills for to teacher to self-monitor, self-analyze and self-evaluate their teaching practices (Gordon, 2004). The literature as a whole suggests that this portion of the learning cycle focused on analysis and interpretation (York-Barr et al., 2006) leads to new insights and increased clarity (Jay & Johnson, 2002).

Moche (2001) investigated coaching teachers' thinking. She considered much of the reflective thinking and cognitive coaching literature that articulates why it is important to coach teachers to think. She further explains the elements that are associated with cognitive coaching process. In this study, Moche (2001) studied cognitive coaching as a means to promote growth in reflective thinking. The research design was experimental in nature as it included three groups of which one group received cognitive

coaching; another received ongoing supervision but no coaching and the last group received staff development/supervision with informal discussions of teaching but without cognitive coaching. The participants were 32 teacher volunteers. The researchers in this study ranked the participants according to years of experience and randomly assigned them to one of the three groups.

Data were collected using a pre- and post-test, reflective thinking as measured by the Pedagogical Language Acquisition and Conceptual Development of Teacher Reflective Thought observation, and field notes. Descriptive statistics showed that there was statistically significant growth but that none of the groups alone was significant. In fact, the findings indicate all three groups grew on the Reflective Pedagogical Thinking Instrument. However, there was more growth from the pre and posttest scores of participants in the cognitive coaching group.

Applying Reflection

The final step in the reflective process is to apply new learning and insights gained through analysis to practice. Dewey (1933) and Smyth (1989) recognize the application of new learning to new teaching actions as being an essential portion of reflective practice. Moon (1999) explains this as being a critical component of the learning cycle. Application of new learning to teaching practices requires the teacher to actively seek out and apply their new awareness and understandings to their teaching practices. Rodgers (2002) translates this final step as defining the next steps as an action for experimentation. In fact, Rayford (2010) examined reflective practice from the areas of adult learning theory and reflective practice theory. She explored this perspective

using three models of reflective practice. This researcher's purpose was to describe the perceptions of elementary administrators and teachers from three states in the western region of the United States regarding reflective practice. She examined the perceived practices of both administrators and teachers concerning reflective practice. This study used a regional cross section survey design with targeted sampling. Researchers selected two participant groups from a pool of candidates listed in the state Department of Education database in Oregon and Utah. The third group of participants was members of an administrative organization within the state of Nevada. It utilized purposive sampling based on targeted subgroups that were knowledgeable of reflective practices and were practicing them. Once the principals were selected, each principal them selected three teacher leaders to complete the teacher survey. School administrators emailed teachers a link to the survey.

Data collection came from a variety of sources. Participants completed a modified version of Young's (1989) Reflective Attitude Survey. The survey contained open-ended questions. This tool assessed the teacher's attitudes toward reflection and reflective practices. This was collected from the teachers' perspectives and administrators completed a modified version. The first section of the survey asked for basic biographical information, while the reflection section included 35 Likert-type items including, how useful the reflective activities were, how frequently they were engaged in reflection, how much they liked the reflective activities and how they felt about reflection. The third section asked five open-ended questions concerning the beliefs of reflection, examples of reflective practices, and the belief of the association between reflection and growth. At

the conclusion of the survey, the respondents could agree to do a 30-minute interview. Of those who volunteered to be interviewed, three teachers and three principals participated in semi-structured interviews about reflective practices. The survey data was analyzed using descriptive statistics. Additionally, the researchers aggregated the biographical data. Percentages and standard measures of tendency describe the results from the administrator and teacher responses. The researcher used an independent *t*-test to compare the principal and teacher responses. Data analysis included use of content analysis of both the open-ended questions and interview responses. The data were color-coded based on pre-determined and emerging themes.

The findings indicate that the teachers believed reflection was important. The teachers enjoyed reflecting about their own teaching practices, often reflected in the middle of teaching and made adjustments as necessary. The teachers indicated that reflection did help them improve their teaching practices. In addition, the teachers noted that they needed time to reflect and preferred reflective strategies that allowed them to engage in dialogue and collaboration with colleagues. The findings also indicate that administrators believed reflection was both interesting and important. They believed reflection was helpful in improving teacher practices and promoting professional learning. The principals in this study promoted reflection using professional learning communities. Although there were differences in the perceptions of teachers and principals among the areas, both groups believed that a supportive environment and shared vision were important to utilizing reflective practices. While this study found that elementary principals promoted reflection through the utilization of professional learning

communities, further research is needed to fill the gap in understanding the evolution of how elementary principals intentionally plan for and sustain school-wide reflective practice.

Gomez (2005) studied the effects of cognitive coaching on teacher's reflective attitudes and practices. One group of teachers received cognitive coaching intervention in the reflection process while the other group of teachers did not receive the cognitive coaching. The reflective attitude survey included 33 Likert items based on usefulness, frequency, likeableness of reflection and overall feelings concerning reflection. After the implementation of the sessions, the Cognitive Coaching group noted increases in attitude and behavior toward reflection while the control group experienced noted minor changes in attitude and behavior toward reflection.

As school leaders plan for reflective practice they must ensure that, there are opportunities for teachers to analyze their teaching experiences. Teachers must then act on their teaching experiences to make improvements based on the analysis of teaching actions. While the review of the reflective learning process literature points to the fact that reflection is an individual learning process for each teacher there are implications that planning for opportunities of experience, analysis on the experience and actions for improvement are parts that should be considered when orchestrating school-wide reflective practice.

Elements of Reflective Practice: Communication and Dialogue

The first element of reflective practice is the consideration of communication. Effective communication and dialogue with others helps to facilitate reflective practice.

Zeichner and Liston (1987) recognize individual reflective practices but are aware that reflection is more effective through communication and dialogue with others. Dialogue allows teachers the opportunity to verbalize their thinking. This is important as teachers develop self-awareness, deconstruct their beliefs and understand how they influence future teaching practices. Jay and Johnson (2002) state reflection is "taking one's thoughts into dialogue with oneself and with others" (p. 76). The process of using shared dialogue allows teachers to verbalize their reflective thoughts with others (Valli, 1997). Fullan (2011) speaks to the importance of collaboration as a technique for engaging people in problem solving. Collaboration with colleagues creates connections that enable them to problem solve in ways that meet both social and cognitive needs. This is the start of transformative thought for individual teachers and has the potential to radiate to the school culture if implemented across the school.

Communication and Dialogue in Classroom Walkthroughs

Classroom walkthroughs and observations are one tool that school leaders can use to create structured opportunities for professional dialogue between the principal and the teacher. Dialogue is a critical component of classroom walkthroughs and is associated with a reflective focus on instructional practices (Downey, English, Frase, Polston, & Steffy, 2004). Fink and Resnick (2001) refer to classroom walkthrough observations as structured visits to classrooms to view instructional practices and to assess student learning. The critical components of classroom walkthrough observations are that they are short, focused, and provide opportunities for dialogue. Downey et al.'s (2004) five-step walkthrough model included the following parts that administrators should look for

when conducting classroom walkthroughs: (a) students' orientation to the work, (b) curricular decision points, (c) instructional decisions and practices, (d) evidences of learning on the walls, and (e) health and safety issues.

The follow up conversations vary based on the instructional leader's approach as well as the developmental level of the teacher (Glickman, 2002). These conversations that occur after the walkthrough can move staff to collegial collaboration. These conversations may vary from direct, indirect, to collegial. Indirect conversation provokes reflective thought on the part of the teacher (Cheliotes & Reilly, 2010).

Skretta (2008) examined principals' perceptions of the use of classroom walkthroughs in Nebraska high schools. There were several research questions that were examined in the study including the demographic characteristics of principals using walkthroughs, the identified purposes of walkthroughs, the most commonly used formats for walkthroughs how common is was for principals to conduct walkthroughs in high school settings, how frequently walkthroughs occurred for principals who walkthroughs as a means of observation and feedback and what principals perceived as the outcomes of walkthroughs. The survey measured the demographic elements of principals to determine if in fact there was a relationship between their practices of conducting walkthroughs and years of experience as a principal, if they were the first principal in that school building to implement walkthroughs or if they had received training on conducting walkthroughs. Findings from this study suggest that high school principals that utilized written feedback attached more importance to walkthroughs than those that only provided verbal feedback.

Keruskin (2005) also examined high school principal and teacher perceptions of using a walkthrough model. The first part of his study investigated high school principals' perceptions of the impact of walkthroughs on student achievement. The last part of this study considered the teacher perspectives on how walkthroughs were both impacting instruction and student achievement. This researcher interviewed five high school principals and five teachers from each school. The interviews gave the researcher an overall understanding on the impact that walkthroughs had on student achievement. Schools that were currently using the Western Pennsylvania Principals Academy Walkthrough Tool were included in the study. After the interviews, Keruskin then gave 17 teachers a survey on the walkthrough process to give teachers another opportunity to express their view on the walkthrough process in case they had not felt comfortable with sharing it completely during the interview process. In addition, they recommended future study on the leadership style used during the walkthrough process.

Communication and Dialogue in Cognitive Coaching

Cognitive coaching is a coaching strategy in which principals can engage with teachers in supportive, collegial dialogue with teachers about teaching and learning. This is a strategy to promote teacher growth as it leads teachers through collaborative and reflective discussions. Costa and Garmston (2002) explain cognitive coaching work has origins in brain research and constructivist theory. It encourages reflection with regard to planning, reflecting and problem solving. During this time, teachers may discuss student behaviors, student performance, or analyze and reflect on the effect of their teaching practices. The goals of this model are to establish trust, facilitate reflective learning and

to enhance growth in being able to evaluate the effectiveness of their practices. There are three phases in the cognitive coaching model. The first phase is the planning phase, followed by the teaching phase, then the reflecting phase. The dialogue that occurs during cognitive coaching is similar to the conversations that occur after walkthroughs but differ in the approach of the conversation.

Cognitive coaching approaches dialogue from a non-judgmental reflective practice as it works at building metacognition skills of self-reflection and self-regulation. Because of this, teachers lead these conversations focusing on the areas of planning, reflection, and problem solving. In this model, there is communication throughout all phases. The process begins prior to teaching with the help of a colleague. The colleague acts as a coach who may engage with the teacher in a discussion of their planning intentions for the lesson. Teachers and coaches discuss the goals for the lesson that the coach will observe. This conversation may focus on improving the teacher's own practices or on improving student behaviors in the classroom. During this phase, the teacher and coach discuss the details of the upcoming lesson and decide on a data collection method. After the actual teaching phase, the teacher and coach meet to analyze the lesson. During this time, the coach may ask probing questions but they do not act as an expert. The teacher and coach discuss discrepancies between the established goal and the actual teaching behavior. These conversations assist teachers in developing the skills to self-monitor, self-analyze and self-evaluate their teaching practices (Gordon, 2004). Additional research is necessary to study how the impact of cognitive coaching of individual teachers contributes to leading reflective practice at the school level

Slinger (2004) utilized a mixed methods approach to describe the effects of Cognitive Coaching sessions on student achievement, teacher perception of reading instruction and the Cognitive Coaching process. This study examined student achievement in first grade students whose teachers had received nine sessions of Cognitive Coaching compared to teachers who did not get Cognitive Coaching. In addition, this study sought to examine the growth in student achievement of teachers who did not participate in Year 1 of Cognitive Coaching but did participate in Year 2 of Cognitive Coaching. Most interesting was that it explored the impact of Cognitive Coaching on teacher perception of student achievement and reading instruction as well as their perceptions about the Cognitive Coaching process.

Communication and Dialogue in Instructional Coaching

Different from cognitive coaching, Knight (2007) formulated another model of coaching called instructional coaching. Instructional coaching is a model of coaching support used to improve content and instructional practices. Instructional coaching, like other coaching models I have reviewed, places importance on communication and the facilitation of dialogue. In fact, Knight states, "Instructional coaches engage teachers in conversation about content, as they think and learn with them" (p. 25). Knight urges that instructional coaching uses a partnership approach and there must be intentional considerations to create conditions that strengthen communication between coach and teacher. Knight (2009) explains the importance of considering and attending to all of the parts of the communication process. Knight identifies the communication process as involving "a speaker with a message, who tries to penetrate interference to communicate

with an audience, who receives a perceived message and whose reactions to the message

function as feedback to the speaker" (p. 79). Effective communicators should be

attentive, self-aware, honest, authentic, show empathy and respect.

Steve Covey (1989) identifies empathetic listening as:

Empathetic listening gets inside another person's frame of reference. You look
out through it, you see the world the way they see the world. The essence of
empathetic listening is not that you agree with someone it's that you fully, and
deeply, understand the person emotionally as well as intellectually. (p. 240)

Knight recommends using listening strategies to develop into better listeners.

Moving toward Coaching Conversations

Both cognitive and instructional coaching promote reflective practice because of

engaging in dialogue with coaches and colleagues. These coaching conversations create

the opportunity for reflection to occur. Establishing opportunities and an environment in

which teachers feel safe sharing their reflections on their practice are crucial for creating

new thinking patterns. These conversations provide the support that teachers need as they

adopt new thinking and approaches. Perkins (2003) discusses the importance of feedback

and identifies three types of feedback. The three types of feedback are negative feedback,

conciliatory feedback and communicative feedback. Negative feedback is associated with

critical and painful feedback. Conciliatory feedback tends to be positive to avoid conflict

but is vague and not helpful. Finally, communicative feedback clarifies a teaching idea or

behavior, communicates the positive features or concerns and requires thought. Perkins

(2003) states that constructive feedback is critical for individual teachers. Additionally, it

increases organizational effectiveness and learning (p. 67). Communicative feedback occurs in a three-step process by first asking clarifying questions, then expressing a value statement and ending with a reflection question. Cheliotes and Reilly (2010) explain the deep learning that occurs because of these critical conversations "this leads to real change, not just at the surface level, but also at the neurological level" (p. 4).

These reflective conversations can vary from supervising conversations, to mentoring conversation and finally to coaching conversations. Supervising conversations usually mean the principal is coaching from the supervisory zone of the leadership practice continuum. This means the principal may be engaging in giving direct advice to a teacher on how to fix and issue instead of allowing the teacher to grapple and reflect upon the issue. Mentoring conversations may fall in the mentoring zone of the leadership practices continuum. These conversations may entail the principal teaching or offering options to fix the issue. Finally, coaching conversations are more collegial as both members of the conversation are co-creating the relationship. Cheliotes and Reilly (2010) state that principals engaged in coaching conversations are encouraging deep reflection on by focusing on new skills and behaviors. This ultimately creates "new neutral pathways in the brain, which then makes changed behavior possible and long lasting" (p. 4).

Cheliotes and Reilly (2010) argue that it is important for principals to develop their skills for coaching conversations instead of giving advice. Coaching conversations help encourage other members of the school culture to reflect on their own issues and develop responsibility. Instructional leaders who are effective at operating in the

coaching zone of leadership are more successful at promoting reflection. These leaders are intentional about the purposes of their coaching conversations. They focus on asking powerful questions focused on solution thinking. This takes some practice on the part of the instructional leader to move from being direct to asking questions that are more reflective. Coaching conversations have a place both in helping to provoke reflective practice individually and across the school culture.

Smyth (1989) proposed that there are four stages linked to questions, which lead teachers to critical reflection. The first stage is describing. In this first stage, teachers would ask, "What do I do?" The second question is informing. It answers the question: What does this mean? The third question deals with confronting the facts such as "How did I come to be like this?" The last question requires constructing and answers the question "How might I do things differently?"

Knight, Knight, and Carlson (2015) address the need to ask better questions as a means to coaching teachers. He states, "By learning to ask smarter, better questions, we learn far more about the other person and the conversations we are able to have become better in nearly every way" (p. 1442). Knight gives strategies to ask better questions including, "Be curious, avoid unhelpful questions, ask open, opinion questions, be mindful of closed/wrong questions, be nonjudgemental." Knight notes that being curious shows interest and concern (p. 1443). He urges readers to avoid questions whose purpose is to "demand, stump, set up or make the other person angry" (p. 1449). Effective questions usually provoke thought, dialogue, or foster better conversations in other ways. Effective questions are often open and opinion questions. Ineffective questions, he shares,

"have obvious answers, often do not provoke thought, and usually do not foster better conversations" (pp. 1477–1478).

Glickman (2002) argues that principals should view the ways in which teachers grow in the areas of "cognition, experience, commitment, identity, as well as particular circumstances" and then determine the "best way" to work with each teacher" (p. 82). Glickman (2002) describes the four approaches an instructional leader may take to foster inquiry and growth including: the directive control approach, the directive-informational approach, the collaborative approach, and finally the nondirective approach. Glickman (2002) describes examples of teacher development that would benefit from each approach but cautions that a directive-control approach "should only be used in an emergency situation in which a teacher is overwhelmed, paralyzed, totally inexperienced, or incompetent in the current classroom situation" (p. 83). Glickman (2002) urges that "A collaborative approach is most often the desired choice in schools to promote learning as cooperative and collegial" (p. 83).

Moving toward less directive and more reflective conversations takes intentional practice. This is difficult for many school leaders in the current era of accountability where the focus is on improving student achievement levels. School leaders grapple with creating ownership through reflective questioning with teachers and being directive to improve student achievement. Downey et al. (2004) state that the toughest reflective questioning challenge for principals is their history with being direct. Many principals who are used to using the more directive approach find it takes some effort to use reflective questioning to promote this professional inquiry into teaching practices. This

requires a shift to committed listening, powerful speaking and reflective feedback (Cheliotes & Reilly, 2010). Cheliotes and Reilly (2010) contend that committed listening is comprised of several behaviors including honoring silence, attending to verbal/non-verbal communication, listening without acting, using productive listening skills. Dennis Sparks (2007) states, "committed listening transforms relationships and deepens learning. Committed listening requires practice and discipline on the part of the participant" (p. 71). This statement echoes the importance that communication plays in the reflective process and the intentional planning that is required to move it to a sustained practice.

Elements of Reflective Practice: Trust

Trust is another essential feature of effective reflective practice implementation. York-Barr et al. (2006) explain that trust emerges through effective listening relationships. For educators to participate in meaningful reflection about their practice, they must first feel they are in a safe environment to share their thoughts. This is especially important as teachers examine and problem solve issues they face in their practice (Carver, 2004). Trust is a necessity if teachers are to engage in meaningful dialogue. Teachers need assurance that they can express both their successes and their failures. Osterman and Kotthamp (1993) state,

> Trust is perhaps the essential condition needed to foster reflective practice in any environment. If the reflective process is going to flourish in an organizational setting, the participants must be confident that the information they disclose will not be used against them. (p. 45)

Relational trust develops as we interact with others who have engaged in similar experiences. In schools, trust develops through social interactions and experiences with members of the school.

Research on School Leaders Building Trust in Schools

School leaders who have created trust in their teachers and in their communities have a better probability of creating a productive learning organization (Tschannen-Moran, 2004). Hoy and Kupersmith (1985) examined faculty trust and the relationship to the principal, colleagues, and the overall school organization. The study had 944 teachers in New Jersey elementary schools take the Trust Scales questionnaire. The researchers in this study found there was a high level of support for the relationship between perception of principal authenticity and trust. Trust measurements occurred in three areas, faculty trust in the principal, faculty trust in colleagues, and faculty trust in the school district. The Leader Authenticity Scale (LAS) measured principal authenticity. Principal behaviors such as being willing to admit mistakes, and not engaging in the manipulation of others demonstrated measures of leader authenticity. Their conclusions found that the three dimensions and authentic behavior led to teacher trust in the principal. There was a relationship between principal authenticity and teacher trust in the organization. The correlation between principal authentic behaviors and teacher trust in each other was smaller but evident. Furthermore, they found that principals who admitted their mistakes, did not manipulate staff, and were authentic created a sense of trust among teachers. They found that openness fostered trust and credibility in the principal's leadership. This is an important finding for principals as it relates to promoting school-wide reflective

structures. Further research is required to study how and if principals that are effective at implementing reflective structures embody these authentic principal behaviors.

Hoffman, Sabo, Bliss, and Hoy (1994) found similar findings related to openness and trust as they examined the relationship between faculty trust and climate. In their study, they examined data from 2,777 teachers in New Jersey. The data measured the organizational climate of the schools. Examination of principal behaviors provided data across the three dimensions. The three dimensions were being supportive, being directive, and being restrictive. This study also examined three areas of teacher behavior. The three areas of teacher behavior were collegial behavior, committed behavior, and disengaged behavior. They found that being open with regard to interpersonal relationships promoted a sense of trust among teachers. Interpersonal trust fostered openness in relationships.

Implications for School Leaders on Fostering Trust

In conclusion, both studies found that principal behaviors influenced the feeling of trust in each study. Bennis (1990) explains that principals can generate and sustain trust through constancy, congruity, reliability and integrity. As principals work alongside staff members the members of the organization, are more likely to perceive the leaders as being empathetic and understanding. Brubaker and Coble (2005) emphasize the importance of creating an environment that is deeply rooted in trust. York-Barr et al. (2006) present personal capacities that foster the development of trust including: being present in the moment, being open to diverse ideas and perspectives, listening with empathetic understanding, seeking out understanding, viewing learning as mutual, honoring and respecting the person, and honoring the process of reflection. Fullan (2011)

speaks about change leaders helping to "develop growth-oriented mindsets in those they are mentoring" (p. 316). In essence, these leaders have to create a "risk taking norm" to create a culture that is trustful of learning through reflection on their experiences (p. 316). Fullan (2011) encourages leaders to model this by being open about mistakes and learning from them. This literature has critical implications for school leaders who are promoting reflective structures in their schools.

Elements of Reflective Practice: Relationships

The third element that is present across much of the literature on reflective structures is the importance of building relationships through the development of effective communication and organizational trust. As effective communication patterns develop, trust within schools develops and this trust fosters the development of relationships. This is important for reflective practice because the quality of the relationships determines how much reflection will actually occur. Effective communication patterns build strong relationships.

Elements of Reflective Practice: Relationships in Cognitive Coaching

Costa and Garmston (1994) note cognitive coaching focuses on three goals. Those goals are building trust, learning, and development toward self-regulation. The cognitive coaching model focuses on building trust between the coach and the teacher. In this model, the coach does not act as an expert but works together with the teacher to analyze the experience. Instructional coaching like that of cognitive coaching focuses on the development of relationships with the coach. Through conversation, the coach works to provide reflective feedback.

Batt (2010) investigated cognitive coaching for sheltered instruction. Data collection included both qualitative and quantitative data. Researchers collected pre- and post-SIOP knowledge test data, as well as interview data. Observation data measured the coach's ability to implement the SIOP standards. Then two to three days later teachers received detailed written feedback from the coach on the observation of the SIOP practices. Other data that collected throughout this study was both qualitative and quantitative data that was analyzed using Excel software. The qualitative data was made up of open-ended surveys, semi-structured interviews, conference notes, and meeting notes. The researchers sorted the data into subcategories and charted the frequency. The findings from this study do indicate that cognitive coaching offered benefits as the teachers learned to implement new strategies. These findings provide important implications for promoting individual reflective practice but also demonstrate promise in using cognitive coaching as a means to move reflective practice with colleagues to the cultural level in schools making it the norm of the learning organization.

Elements of Reflective Practice: Relationships in Instructional Coaching

Instructional coaching is deeply rooted in a partnership approach. The core belief of this model is that of respect for the equality of partners (Knight, 2007). This approach focuses on equality, meaning that the instructional coach and teacher are equal partners. One important principle considered in their approach is that of choice. The principle of choice means that teachers have a choice in how they make decisions and what they learn. Another principle that is considered is that of voice. The principle of voice signifies that teachers have the opportunity to voice their opinions. In this model, coaches set aside

their own opinions. Instructional coaching honors the reflective principle that reflective

thinkers have the right to choose or reject ideas (Knight, 2007). The interactions of the

coach and the teacher coupled with the empathetic listening allow the instructional

coaching relationship to develop.

Knight (2009) suggests building an emotional connection with the teacher as a

way to build a strong foundation for the coaching relationship. The process may begin

with taking on the role of resource provider to show willingness and ability to meet the

needs of teachers. The relationship needs time to develop to build trust. In the beginning,

coaches may have few interactions into the teaching practices, however, as relationships

develop this will shift to reflective conversation. Research on instructional coaching

demonstrates the positive benefits it can have for individual teachers as well as for

promoting the professional learning of teachers.

Cornett and Knight (2008) examined the impact of instructional coaching. The

purpose of this study was to

> further the understanding of coaching by evaluating whether or not instructional
> coaches have (a) any impact on whether or not teachers implement proven
> practices that they learn in a professional development workshop and (b) any
> impact on the quality of teacher implementation of new practices. (p. 2)

Teachers' assignment included assignment either to receive instructional coaching after

the workshop or to receive no coaching support. Thus, it found that teachers that did not

receive the instructional coaching actually used the teaching routine at a lower level than

those that had instructional coaching. Fifteen of 22 teachers who had the coaching

condition noted that they continued to use the new teaching practices even after coaching

stopped compared to only three of the 17 who did not receive the coaching support. The study provides evidence of the benefits of instructional coaching toward promoting reflective practice at the individual teacher level.

Leading School-wide Reflective Practice

Up to this point, the literature that I have reviewed for my study focused on reflective practice at the individual level. Now I will shift the examination of the literature to the school level. Literature on leading school-wide reflective practice intersects with research and literature on instructional leadership, leadership planning models, building school cultures and developing professional learning communities.

Leading school-wide reflective practice begins with the principal as instructional leader. The literature on instructional leadership abounds (Blase & Blase, 2004; Clark & Clark, 1996; Hallinger, 2000; 2005; Hallinger & Murphy, 1987a, 1987b; Reitzug, 1994; Sheppard, 1996; Smith & Andrews, 1989). The literature categorizes instructional leadership into the following domains: providing support to teachers, orchestrating professional learning, promoting a positive school culture, and utilizing leadership planning models for school improvement. Blase and Blase (2004) organize instructional leadership into the following three responsibilities: communicating with teachers, promoting professional growth, and fostering teacher reflection. No matter which instructional leadership model school leaders choose to emulate, these are important considerations for school leaders to consider. Hallinger (2000) argued that the first dimension of instructional leadership was the role of the instructional leader to identify a clear mission and clearly communicate that mission to school staff. According to

Hallinger (2000), leading the instructional program is the second dimension of instructional leadership. This includes the supervision/evaluation of instruction, alignment of instruction/curriculum, and attending to student data for progress. The final dimension in Hallinger's (2000) model considers is the creation of a positive learning environment.

Runhaar, Sanders, and Yang (2010) examined the stimulation of teacher reflection and feedback taking into consideration self-efficacy, goal orientation, and transformational leadership of the principal. Thus, the research question in this study was "How can reflection and feedback asking of teachers be explained by the interplay between occupational self-efficacy, learning goal orientation and transformational leadership?" (p. 1155). This study draws on the research of occupational self-efficacy and further hypothesized that: "The stronger the occupational self-efficacy of teachers the more they reflect and ask for feedback" (p. 1156). They further hypothesized, "The stronger the learning goal orientation of teachers the more they reflect and ask for feedback" (p. 1159). The researchers examine the relationship of self-efficacy and learning goal orientation in the following hypothesis: "Learning goal orientation mediates the relationship between occupational self-efficacy and reflection and asking feedback" (p. 1156). This study considers transformational leadership with respect to teacher reflection and asking feedback in the hypothesis: "The more teachers perceive their leader as transformational the more they reflect and ask for feedback" (p. 1156). Finally, the effect and relationship of learning goal orientation is considered with regard to transformational leadership, reflection and asking feedback in the hypothesis: "The

stronger the learning goal orientation, the weaker the relationship between transformational leadership and reflection and asking feedback" (p. 1157). The findings of this study have important implications for principals in the intentional design of opportunities for reflective practice.

Leadership Planning Models Identifying the Mission

Leading a school-wide effort toward reflective practice requires identifying a clear mission focused on all members of the learning organization engaging in daily reflective practice as a school staff. Many planning models differ in how principals should begin this process. Williamson and Blackburn (2010) advocate use of the base planning model and the compass model. Both are models for continuous improvement. The base planning model includes the following parts: begin to plan, act to implement, sustain success, evaluate and adjust. However, this model does not necessarily take into account how a principal is planning to incorporate strategic components in their planning. Williamson and Blackburn propose using the base planning model in conjunction with the compass model. Within this model, creating a positive culture, ownership and shared vision, managing data, professional development, advocacy, shared accountability, and structures are considered.

They address the importance of

> including all stakeholders, being clear on the intentions for the group including setting professional behavior norms in place, identifying a process for making decisions, provide a common base of information, anchor the plan in shared vision and commit to the use of data. (pp. 46–48)

This planning model is important to consider as principals embark on many types of

school improvement planning including that of promoting reflective practice at the school

level.

Other planning models advocate that the first step should be accessing the climate

and culture of the school to determine needs that should be addressed (Lindahl, 2006).

Bernhardt (2015) argues that "Schools are learning that if they don't analyze and change

inefficient or ineffective processes, they'll keep getting the same results" (p. 58).

Bernhardt (2015) proposes use of the continuous school improvement framework as a

means to improve both teaching and learning. This framework consists of considering the

current reality, how a school arrived at that place, determining where they want to be,

establishing steps for how to get to where they want to be and identifying if current

practices are making a difference. Accomplishment of positive change can occur through

the development of a shared vision and commitment. However, developing a shared

vision and commitment requires reflection on the current condition of the school culture

and climate. As stakeholders engage in looking deeply at the school culture and

formulating the vision, teachers as well as other staff increase their investment and

commitment to the process.

The Consortium for Responsible School Change in Literacy noted that having a

"model for school improvement is essential" and the School Change Framework

encourages having 75% buy-in across teachers (Taylor, 2005, p. 1). Part of these shared

expectations should focus on the positive student gains made when using data-driven

reforms. Through the utilization of data at the district, student, teacher and school levels change can occur.

Planning for School-wide Reflective Practice

Study of school improvement planning models has occurred as a way to promote continuous improvement and professional learning. However, many school improvement-planning models have focused on general continuous improvement issues. Principals planning for successful implementation of reflective practice at the school level must attend to the details of creating the conditions for reflective practice to occur. York-Barr et al. (2006) offer a specific framework for school-wide reflective practice planning and design. This planning framework considers the elements of educational context, people, purpose, resources, as well as structures and strategies when planning for school-wide reflective cultures. York-Barr et al. (2006) encourage principals to consider their own educational context when planning to implement reflective practice at the school level. They urge investigating the current educational conditions including the school and district culture, leadership practices and state goals. Principals are also encouraged to consider the purpose for reflective practice, design of reflective practices throughout the school, the people that will engage in reflective practice, the resources needed to support reflective practice at the school level and finally the intended result of the use of reflective practices.

According to York-Barr and colleagues (2006), it is important for principals to understand themselves and articulate the rationale for the support of reflective structures. Articulating this purpose engages members of the school culture in the process and gives

meaning to the reflective practices. York-Barr et al. (2006) acknowledge the importance that attending to people and relationships has in leading reflective practice at the school level. They recognize the element of people as the "greatest resource for learning is within and among the individuals who reflect, create, and work together" (p. 240). Thus, it is important for principals planning for school-wide implementation of reflective practice to consider who will be involved in the design and support of these reflective structures. York-Barr et al. (2006) encourage principals to attend to building the capacity of the members of the school by working to foster trust, build relationships, and empower members of the school culture as active participants. Attending to these factors can create those conditions for collective cultural understanding.

Principals must design opportunities for reflection to occur including strategically planning for implementation of the structures and strategies. Strategies differ from structures in that they are more concerned with the procedural aspect of "guiding interactions, reflection, and learning by participants" (p. 240). York-Barr et al. (2006) recognize that leaders must consider how professional learning is integrated within the daily work of the members of the school culture, as well as the knowledge level of staff on inquiry and reflection. School leaders who integrate reflective practice at the school-wide level provide ongoing opportunities for job-embedded professional learning. York-Barr et al. (2006) recommend that principals intentionally plan for how they will support the implementation of reflective practices at the school level. This includes the consideration of how of time is provided for engaging members of the school culture "in reflective practices and professional learning" as well as considering how leaders can

"support embedding opportunities into the existing schedules" (p. 241). Finally, there is encouragement for principals to strategically plan for what they want teachers to know and be able to do because of the reflective learning opportunities. York-Barr et al. (2006) encourage principals to provide time to focus on the impact reflective practice has on student learning, professional growth, relationships, and capacity of members within the school culture. The positive outcomes and professional learning will sustain the motivation of members of the school culture to continue utilizing reflective practice.

Maintaining a Positive School Culture

School culture refers to the underlying beliefs about how schools should function. Peterson and Deal (2002) refer to culture as "the unwritten rules and assumptions, the combination of rituals and traditions, the array of symbols and artifacts, the special language and phrasing that staff and students use, the expectations for change and learning" (p. 10). School culture can shape the work and behavior within the organization (Williamson & Blackburn, 2010). The literature on school culture intersects two dimensions of instructional leadership: the direction of the instructional program and creating a positive learning environment. The literature focuses on developing a collaborative professional learning culture with regard to data. This means developing teams of teachers focused on unwrapping the Common Core Standards, determining what mastery looks like at their particular grade level, designing common formative assessment that target understanding of the standard and using student data to inform teaching practices. Creating a collaborative school community will help sustain reforms and progress.

Lassiter (2012) discusses how many schools are creating collaborative school cultures by focusing both on the use of professional learning communities and data teams. Some successful schools have worked toward building collaborative schools by establishing the norm of high expectations and a climate of commitment toward the students (Taylor, 2005, p. 1). Schein (1985) offered several strategies for school leaders to implement cultural norms. The strategies include responsiveness to crisis, supporting staff through modeling, teaching and coaching, and setting criteria for success for staff recognition. It is crucial to examine the cultural norms of the school when investigating how principals are implementing reflective structures at the school level. Lassiter (2012) cites the work of (Adler, Heckscher, & Prusak, 2011), stating four skills that are needed to develop a collaborative culture. These four areas include developing a vision for common purpose, norm of contribution, building procedures and structures that enable, and value collaboration.

DuFour and Mattos (2013) offer five steps in the journey to establish successful professional learning communities. The first step they refer to speaks to the importance of principals establishing the core purpose of the school being that "students learn at high levels" by examining practices and procedures that align with the overall school purpose (p. 39). Next, they refer to organizing staff into collaborative learning teams focused on "taking collective responsibility for student learning" (p. 39). The third step in the journey considers teams working together to establish curriculum standards, pacing and common formative assessments. The evidence of student learning is the next step in the journey as PLCs work together to identify student, skill or teacher needs. Lastly, from

this identification process comes coordinated instruction that is aligned to meet the student, skill or teacher needs.

Literature abounds on the importance of using data as a tool for reflection, specifically to change the school culture and to target areas of instructional need (Ainsworth & Viegut, 2006; Datnow & Park, 2015; DuFour, 2015; DuFour, DuFour, & Eaker, 2005; Holcomb, 2004; Johnson & La Salle, 2010; Williamson & Blackburn, 2010). Holcomb (2004) argues for a cultivation of a culture of collective responsibility created through combining people, passion, and proof to maximize student achievement. Her work focuses on the alignment among mission, school portfolio, concerns, priorities, study, strategies, evidence and action plans. She emphasizes that it is through this data use and look at alignment that awareness occurs. Holcomb argues that "the key to changing a culture is to create structures processes and activities that cause people to think about different things in different ways with different people than they ordinarily would" (p. 42). Holcomb notes that some things do not work because they do not engage the right people with the right things. It is important that real time data is available for teachers to use to inform their practice as they work in professional learning communities through collaborative inquiry. It is essential that teachers engage in deep reflection using their available data. It is through this deep examining process that teachers can evaluate the effectiveness of their instruction, processes and procedures. This creates an awareness that requires action.

DuFour (2015) argues that "the biggest difference between traditional schools of the past and high performing professional learning communities today is their approach

to data" (p. 24). The work that the professional learning communities do toward

analyzing data should be guided by first asking which students did not demonstrate

proficient understanding. This allows the team to target those students that need

intervention instruction and then begin considering which students need accelerated

instruction. As part of the PLC data analysis members then look at strengths of their

colleagues and consider if there are strategies they can learn and implement to improve

their instructional practices. Finally, the PLC works together to determine if there are

areas and skills across the grade level PLC that need more time or attention.

Johnson and La Salle (2010) also discuss the importance of reflecting upon data

as it relates to uncovering inequitable practices that may exist in the normative school

culture. Data allow educators to see the inequities that exist in schools. A central idea

Johnson and La Salle (2010) present is "a hope to promote a collective disposition of

intolerance for the normalization of academic failure for large groups of students" (p. 8).

Johnson and La Salle note that reflection creates awareness that illuminates and challenge

inequitable practices. Johnson and La Salle coin the term "wallpaper effect" from the

emphasis that is placed on members of the school culture to peel back the layers of data.

This reflection on data refers to the uncovering of practices, programs, and policies that

are perpetuating these inequities. Using data and reflecting upon it creates the opportunity

uncover the hidden layers that cause so many students to fail in the current educational

system. Johnson and La Salle encourage reflection on data: "data give clues to what

needs to change in the culture and practices of schools" (p. 9). Use of data causes

learning organizations to question if their practices are really in the best interest of

students. It causes a change in the normative culture that must occur so that higher student achievement becomes a norm of the learning organization.

Lachat and Smith (2005) investigated (a) data use to examine the progress and guide improvement in the process of restructuring urban, low-performing high schools; (b) conditions that promote hinder data use; and (c) the implications of effective data use during a high school reform process. This study used a case study method approach and it took place over the course of four years in five low-performing high schools located in three high-poverty urban districts. Qualitative data collected in the five study sites provided contextual facts that demonstrated support or lack of support for data usage. The qualitative data included (a) school reform documents, such as School Improvement Plans showing uses of data for planning and improvement; (b) field note documentation of data meetings, action plans that were developed based on the data, (c) an historical list of data used by the schools; and (d) interviews with administrators and other teachers, and data team members. Results from the study found that staff needed timely access to accurate data, and the staff needed opportunities for building their capacity to disaggregate data. The results of this case study also confirm using data in a collaborative manner build the staff's capacity and keep them focused on student learning. Leadership structures such as data teams and continued follow up with instructional coaches proved to aid in data usage.

Data use is most effective when teacher decisions about instructional effectiveness are based on student assessment performance (Pardini, 2000). Providing structured opportunities for school staff to use data in a collaborative problem solving

setting can foster the collaboration that is needed for equity issues to be addressed (Love, 2000). Datnow and Park (2015) discuss five foundational components that should be considered to support teachers in discussing data. The first consideration is "Students are the shared responsibility of everyone" (p. 12). The second component is the establishment of norms so that teachers can have "effective collaboration including healthy disagreement" (p. 13). These conversations can become heated and this is the rationale for establishing norms for respectful communication. Datnow and Park (2015) urge that this is essential to create trust within these teacher teams and establish a "solution oriented approach" as they analyze data. Datnow and Park (2015) state, "For data use to truly improve teaching and learning, teachers need to engage in reflective practice" (p. 14). Establishing a reflective and collaborative school culture focused on using data as a reflective structure can be one of the most effective ways to make a school successful. Lassiter (2012) urges,

> Schools with effective data teams have established a culture that values cooperation, collaboration, and teamwork. They have established structures, norms and expectations for the work. The leaders of these provide resources, structures and adjustments to the master schedule to maximize the work of these data teams. Under these circumstances, teachers engage in the regular practice of teamwork and collaboration and they regularly track student and adult performance indicators to drive their work. The data team process enables teachers to work together and learn from one another. (p. 63)

Leading Professional Learning

The last dimension of instructional leadership for implementing school-wide reflective structures is the development of a positive and professional learning environment. The literature explains the need for professional learning, a professional

learning model, benefits of professional learning communities, the work of professional

learning communities, the importance of developing lifelong learning in the school, and

advice for school leaders implementing professional learning communities. Attending to

the positive learning environment means attending to the professional learning needs of

teachers and providing opportunities for them to learn collaboratively.

The current environment of school reform and the move to the Common Core

standards has increased the need for professional learning. Teachers must now unwrap

the Common Core standards they are teaching to identify the concepts, determine what

mastery of the standard will look like, select instructional strategies to teach the standard,

and design common formative assessments to guide their teaching practices along the

way. Teachers then must analyze data and make inferences about why a student is

performing in a certain way for determining which teaching actions should come next.

The newness of the standards and the high rigor level expected during teaching of the

standards has proved to be a challenging task for many educators. It is a complex task to

align all the necessary parts of the process and requires collaboration with other

professionals. Shirley and Hargreaves (2006) argue,

> Once performance problems have been exposed, instead of rushing to judgment
> about quick fixes, we need deeper reflection and further inquiry before we act.
> Our instructional choices should be based on all kinds of evidence and
> experience, process together in professional learning community that helps us
> identify common problems, swap ideas and strategies, and develop and deploy
> our own school-based assessment instruments. (p. 32)

Schlechty (2002) offers one model of professional learning for leaders to create a

collaborative and reflective teacher culture using the standards in Working on the Work.

The Working on the Work framework focuses on the concept that the key to school success is in identifying and creating engaging schoolwork for students. The intentional design of the schoolwork is to produce engaged learning. Schlechty explains that students generally respond to schoolwork in one of five ways. The responses include being authentically engaged, ritually engaged, passively compliant, retreating, or in full rebellion of the task. Schlechty further argues the 12 standards considered when designing student work are: patterns of engagement, student achievement, content and substance, organization of knowledge, product focus, clear and compelling product, a safe environment, affirmation of performance, affiliation, novelty and variety, choice, and authenticity. Schlechty (2002) focuses on redefining the role of students and teachers in an engagement-centered school. He emphasizes the importance of reflecting on the belief, vision and mission for the school. Schlechty (2002) explores lesson design and reflection in teacher protocols. During these protocols, teachers work together to evaluate the standards evident in student work. The interactions and conversations during these protocols allow teachers to examine and reflect on student engagement. It is through this process of evaluating lesson design that reflection and collaboration occur. Schlechty (2002) urges teachers to examine and reflect upon what engagement means and what it looks like at various levels of engagement. Teachers create engagement meters and have students assess their engagement at the conclusion of a lesson. Through reflecting upon the student responses on how engaged they were teachers can adapt and adjust their lessons to meet student interests and needs.

Many researchers have written about the benefits of professional learning (DuFour & Eaker, 2005; DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, & Many, 2010; DuFour & Marzano, 2011; Lassiter, 2012; Schlechty, 2002). Professional learning is concerned with developing the professional capacities of teachers with regard to knowledge and pedagogy. Increasing the capacity of teachers will have a positive impact on student learning. Michael Fullan (2005) states, "capacity building . . . is the daily habit of working together, and you can't learn this from a workshop or course. You need to learn it by doing it and getting better at it on purpose" (p. 69). Effective professional learning methods focused on looking inward at teaching practices have replaced the one-day sit and get professional development. Milbrey McLaughlin (2007) states,

> The most promising strategy for sustained, substantive school improvement is building the capacity of school personnel to function as a professional learning community. The path to change in the classroom lies within and through professional learning communities. (as cited in DuFour, 2007, p. 1)

DuFour, DuFour, and Eaker (2005) define professional learning communities as groups of educators who work in a collaborative manner over time on "action research and collective inquiry" to get more effective results for student learning. They state that professional learning communities work with the following assumption "the key to improved learning for students is continuous, job embedded learning for educators" (p. 3), meaning that educators are learning within the context of working alongside their peer.

Hord (2009) addresses the issue of teacher quality through continuous professional learning. She defines the work that occurs in professional learning

communities. The first area she addresses is the learning. She notes that staff members come together and carefully examine student data from a multitude of sources to uncover strengths and weaknesses. This is a time to celebrate successes and prioritize needs. Collectively, the group takes responsibility and establishes strategies to approach the priority area. The next area she examines is the community concept. She notes that as a professional learning community "they assume a focus on a shared purpose, mutual regard, caring, and an insistence on integrity and truthfulness" (Lambert, 2003, as cited in Hord, 2009, p. 41). It functions as a constructivist process, as colleagues learn with one another, and develop a shared purpose. The social interaction of the professional learning community allows each member to gain "multiple perspectives through reflection, collaboration, negotiation, and shared meaning" (p. 41). At the elementary level, this might mean that teachers on a particular grade level are working and learning together as they are dissecting the Common Core standards, determining what mastery of that particular standard looks like and designing instructional practices and common formative assessments to assess the standard. Professional learning communities might also function as a data team to analyze student data, reflect on their practices and make adjustments as needed to meet the student learning needs. Hord (2010) notes that professional learning communities share the attributes of: supportive and shared leadership, collective creativity, shared values and vision, supportive conditions, and shared personal practice. These characteristics and tasks are important for principals to consider as they attending to how they will support and provide the necessary resources for successful implementation of PLCs.

Professional learning provides opportunities for teachers to reflect on their practice and revisit their teaching in an effort to improve it. This process is reflection on action and it is a crucial means of professional growth (Schön, 1983). According to York-Barr et al. (2006), creating intentional opportunities to "pause" is critical. "There is a need to find, create, and intentionally choose opportunities to pause in today's teaching environments" (p. 9). Intentionally creating these opportunities leads to the other elements included in York-Barr et al.'s (2006) Theory of Action for Reflective Practice including openness to viewing situations from many angles, inquiry about practices, active and deliberate thinking, learning from the reflection, and applying that learning in action which results in enhanced student learning.

DuFour, DuFour, and Eaker (2005) cite the work of Roland Barth (2006) on lifelong learning in relation to professional learning communities. Barth discusses the fact that the fundamental goal of a professional learning community is to develop lifelong learning for every individual involved in school community. He urges in order to establish that culture of lifelong learning, the school principal must lead it. DuFour and Marzano (2011) argue that impact and value professional learning communities offer for professional growth collectively far outweigh the benefits of building the capacity of individual teachers. Building the collective collaborative capacity of teachers leads to more effective reflective practice gains than time spent coaching individual teachers.

Dennis Sparks (2004) states that "Teacher isolation is so deeply ingrained in the traditional fabric of schools that leaders cannot simply invite teachers to create a collaborative culture" (p. 111). It is crucial that principals identify and structure

opportunities for collaborative reflective practice. DuFour and DuFour (2012) advise

school leaders to link the change to practices that already a part of the prior knowledge.

This helps the members of the professional learning community to see how it is natural

progression. Effective leaders of professional learning communities begin by articulating

why the change is important before articulating how it will happen. The actions of how

the change will occur should match with the leader's actions to develop credibility. With

change, leaders should be flexible in alternatives for carrying it out but firm on the core

principles. School leaders must distribute leadership to the professional learning

communities to test strategies and move forward with professional learning communities

even when there is resistance.

Graham (2007) studied the relationship between professional learning community

activities and teacher improvement. The researchers in this study explored the ways in

which the factors of the organizational structure and the focus on the professional

learning community model impact teachers. The researcher studied a first year middle

school in North Carolina. It was a mixed method case study. Data collection included

professional development surveys, teacher interviews, and a review of school documents.

Twenty-four teachers completed the professional development survey while ten teachers

completed follow up interviews. Results from the study show that professional learning

community activities involving teachers at the same grade level had the potential to

produce significant improvements in teacher effectiveness, but that teacher effectiveness

depended on a number of factors. Some of the factors included both leadership and

organizational practices. The organizational and leadership factors that promoted

successful implementation of the PLC structure were commitment and expectation from the principal as well as 90-minute blocks of time for PLC collaboration. The findings indicated that the nature of grade level PLCs included collaboration and focus on instructional and curricular issues. In addition, all of the teachers noted that PLC activities had an impact on their professional improvement and indicated that having the opportunity to collaborate was a catalyst for this impact. The teachers also indicated that the PLC success was due in large part to many organizational factors including the personalities in the PLC groups, the principal, the new school, the structure, and even the schedule. The PLC groups in this study acted as vehicles to facilitate collaboration, mediate conversations, and develop community among the PLC.

School capacity develops when all members are involved in the construction of knowledge. Blase and Blase (2004) studied how principal behaviors foster teacher reflection and benefit teachers. They collected and analyzed data using methods that are relevant to symbolic interaction theory. This meant the majority of their data included individual teacher perceptions and interpretations. Principals completed an open-ended questionnaire on the inventory of strategies principals use to influence classroom teaching. In addition, each teacher responded by providing one positive principal characteristic and one negative principal characteristic that had influenced their classroom teaching. Eight hundred nine teachers taking graduate courses at three state universities across the United States completed the inventory. Emerging categories and subcategories developed through the data analysis process of coding. Behaviors such as "modeling, classroom observation, dialogue, suggestion and praise" (p. 95) prove to

provide reflection benefit to teachers. Responses from teacher perspectives on the questionnaires acknowledged these behaviors reflectively informed their teaching behaviors. Blase and Blase (2004) additionally noted that principal behaviors such as "providing professional reading materials, encouraging teachers to attend staff development opportunities and encouraging collaboration" (p. 98) enhanced reflective behaviors.

While many elementary principals engage in the behaviors Blase and Blase (2004) refer to in their study, there have not case studies that chronicling how elementary principals in North Carolina intentionally and effectively plan for coordinated school-wide reflective structures. School-wide reflective structures can range from providing opportunities for peers to model and observe one another's teaching practices, to classroom observations with coaching and reflective questioning, to engaging members of the school in professional learning opportunities such as data based decision making. School-wide reflection can even mean that the school as a whole is studying the impact of their teaching practices through protocols for student work or interrogating the impact of school improvement efforts on actual student achievement. Lambert et al. (1995) refer to this as constructivist leading as members of the school community are engaged in shared inquiry as a way to improve teaching practices. Blase and Blase (2004) call for principals to "expand their basic instructional leadership skills, develop professional learning communities, and ensure that schools become centers of constructivist leading and learning. We call this constellation of behaviors, skills and attitudes, academic leadership" (p. 194).

Collet (2012) examined the gradual release of the responsibility model in coaching as it relates to teacher change. The purpose was to clarify the coaching process, refine the role of instructional support, and the role feedback takes on in teacher decision making. Analysis of the coaching notes helped determine which coaching practices were used most often and how these coaching practices changed over time. The findings indicate that early on most coaches used the modeling technique, before moving to making recommendations, then asked probing questions and finally moved to affirming and praising which came later in the study. These finding are indicative of the need to scaffold teacher learning and reflection within the teachers' zone of proximal development. As we move into the NC Teacher Evaluation model and instructional leaders must coach it is important to consider what coaching behaviors are really occurring to support reflective practice. In conclusion, the areas of literature on instructional leadership and reflective practice continue to intersect when considering the impact they both can have for promoting reflective practice in schools. Principals will have to consider the areas that these fields intersect when considering planning for school-wide reflective practice. The literature points to the importance of creating opportunities for the teachers to engage in the experience, analysis, and finally the action of applying what they have learned to new learning. The literature on reflective practice suggests the importance of principals providing intentional opportunities for staff to develop effective communication skills, intentional opportunities to develop staff relationships and to foster trust throughout the school. Leading school-wide efforts of reflective practice mean principals will need to provide instructional leadership as it

relates to defining the mission and developing the capacity of the school culture through professional learning.

Theoretical Framework

Principals planning for successful implementation of reflective practice at the school level must attend to the details of creating the conditions for reflective practice to occur. As I explored the research questions in this study, I was guided by the work and theories of Schön (1983, 1987) and York-Barr et al. (2006).

I used the York-Barr et al. (2006) framework to investigate how elementary principals strategically promoted and sustained reflective practices in their schools. This is a framework for school-wide reflective practice planning and design. This planning framework considered the elements of educational context, people, purpose, resources, as well as structures and strategies when planning for school-wide reflective cultures. York-Barr et al. (2006) encourage principals to consider their own educational context when planning to implement reflective practice at the school level. They urge investigating the current educational conditions including the school and district culture, leadership practices and state goals. Principals are also encouraged to consider the purpose for reflective practice, design of reflective practices throughout the school, the people who will engage in reflective practice, the resources needed to support reflective practice at the school level, and finally the intended result of the use of reflective practices.

York-Barr et al. (2006) recommend that principals intentionally plan for how they will support the implementation of reflective practices at the school level. This includes the consideration of how time is provided for engaging members of the school culture "in

reflective practices and professional learning" as well as considering how leaders can "support embedding opportunities into the existing schedules" (p. 241). Finally, there is encouragement for principals to strategically plan for what they want teachers to know and be able to do because of the reflective learning opportunities. York-Barr et al. (2006) encourage principals to provide time to focus on the impact reflective practice has on student learning, professional growth, relationships, and capacity of members within the school culture. The positive outcomes and professional learning will sustain the motivation of members of the school culture to continue utilizing reflective practice.

Principals must design opportunities for reflection to occur including strategically planning for implementation of the structures and strategies. Strategies differ from structures in that they are more concerned with the procedural aspect of "guiding interactions, reflection, and learning by participants" (p. 240). York-Barr et al. (2006) recognize that leaders must consider how professional learning is integrated within the daily work of the members of the school culture, as well as the knowledge level of staff on inquiry and reflection. School leaders who integrate reflective practice at the school-wide level provide ongoing opportunities for job-embedded professional learning. York-Barr et al. (2006) recommend that principals intentionally plan for how they will support the implementation of reflective practices at the school level. This includes the consideration of how of time is provided for engaging members of the school culture "in reflective practices and professional learning" as well as considering how leaders can "support embedding opportunities into the existing schedules" (p. 241). Finally, there is encouragement for principals to strategically plan for what they want teachers to know

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According to York-Barr et al. (2006), it is important for principals to understand themselves and articulate the rationale for the support of reflective structures. Articulating this purpose engages members of the school culture in the process and gives meaning to the reflective practices. York-Barr et al. (2006), acknowledge the importance that attending to people and relationships has in leading reflective practice at the school level. They recognize the element of people as the "greatest resource for learning is within and among the individuals who reflect, create, and work together" (p. 240). Thus, it is important for principals planning for school-wide implementation of reflective practice to consider who will be involved in the design and support of these reflective structures. York-Barr et al. (2006) urge principals that attending to the building the capacity of the members of the school means working to foster trust, build relationships and empower members of the school culture as active participants. Attending to these factors can create those conditions for collective cultural understanding just as Schön proposes that professional learning situated in real world learning situations is most powerful.

As I studied the reflective practices and structures that principals used in these schools, I used Schön's theory of reflection to classify the practices that principals were

using. Schön emphasizes the importance of intuitive knowledge and experiences and classifies reflection into categories. Schön (1983) details the types of reflection that teachers engage in as being reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action. He defines reflection-in-action as the reflective thinking of teachers that occurs during teaching. This occurs when teachers informally evaluate their work and make modifications while they are in the middle of teaching. Teachers reflect on action after the teaching experience. This is when teachers replay their teaching actions by thinking about how they can make improvements to their teaching in the future. Both types of reflection are integral parts of the process of reflective teaching. Schön (1983) asserts that reflection-in-action involves the teacher as a "researcher in the practice context" (Schön, 1983, p. 68).

As I investigated the last research question about the relationship between individual reflection and collective reflection in the school, I used both the school-wide planning framework theories of York-Barr et al. (2006) and Schön (1983). The ultimate goal of this approach is to move staff to a level of collegial collaboration and reflection toward instructional practices, which is considered a form of reflection-on-action (Schön, 1983). Schön (1983) was concerned with organizational learning and models of reflection. He found that teachers are in a "crisis of confidence" (p. 14). He asserts that this is due to the issue of their professional knowledge being mismatched to the changing educational needs. This means that teachers have to continually be able to adapt. This is difficult as it is cannot clearly be explained why some teachers are able to more effectively use these "intuitive" processes (Schön, 1983, p. 49) in their teaching practice while other teachers are much less effective. Schön (1987) states,

> When we have learned how to do something, we can execute smooth sequences of
> activity, recognition, decision and adjustment without having, as we say to "think
> about it." Our spontaneous knowing-in-action usually gets us through the day. On
> occasion, however it doesn't. We may respond to it by reflection in one of two
> ways. We may reflect on action to discover how our knowing-in-action may have
> contributed to the unexpected outcome . . . or we may pause in the midst of the
> action. (p. 26)

In this case, Schön (1987) notes that there is "no direct connection to the present action"
(p. 26). Schön (1987) classifies reflection-in-action as an "action present time, during
which we can still make a difference in the situation at hand, as our thinking serves to
shape what we are doing while we are doing it" (p. 26).

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for studying school-wide reflective practice begins
with intentional planning for reflective practice by considering the following elements
related to each school's particular educational context, including "people, design,
purpose, resources, and structures" (York-Barr et al. 2006). Additionally, the conceptual
framework focuses on targeting both individual and collective reflective practices. The
implementation of both the individual and collective reflective practices promote
reflection in and on their practice. Thus, the outcome is the impact of the utilization and
sustainment of reflective structures and strategies at the school-wide level (see Figure 1).

The literature I have reviewed discussed the reflective learning process, as well as
reflective practice at both the individual and school-wide levels. As part of my review of
the literature I discussed the components of the reflective process. These parts of the
reflective process were an important consideration for my study of the reflective practice
structures being utilized in the schools included in this study.
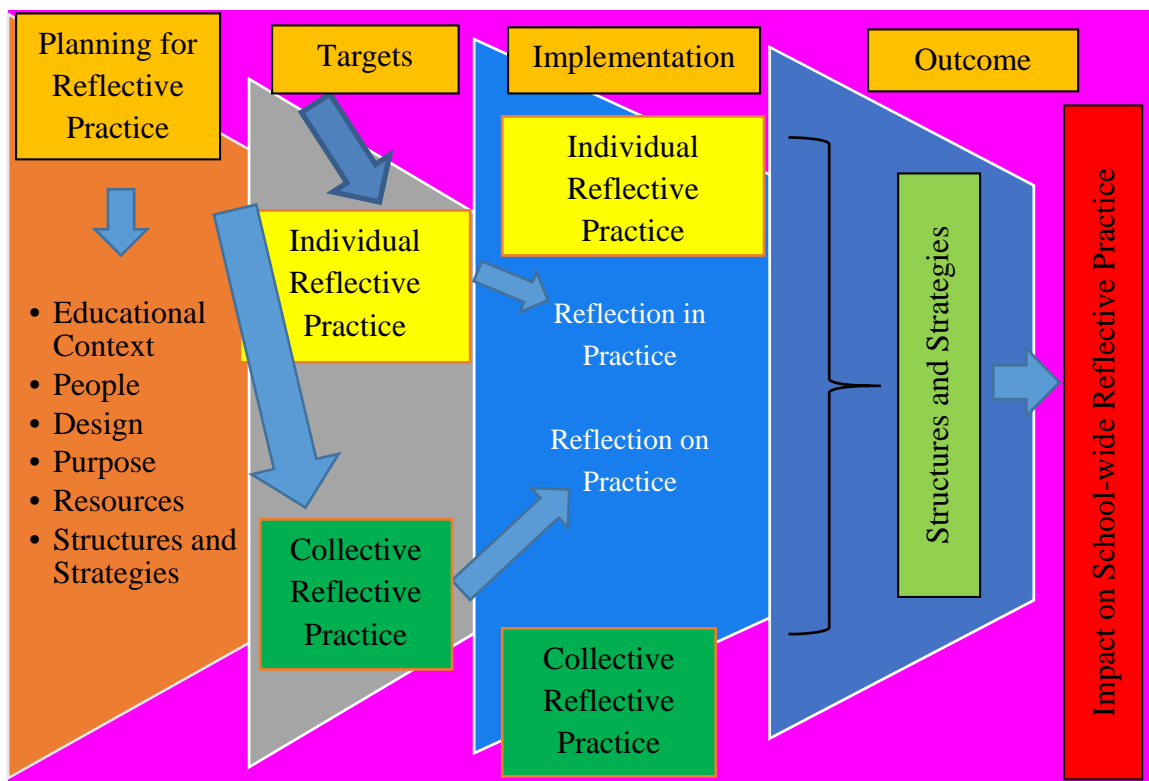
Figure 1. Conceptual Framework.

Additionally, I explored each subsection of the reflective learning process before moving to the implications that this process has for planning for reflective practice. As part of the review I explored who the reflective structures would target and what would be the result of the implementation. As part of the implementation I considered how the elements of communication, dialogue, and trust played a role in creating the environmental conditions for reflection to occur. The literature I reviewed on instructional leadership led to my understanding of how the principals in the study might go about leading and supporting school-wide reflective practice. Finally, the research and literature on leading school-wide reflective practice studies from a professional learning

community perspective helped me to form understanding in how the principals in my

study might go about sustaining reflection at the school level. The next chapter will

present the methodology for how I conducted the research study.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

As previously stated, the research questions for this study are:

1. How do elementary principals strategically promote and sustain effective reflective practices in their schools?

2. What are the reflective practices and structures used in these schools?

3. What is the relationship between individual reflection and collective reflection in the school?

Research Design

This study used qualitative methodology. The main purpose of qualitative research is to provide a rich "description, understanding and interpretation of the human experience" (Lichtman, 2006, p. 12). In this study, I used a multiple case study approach in which data collection occurred through focused interviews. Lichtman (2010) noted that the case study method is a close evaluation of a certain case or cases. Case study methodology can be focused on studying particular behaviors or characteristics. Lichtman (2010) asserted that when considering this type of research, it is essential that researchers identify the characteristic or behavior they will be studying in advance. Researchers set the criteria or boundaries within which they will conduct their research. In this study, I identified the planning and implementation behaviors of elementary

school principals who use reflective structures and strategies in their school buildings as the focus.

Lichtman (2006) stressed that multiple case studies may be useful as they can provide additional information that may not be apparent from looking only at one case. Multiple case study methodology allows the researcher to focus on the "richness of the information we generate from the case" rather than focusing on generalizing this information across cases. The goal of the research, utilizing this approach, was to "get detailed and rich descriptions of the cases you have selected" (p. 83).

Setting and Participants

Lichtman (2006) explains that the researcher should identify the "individuals that are thought to have that characteristic" (p. 82). This study used a three-step selection process to identify two elementary principals who were promoting school-wide reflective structures. Principals were first identified because they were elementary principals in the Seaside school district in the Piedmont region of North Carolina. Seaside school district is a pseudonym utilized to protect the identity of the school district. As a secondary selection component, the principals were selected because they use the North Carolina Educator Evaluation Tool to promote teacher reflection. The final selection component was a recommendation from the Seaside School district's elementary education director regarding those principals who effectively promoted individual and collective reflective practice. Prior to the recommendation from the elementary education director, I shared information with the director regarding the purpose of the study and the criteria I was considering in this study.

The Seaside School System was selected as the district for this study because they have provided professional development for elementary principals focused on promoting reflection in their schools through instructional coaching, coaching conversations, the data teaming process, and leadership for school improvement over the course of the past three years.

Participants included in the case studies were from two elementary school sites. Each site included one elementary principal in the Piedmont region of North Carolina who had implemented reflective structures in their building and five teachers from their school site who had engaged in reflective practices. I selected the school leaders based upon the selection criteria for this case. The selection criteria were that they were elementary principals, utilized the North Carolina Educator Evaluation tool, and that they had implemented reflective structures in their buildings. The five teacher participants were selected by the principal of each elementary school. Prior to selection of teacher participants, I shared with each principal the purpose of the study to examine reflective practices being utilized in their schools.

I conducted a total of 24 interviews. There were 12 interviews at each school site including two interviews with each administrator and teacher participant. The first interview occurred during early to mid-March 2015, and the second interview occurred in early to mid-May 2015. I used the interview protocol to guide the interview. Additionally, I recorded each of the interviews and had them transcribed. All of the interviews took place in each school site in a private room so that participants could speak confidentially.

Structured Interviews

I conducted a total of 24 interviews. Twelve interviews took place at each school site. There were two focused interviews with the principal and two focused interviews with each of the five teachers at each school site. This helped me to understand what the principal does to promote reflective practice both individually and collectively. The focused interviews followed an interview protocol (see Appendix B and Appendix C). According to Lichtman (2006), interviewing allows the researcher to "get the story from the point of view of the participant" (p. 139). Each of the two administrator interviews lasted approximately an hour and a half and each of the two teacher interview interviews lasted approximately 45 minutes to an hour. All of the interviews took place in each school site in a private room so that participants could speak confidentially.

Interviews were the primary data collected for this study. It is important to note that Lichtman (2006) addresses the reason for interviewing a participant is to allow the researcher to gather more information about the topic they are investigating. Rubin and Rubin (2005) note a similar purpose of interviewing may be to explore how participants feel about certain things. In this case, I was concerned with investigating how the principal felt about reflection. This included investigating how the principal supported school-wide reflective practice, what reflective structures they used, and the relationship between individual reflection and collective reflection in these schools. In qualitative research, these interviews passed through the eyes of the researcher. Lichtman (2006) asserts that as researcher you "adopt the role of constructing and interpreting the reality

of the person being interviewed" (p. 140). Interviews were recorded and stored in a secure location. The interview data were transcribed by a professional transcriber.

Description of Key Concepts

Key concepts addressed in this study were teacher reflection, professional learning communities, collaboration, school-wide reflective practices, and school culture. Teacher reflection was classified as the behavior of the teacher of rethinking teaching actions and practices. Teacher reflection was defined further into reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action. Reflection-in-action was described as teacher rethinking of actions that occurs as teachers are engaged in the act of teaching. Reflection-on-action was described as teacher rethinking of actions after a teaching experience.

"Professional learning communities" was defined in this study as members of a school who worked together over time questioning current teaching practices, using reflective thinking, and learning about pedagogical approaches. The focus was on collaboration to get to collective inquiry. Through collective inquiry, the identification of best teaching practices occurs (DuFour, 2007).

Collaboration occurs as members of the learning community are working together and supporting one another with a focus on continuous improvement. Collaboration in this study included more than one avenue. I explored this from the angle of written collaboration, verbal collaboration, email collaboration, and peer collaboration. Collaboration included the social piece of sharing and exchanging reflective teacher thinking. This described how members of the learning community functioned together.

I defined school-wide reflective practices as those experiences that involved the school staff in the work of reflective thinking on improving the school as a whole. This referred to all members of the school staff, school procedures, and processes. The focus was on examining, evaluating, and improving current practices in an effort to provide instruction that is more effective for students. School culture was defined as the overall cultural attitudes and norms of how the school functions. Elementary principals were school leaders in the principal role at the elementary level. Reflective structures included but were not limited to structures, procedures, and processes that promote reflective thinking and professional learning. Examples of these include instructional coaching, professional learning communities, and professional readings.

Data Analysis

Interview data were coded using a constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Examination of interview responses determined a code that best fit the particular statement or response. I used a three-step process to analyze the data. This three-step process was a recommendation that came from Glaser and Strauss (1967) and Strauss and Corbin (1990). The initial step of the process began with careful reading of the data, keeping in mind the literature written in the area, and associating it with the transcribed interviews. The next part of the process was concerned with identifying codes that ran throughout the data. The last portion of the process involved separating the coded data into the best thematic category.

I analyzed and coded the interview responses according to the research questions and conceptual framework. This helped me gain an understanding of how the elementary

school leaders were planning for reflective structures. I coded the respondents' responses according to the initial conceptual framework including structures and strategies used to plan and implement reflective practice, principal behaviors that supported reflective, and how the reflective practices moved from individual reflective practice to collective reflective practice. In addition, I analyzed the interview responses from the themes that emerged through a review of the literature including the definitions of reflection and conditions that encourage reflection. The information gleamed from the interview data enabled me to better understand the deliberate process of promoting reflective structures in these learning organizations.

Subjectivity

As a researcher and peer administrator, I realize I might have had preconceived notions of the reflective skills needed by administrators. I used bracketing to mark my own thoughts and restrain my own judgment.

Trustworthiness

Triangulation is a critical method for establishing trustworthiness in a qualitative study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 2002). Triangulation involves comparing multiple sources of data with each other. Although the term implies three sources, in this study two were compared. Through triangulation, I compared and analyzed the findings among both the teacher interviews and principal interviews. I utilized triangulation during the data collection to create a deeper understanding of the principal behaviors in this study. The reason for triangulation was to provide confirmation across multiple data sources. As Patton (2002) asserts,

> Understanding inconsistencies in findings across different kinds of data can be eye-opening to the researcher. Finding such inconsistencies ought not to be viewed as weakening the credibility of results, but rather as offering opportunities for deeper insight into the relationship between inquiry approach and the phenomenon under study. (p. 556)

Data were triangulated by comparing the interview responses of the principals with those of the teachers.

Member checking is a method that provides trustworthiness to a study because it involves the participants in verifying and validating the accuracy of the data. In this study, I gave the interview participants the opportunity to review their transcripts and check them for accuracy.

Significance of the Study

This study has significant implications for principals of elementary school principals in North Carolina as well as elementary school principals across the nation. It is important to identify structures that develop teacher reflection and professional growth. It is essential that principals are intentionally planning for reflective practice to occur by considering the purpose, people, resources, design, results, and the overall context. The structure, processes, procedures, and settings for reflective practice to occur must attend to the importance of communication, relationships, and trust. Principals are now evaluated on how well their teachers are performing with regard to reflective practice, but it must be clearly established that teachers are likely to improve when school leaders set reflective professional learning structures in place. It is hoped that the findings of this study will help principals re-culture schools into successful communities of practice.

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION OF CASE STUDY 1: OCEANSIDE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

In this chapter I will present the interview data from each of the participants in Case Study 1, themes that emerged from the interview data, and an analysis of the themes. I will begin with an introduction to the case study site and participants, who were all represented with pseudonyms at Oceanside Elementary School. Table 1 presents the participants at Oceanside Elementary School.

Table 1

Participants at Oceanside Elementary School

Participant	Position
Hannah	Principal at Oceanside Elementary
Abby	Kindergarten Teacher
Brenda	Third-Grade Teacher
Candace	First-Grade Teacher
Deborah	Fourth-Grade Teacher
Emma	Second-Grade Teacher

Oceanside Elementary is located in the piedmont of North Carolina and serves approximately 500 students. It is a K-5 elementary school. This elementary school is not a Title I elementary school, meaning that it serves a clientele that does not meet the federal guidelines of 50% or more of their student population receiving free or reduced

lunch. Currently the school is close to that number with 48% qualifying as free or reduced lunch. The school is located in a suburban area. The attendance zone pulls from pockets of affluent clientele to recently, an increased number of students qualifying for free or reduced lunch. Historically, the school has been a high performing school that has served an affluent community. However, over the course of the past five years, there has been a substantial shift in the demographics.

The staff of the school is primarily tenured staff that has worked in the school for a long time. The principal noted that the school is beginning to see turnover in staff and students as the demographics are changing. She stated that although they are not growing in numbers for enrollment, the student population is shifting. They are getting fewer affluent clienteles than they had previously and needier students. The major obstacle the principal spoke about was that the staff has had difficulty with the changing population. They have struggled with how to teach differently to meet the new population's needs.

According to the North Carolina School Report Card for this school for the 2013–2014 school year the school did not meet growth but they did have a school achievement score of 71%, and had 54.4% growth. Overall school performance was at 68%, with EOG reading and math at 69% and 65%, respectively. These ratings gave the school an overall C rating according to the state school report card standards. According to the 2013–2014 North Carolina Educator Effectiveness database, 7.7% of teachers were ranked as developing in the area of reflective practice, while 92.3% were ranked as proficient. This school was selected for participation in the study because it was an elementary school

site, the principal utilized the North Carolina Educator Evaluation tool, and it was recommended by the district elementary school director.

Hannah: Principal of Oceanside Elementary

Hannah, the principal of Oceanside Elementary school, is a Caucasian female and has served as the school's principal for four years. Over the course of the four years she stated that she saw the demographics of her school change. She noted that while the Caucasian population is still the highest subgroup, it is followed by both the African American and Hispanic subgroups. She commented that in reflecting on the school data, these latter two subgroups are falling behind.

Hannah shared that the look of Oceanside Elementary had shifted for both staff and students and that one of the hardest things was to "get people to understand that they were not the same school that we used to be . . . people look at Oceanside as what Oceanside was ten years ago." Hannah shared that as principal she felt an important strategy she used and the most powerful at a school-wide level was modeling reflection for her staff. She talked about the impact of modeling reflection for teachers if it is to be an expectation throughout the school. Hannah provided examples of how she modeled reflective practice with her staff. One specific example occurred with the PBIS team. She noted that they had been meeting as a PBIS team to review their PBIS matrix as well as PBIS data. In this instance, she as principal said, "Maybe the matrix needs to be revisited, we created it, but maybe we need to look at it, maybe it needs clarification." Thus, she modeled reflection as looking back on the PBIS data to inform further work on the school-wide PBIS matrix.

She shared that she used the North Carolina Educator Evaluation system to aid teacher reflection. She referenced the observation/post-conference as a way that she promoted individual reflection on practice. She shared that during the post conference it was easy to ask questions about what teachers felt went well or what they would change, however she noted that in her experience she has found it was good to pose questions focused on the students. Hannah reported that these types of questions helped lead to good conversations about "teaching and learning." She shared that she had addressed and differentiated for individual reflection through use of the end of year evaluation summative for each teacher. This tool had provided one avenue for individual reflection on the whole year. She explained that these individual summative meetings presented the opportunity to have individual conversations on what teachers needed in terms of support to continue to develop. She stated that she always asked one important question as a part of those conversations, "What can we do to help support you to help you move forward?" During these conversations she was direct with teachers about what she needed from them in terms of teaching during the next year and explained how she thought that it will help them to grow as a teacher.

A part of her discussion about differentiation for individual teachers she spoke about the challenge of meeting the needs of teachers with understanding data "at all different levels of reflecting." She noted that she had found that "where you have a strong teacher, you have a strong grade level." Similarly, Hannah explained how she and her administrative team had provided differentiated support to grade levels on reflecting on the curriculum as well as curriculum mapping the content. Hannah explained that with

some grade levels there was a lot of pre-planning that had to take place to prepare for the curriculum planning session. She shared the PLC data teaming process was an additional strategy they had used to build reflective capacity. She reported that she had provided support for reflection on student data by providing release time for each grade level PLC to have a data day to analyze and reflect on student data each nine weeks. During those days, they worked together, reflecting on whether the core instruction was working and determined if they need to create a grade level plan for instruction. She noted that these are opportunities for the PLC to "really dig deep into the data." She explained that the process really enabled them to have discussions and ask questions about the data.

A school-wide strategy that Hannah spoke about was using her staff meetings as reflective opportunities. She shared that this year they had been engaged in revisiting their mission, vision and core values. During this reflective process, she explained that she first asked them to "reflect personally on what was important to them, what they value in work, what they want to be remembered for" and then she took it to the school level.

Additionally, Hannah spoke about her efforts to coordinate school-wide reflection on student data. She shared that at the beginning of the school year she had shared the school data with all of the staff. She asked the staff about how it made them feel to see the data and to see that their data was flat lining. Her purpose in sharing the data in that way was for the staff to see that "we have to do something different." Although Hannah shared this data with her whole staff she explained that what she found out was that staff did not know how to feel about the data because they didn't understand how to interpret

it. One strategy that Hannah used to help her staff better understand the data and how to reflect upon it, was the presentation of data in a visual format, which enabled teachers to see their data for all students across grade levels and the school level. Hannah gave examples of intentional planning for reflection in examples of how the school improvement team and leadership team were using a text *Question behind the Question* to facilitate reflection. The challenge she shared was finding the time but it offered an opportunity to pose questions to shape their thinking in a reflective manner. Table 2 presents a summary of Hannah's reflective practices.

Table 2

Hannah: Summary of Reflective Practices

Individual Reflection Strategies	Purpose	Type of Reflection	People	Resources/ Support
Use of NC Educator Evaluation System (observations, conferences)	Promote reflective thinking about practices, data, observations	Reflection on past instructional actions, student data	Individual teachers	Time, opportunity for reflection, administrative support
Posing questions	Promote reflective thinking about practices, data, observations	Reflection on past instructional actions, student data	Individual teachers	Time, opportunity for reflection, administrative support
Differentiated support through individual conversations	Promote reflective thinking about practices, data, observations	Reflection on past instructional actions, student data	Individual teachers	Time, opportunity for reflection, administrative support
Individual support for data analysis	Promote reflective thinking about practices, data, observations	Reflection on past instructional actions, student data	Individual teachers	Time, opportunity for reflection, administrative support
Collective Reflection Strategies	**Purpose**	**Type of Reflection**	**People**	**Resources/ Support**
Administrator modeling of reflection with staff	Promote reflective thinking as the norm in the school	Reflection on past instructional actions and data	All staff	Reflective guiding questions
Modeling with PBIS team on matrix and data	Promote reflection on student data	Reflection on past instructional practices, future expectations	All staff	Release time for vertical data analysis of PBIS plan across school
Staff meeting reflection on instructional practices and core values	Promote reflection on instructional delivery	Reflection on core values	All staff	Books for book studies Opportunities for reflection on core values

Abby: Kindergarten Teacher

Abby, a Caucasian female, is a kindergarten teacher. Abby joyfully spoke about her teaching journey saying "It has been a wonderful journey. I have thoroughly enjoyed my teaching experience, my colleagues, and the students that I have hopefully helped grow." Over the past 34 years, Abby spent the majority of her career in kindergarten and second grade. Her experiences allowed her to teach in two elementary schools in her local school district. She described her classroom environment as a positive one with an emphasis on building strong relationships with students and parents.

Abby indicated that

> Reflection is something that we do as teachers, as principals, as a staff, to think about what your role is in working with children, thinking about your lessons and how well they've gone or maybe some things that need to be improved upon, did it work, did it not work, those kinds of self-reflecting questions. If there are students that are doing really well, looking at how we can grow them more, challenge them. If there are students that are struggling, looking more at the whole child and what might be affecting that learning process.

Abby engaged in individual reflective practice daily, throughout the day as she was thinking. Abby shared that she was involved with reflecting on her end of year student data. "I've looked at what student needs are and what I can do in this next few weeks to prepare them further for first grade." Abby also indicated that she was involved with meeting with parents and helping them to reflect on what they needed to do to continue to help their children grow over the summer.

She noted that she was involved in reflective practice with her grade level colleagues as part of her professional learning community. She shared that during this

time they talked about their practices, "what's working, what's not working, what could they do differently to help this particular child that is struggling or what can we do for those students that know this material and need to move on further." Abby met with her grade level PLC multiple times throughout the week, once to focus on student data and other times for planning. There were even some meetings that were coordinated between pre-kindergarten, kindergarten, and first grade to build vertical alignment to "see what we can do better to get the children prepared for first grade." Abby explained how reflection on her student data helped her to differentiate her instruction.

In the area of school-wide reflection, Abby noted that twice a month the staff came together to meet as a full staff to discuss data pre-kindergarten through fifth grade as well as discuss how things were going throughout the building. She shared that she felt these school-wide opportunities were due to the "wonderful vision" of her principal, Hannah. She felt her principal did a "wonderful job of bringing us together as a building, as a family."

There was a theme for each school year, and the staff were provided with books for the theme each year. During the year, principal Hannah engaged them in staff exercises and reflected on "how it relates to us as a staff with our work with the children." The school-wide theme for this school year was "love, serve, and care." As a school they reflected on "how they serve their students, how they show them they care, and how they show them they love them." The focus was on the tools teachers use in their classrooms.

Abby referenced other PLC work that she was involved with school-wide including cross curriculum and vertical alignment meetings each nine weeks. During those meetings everyone checked in and made sure they were on track for preparing students for the next grade level. Abby concluded by sharing the reflective work that the school as a whole was involved in as they examined their work ethics as a school. She mentioned that all members of the school were involved in this process and that they utilized small groups of staff all mixed together to determine four to five words that represented the school's work ethic. Table 3 presents a summary of Abby's reflective practices.

Table 3

Abby: Summary of Reflective Practices

Individual Reflection Strategies	Purpose	Type of Reflection	People	Resources/ Support
Daily reflection throughout the day	Reflection on student data and instructional practices	Reflection in action Reflection on action	Individual teachers	Time and opportunities for reflection
Reflection on student data	Reflection on student data and instructional practices	Reflection on action	Individual teachers	Time, opportunities and support with data analysis and reflection
Individual support for data analysis	Promote reflective thinking about practices, data, observations	Reflection on past instructional actions, student data	Individual teachers	Time, opportunity for reflection, administrative support

Collective Reflection Strategies	Purpose	Type of Reflection	People	Resources/ Support
PLC reflection on curriculum and data	Promote reflective thinking as the norm in the school	Reflection on past instructional actions and data	PLCs	Support for understanding data and curriculum mapping Release time for PLC data days, curriculum mapping
Vertical reflection on curriculum and data	Promote reflection on vertical progression of curriculum and school level data	Reflection on past instructional practices, future expectations	All staff	Release time for vertical team data reflection and examination of curriculum
Staff meetings focused on reflection on core values	Promote reflection on core values as a school	Reflection on core values	All staff	Books for book studies Time and opportunities for all staff to come together

Brenda: Third-Grade Teacher

Brenda, a Caucasian female, is a third-grade teacher at Oceanside Elementary School. During that time Brenda taught both second and third grades. Brenda described her classroom as being structured and more traditional. She noted that she was very time- and task- oriented within her classroom. Brenda also shared that she was open to trying out new strategies but noted that some things in her classroom work for her students and those are the things that she continued to use.

Brenda defined reflective practice in relation to teaching, as "looking back." She shared that she was engaged in both individual and PLC reflective practice opportunities. Brenda noted that she was constantly thinking and asking questions about how to improve instruction. As a result of her individual reflective practice she shared that she sought out help from her PLC. Brenda shared that her principal, Hannah, helped her to grow in her individual reflective practice through observation feedback and using data. Brenda's principal also provided information and resources as a support for her PLC. Most of all, Brenda shared the most important support from her principal was her "belief in me."

Brenda discussed the opportunities they were engaged in as a PLC for reflection such as how they had thought about the best use of their time, reflected as a team on data and curriculum, and time for collaboration which helped promote reflection. Her principal, Hannah, provided them with time to meet quarterly and reviewed their student data as a PLC. During those meetings they discussed assessment data, where they needed

to go instructionally to meet student needs, and monitored their grade level plan to determine if it was effective for core instruction.

Additionally, as a PLC, they created their professional development plans. One goal on the professional development plan was a school goal on how they used the data team process to analyze student data. Brenda addressed the crucial nature of how they reflected as a team, when she said, "If you don't reflect as a team or group you won't improve. It is important to 'recognize and see the deficit.'" Brenda shared that the bulk of the reflection that her PLC did was through discussion. In fact, Brenda stated, "We're always asking for help, asking questions, making sure we understand and trying to figure out what needs to happen."

She shared that expectations for reflection were communicated through the processes her principal used in staff meetings and PLC meetings. Brenda noted her principal's expectation was that they consistently use the data team process, identify needs, and refine instruction. Brenda shared that her principal supported these efforts by listening, offering suggestions and guiding them through the process. Brenda clarified that her principal did not lead the PLC data reflection but guided them and helped them develop more ownership in the process.

Brenda spoke about school-wide opportunities for reflection through grade level transition meetings, in which grade levels met with grade levels above and below them. She shared her experience stating, "We talked to second grade and showed them the verbiage of the standard, the rigor level, and how we needed them to see that and take that into their planning to prepare students for third grade." Brenda shared that these

meetings were opportunities for reflection on instruction and curriculum, not a blame game. Brenda also shared that her principal, Hannah, engaged the whole staff in book studies that she felt would help them to grow, such as helping us to build relationships and school culture.

Brenda talked about the importance of everyone working toward the same goal of helping students to be successful. She noted that Hannah developed norms to problem solve issues and that she was open to explaining herself. She explained that trust and relationships were important components to reach goals for her students with her team. Table 4 presents a summary of Brenda's reflective practices.

Table 4

Brenda: Summary of Reflective Practices

Individual Reflection Strategies	Purpose	Type of Reflection	People	Resources/ Support
Reflection on instruction by thinking and asking questions	Reflection on instructional practices	Reflection in, on and for future instructional actions	Individual teachers	Support with reflective feedback and guiding questions
Reflection on student data	Reflection on student data and instructional practices	Reflection on and for future instructional actions	Individual teachers	Time and support with understanding student data
Observation feedback and belief in me as a teacher	Developing reflective capacity	Reflection on actions for future instructional actions	Individual teachers	Support with reflective feedback, guiding questions belief in individual teacher capacity to reflect
Collective Reflection Strategies	Purpose	Type of Reflection	People	Resources/ Support
PLC reflection on student data, curriculum, and instructional practices by asking questions	Building PLC capacity to reflect and analyze student data and instructional practices	Reflection on student data and instructional actions	PLC grade level members	Administrator support of PLC for data and curriculum reflection
PLC development of professional development plan on student data	Reflect on PLC capacity with the data team process	Reflection in, on and for future actions	PLC grade level members	Support of PLC in understanding the data team process
Vertical transition meetings across grade levels	Reflecting on curriculum and instructional practices across grade levels	Reflection on and for future actions	Vertical team members across the school	Time and opportunities for reflection across grade levels
School-wide opportunities for reflection on school data	Reflection on data as a cultural expectation across the school	Reflection in, on and for future actions	All staff	Time, opportunities and support reflecting on school data
School-wide book studies to build relationships and culture	Reflection on relationships across the school	Reflection on relationships and cultural implications	All staff	Providing opportunities to reflect on relationships and school culture

Candace: First-Grade Teacher

Candace, a Caucasian female, is a first grade teacher at Oceanside Elementary. Candace had a student teacher working in her classroom with her all year. She shared that she thought about reflection as reflecting on what she taught and how she would change it. Candace addressed the need for her as an individual to reflect to ensure that her students were prepared for the next grade level. Candace also spoke about her individual reflections on the content standards. She indicated that this was a focus for her because she was new to the grade level and the standards. Her goal was to ensure that she went in and "started doing teaching and things the way I wanted to, not the way that it's necessarily always been done."

Candace indicated that she felt having a student teacher caused her to focus more on exactly what she was supposed to be teaching. She clarified this by sharing that she felt an obligation to model reflecting on the standards and resources for the student teacher. Candace explained this process helped her to focus more intently on the standards rather than just skimming the surface. Candace also shared that her principal, Hannah, promoted individual reflective practice through staff development, and modeled clearly what the expectation for reflection is and what it should look like. Candace discussed other opportunities and strategies that her principal, used to support her individual reflection including daily walkthroughs.

Additionally, Candace indicated that her principal, Hannah, used the North Carolina Educator Evaluation tool to promote reflection when she did her observation. Candace stated, "I feel like when we have our observation, it's about me, how I'm doing,

what I can do better." Candace spoke about suggestions that her principal shared after an observation stating, "The feedback after the observation both acknowledged and affirmed the work that she was doing."

Candace spoke about the collaborative reflective practice sessions she was involved with at school. She stated that there were PLC meetings on Tuesday afternoons of each week. She discussed the fact that it was also an opportunity where she talked with colleagues and problem solved if there was something instructionally that a classroom struggled with. The principal provided support for the grade level by providing the grade level with administrative support, a spreadsheet, helping them enter their data, and giving them leniency to figure out a data system that best worked for them. Candace shared that her principal sent her to a PLC staff development and stressed that this was an important support. She stated, "This really helped me with you know, being more reflective. As part of the administrative support for implementing the PLC the assistant principal attended the PLC and helped them to look at their data and determine the next steps."

Candace shared the fact that her principal, Hannah, provided her with "data days." These days gave her and her PLC an opportunity to look at their overall data both individually and as a grade level. She noted these opportunities gave both the teacher and the PLC an opportunity to follow up with those that needed help. Her principal, Hannah, was a part of the meetings and her presence helped the PLC determine norms for proficiency. As a PLC with the help of their principal they decided "up front what we feel is proficient, whether they're close or far away and who needs intervention."

This grade level support for each PLC team was provided as part of the data team process. Candace shared that "as a whole, this was something that they had never really done as teachers, to actually analyze the data." Candace indicated that analyzing student data made a large impact on instruction. This analysis allowed them to better meet the needs of their students as they reflected on student data from their common formative assessments based on content standards and they were able to see growth in student learning. She explained that "with everybody talking about numbers and our data and all, it really keeps it at the forefront and makes us think about it a lot more." She shared that her principal's expectation for reflection stating, "She expects us all to do that, but I don't think that she assumes that everyone's doing it, she's encouraged us a lot to be reflective to make sure we're doing the best for each individual child not just the whole group." Table 5 presents a summary of Candace's reflective practices.

Table 5

Candace: Summary of Reflective Practices

Individual Reflection Strategies	Purpose	Type of Reflection	People	Resources/ Support
Reflection on student preparedness for the next grade level	Promote reflection on instructional practices and student needs	Reflection on and for future instructional actions	Individual teachers	Time and opportunities for reflection
Reflection on content standards	Promote reflection on content standards and instructional practices	Reflection on and for future instructional actions	Individual teachers	Instructional leadership support with reflecting to identify priority standards
Modeling reflection with student teacher on curriculum and instructional practices	Developing reflective capacity to reflect on content standards and instructional practices	Reflection on actions for future instructional actions	Individual teachers	Providing support by listening, providing feedback, and posing reflective questions
Walkthrough feedback and North Carolina educator evaluation observation feedback	Promote reflection on instructional practices and instructional delivery models	Reflection in, on and for future instructional actions	Individual teachers	Providing support by providing feedback, and posing reflective questions
Collective Reflection Strategies	**Purpose**	**Type of Reflection**	**People**	**Resources/ Support**
PLC reflection on data analysis, curriculum, and instructional practices	Promote reflection on curriculum, instruction and student data with grade level PLCs	Reflection on student data and instructional actions	PLC grade level members	Instructional support for PLC with curriculum planning Provide release days for PLCs to analyze student data
Administrator modeling through school wide staff development including staff development on the data team process	Sets the norm for reflective practice throughout the school and builds capacity of staff to reflect on student data	Reflection on and for action Reflection on past actions, instructional practices and student data	All staff	Administrator modeling of reflection with staff Providing staff development on the data team process and leniency to figure out a system for analyzing data

Debra: Fourth-Grade Teacher

Debra, a Caucasian female, is a fourth-grade teacher at Oceanside Elementary. Debra explained that the majority of her teaching experience was in third through fifth grade. In her classroom, she used group work, small groups and incorporated technology. Debra also discussed the fact she felt it was important to build a strong sense of classroom community. She defined reflection as "going back and thinking about what she would do differently, was it effective, what things would I change." Debra also said that she felt that since teachers were so busy with everything that reflection was "one of the important pieces that are often forgotten about." She explained that she had a student teacher who worked in her classroom and that the experience with the student teacher helped her to be more reflective as she guided the student teacher.

Debra discussed the strategies that her principal, Hannah, used to help build her individual reflection as a teacher. She noted walkthroughs, instructional coaching, professional development plan conferences, pre-conferences, post-conferences and individual data meetings were all strategies that her principal used to help her grow. Debra discussed how individual reflection was impacting her instructional practices in the classroom stating that she made better lesson plans and reflected more on her data which focused her instruction more on meeting the needs of her individual students. Debra explained that the end result was "the kids are going to be more engaged if you have better lessons, the rigor is better and everything improves at that point after you have reflected."

Debra also spoke about the opportunities for reflection with her PLC using the data team process. She felt that the data team process "forces you into that reflective practice," thinking about "what's working, how did it work, looking at your data to determine why the students did not grow." She shared that her grade level PLC met for day long data meetings once per nine weeks and that during this time they analyzed student data. She noted that her grade level PLC used the data team process for math. Debra shared that her principal supported PLC data reflection and helped the grade level PLC to physically look at the data by providing them with extra assistance in the classroom to differentiate to meet student needs. The administration provided guidance on instructional practices, and helped with creating appropriate common formative assessments. She indicated that the principal "posed questions that got them thinking about the reflective piece" but also attended the weekly grade level PLC meetings and spoke with them in an informal manner about how things had been going at their grade level.

Debra referenced book studies as a school-wide strategy that her principal used throughout the year which helped them become more reflective. She noted that her principal integrated reflection and the book study back into her weekly updates, referenced the book and helped them to become more reflective "not just with our lessons but just in life." Debra discussed the behaviors of her principal as a reason that the school was becoming more reflective. She explained that her principal used an open door policy for communication, provided support and release time for reflection.

A powerful part that Debra spoke about was the school-wide focus on team. She stated that her principal often said "it's not your kids, it our kids, it's not even just fourth-grade kids, it's Oceanside Elementary School's kids, it's looking at the whole child and seeing how everyone has an impact." She shared that there were many individual teams that reflected vertically across grade levels. Debra indicated that this school-wide focus allowed them to reflect on "how things are fitting together" across the school.

Debra shared that staff meetings focused on common values and were another vehicle for school-wide reflective practice. Debra referred to the importance of this reflective activity, saying, "it got us thinking, how are we teaching in the classroom, where we stand, and how we're all trying to get on the same page." Overall Debra said she felt the activity allowed her the opportunity to interact with others she didn't know and reflect on their values as well.

Debra spoke about the huge part that reflection on school-wide data played in the school. She explained that at the beginning of the school year her principal began the year by reflecting on the EOG data with the whole staff. She shared that as a school they reflected on their school-wide data, they "looked at subgroups, focused on why they think it happened, what are the reasons that the subgroup didn't show growth that was expected." Setting off the school year with this type of focus of reflection on data helped "get us in that reflective practice mode." She referenced again the school wide focus that her principal set for the school and stated "so it was that kind of focus that set our focus."

Debra referenced the relationship part of the PLC process and the relationship with her administration. She stated "I care for everybody I work with" and she indicated

that was helpful that you like who you work with because it helped create openness and honesty. Debra stated that she felt the openness "started with administration and trickled down."

Debra spoke about the importance that trust played for her from both administration and her colleagues. She said, "it's huge knowing that my administrator trusts me to do the right thing." She talked about the importance of trust with regard to her teammates, saying, "You're trusting your teammate to do their job, make sure that it's done correctly, that they know the standards. Table 6 presents a summary of Debra's reflective practices.

Table 6

Debra: Summary of Reflective Practices

Individual Reflection Strategies	Purpose	Type of Reflection	People	Resources/ Support
Reflection on curriculum and instruction with student teacher	Reflection on curriculum and instruction	Reflection on and for future actions	Individual teacher and student teacher	Listening, providing feedback, and posing reflective questions
Reflective coaching feedback from walkthroughs	Reflection on instructional practices and delivery	Reflection in action, on action and for future actions	Individual teachers	Provide feedback and pose reflective questions
North Carolina Educator Evaluation components	Develop reflective capacity and professional growth	Reflection on actions and for future actions	Individual teachers	Provide support by listening, providing feedback, and posing reflective questions
Reflection on student data during individual data meetings	Reflection on effectiveness of instructional practices and student learning	Reflection on actions and for future instructional actions	Individual teachers	Support with data analysis and reflection by and prompting reflective questions

Collective Reflection Strategies	Purpose	Type of Reflection	People	Resources/ Support
PLC reflection on data analysis, curriculum, instructional practices, and common formative assessments	Reflection on instructional practices, content standards and data analysis across the grade level PLC	Reflection on instructional actions and for future instructional actions within the PLC	PLC grade level members	Instructional support with curriculum planning and release time for data analysis
Vertical reflection on instructional practices and student data across the school	Reflection on vertical progression of curriculum, instructional practices and data across the school	Reflection on instructional actions and for future instructional actions across the school	Vertical team members	Opportunities for vertical teams to analyze student data and evaluate instructional effectiveness across the school
School-wide book studies and staff meetings reflecting on common values	Reflection on common values in the school culture and redefining the school's mission	Reflection on and for future action	All staff	Opportunities to define core values in an environment fostering trust and relationships
School-wide reflection on data	Analysis of student data	Reflection on action	All staff	Opportunities to build staff capacity to analyze student and school data

Emma: Second-Grade Teacher

Emma, a Caucasian female, is a second grade teacher at Oceanside Elementary. She stated that she viewed reflection as "looking back" and that at school she reflected over data, student work and instructional practices individually and with her PLC. Emma reported that her principal used both the formal North Carolina Educator Evaluation tool for observations which aided with individual reflection. Emma spoke about the feedback she got after an observation, and during the post conference. She explained that during the post conference, her principal shared the observation, strengths and then provided an opportunity for her to reflect on areas in which she might want to improve. Emma noted that her principal usually allowed her time to self-reflect and formulate what she thought she could improve upon and then her principal offered some affirmation if she was too hard on herself.

Emma spoke about the opportunities for weekly reflection with her grade level PLC. During those weekly meetings, Emma reported that they "discussed where we are going with the curriculum and what our plans are." Emma stated "our team is always reflecting, discussing and talking, we meet almost every day either at specials or after school, planning, looking back and using examples we've seen before." Instructional coaching with their PLC, also helped them reflect on their standards as they created common formative assessments. She noted that these rich discussions and support gave them better understanding of the direction that they needed to take and what they needed to do.

Emma also discussed PLC reflection on data done during allotted release time for data meetings. She shared that this reflection opportunity allowed them to monitor their grade level data and grade level instructional implications. Her grade level used their ongoing data to form guided reading and math groups as well as to determine which students need continued intervention. She noted that they reflected on their PLC data, which "helped me see in a broad sense, not only my students but as far as a grade level, where the children need to go, what direction we want to guide them in, and where we need to work on things." As an individual and part of the grade level PLC she noted that she reflected individually on a rubric about how their PLC worked over the course of the year. She noted her principal was compiling and reflecting on that data to help their PLC team move forward for the next year.

Emma noted that her willingness to share with her grade level PLC was closely related to the fact that they all trusted one another and supported one another with confidential matters. She shared that trust was built over time with one another and that part of that was being open to opinions. Emma explained that she felt the success of her PLC was due to the fact that everyone communicated well together, they all supported one another and that they trusted each other. She stated "you have to trust in one another to be a good team and a good team player."

Emma explained that there were school-wide opportunities for reflection. She shared that her principal brought the grade levels together vertically to reflect upon how the curriculum builds and "how important each grade level is in the growth and the success of the child's learning." This experience provided an "opportunity to interrelate

with each other to understand where we need to go because sometimes we don't see that ourselves." She spoke about the personal impact it made on her saying "I got that big impact that day when we reflected on each grade level's role, we laid out expectations for each standard and saw where it started in kindergarten." Overall she noted that this reflection helped to create shared understanding of where they needed to begin and where they needed to end.

Emma shared that her principal, used staff meetings as a safe forum for reflection on common values. Emma discussed that she felt this type of structure was a good one to use to discuss common values because "we all had input in it" and it helped "make us see what is really important to us." She shared that the strategy her principal used of bringing everyone together and not just as individuals made a large impact. Table 7 presents a summary of Emma's reflective practices.

Table 7

Emma: Summary of Reflective Practices

Individual Reflection Strategies	Purpose	Type of Reflection	People	Resources/ Support
Reflection on student data	Analyze instructional effectiveness and student learning	Reflection on action and for future actions	Individual teacher	Opportunities for analyzing student data and instructional practices
Reflection on student work	Promote reflection through analyzing and assessing student work	Reflection on action and for future actions	Individual teachers	Opportunities to analyze student work and pose reflective questions
North Carolina Educator Evaluation components	Develop reflective capacity and professional growth	Reflection on actions and for future actions	Individual teachers	Posing reflective questions and providing observational feedback
Reflection on instructional practices	Reflection on effectiveness of instructional practices and student learning	Reflection on actions and for future instructional actions	Individual teachers	Opportunities for analyzing instructional practices
Collective Reflection Strategies	**Purpose**	**Type of Reflection**	**People**	**Resources/ Support**
PLC reflection on data analysis, curriculum, instructional practices, and common formative assessments	PLC reflection on effectiveness of instructional practices, content standards and data analysis across the grade level PLC	Reflection on instructional actions and for future instructional actions within the PLC	PLC grade level members	Release time for PLCs to develop common formative assessments, reflect on curriculum, and instructional practices
PLC reflection on the development of the PLC	Promote grade level PLC reflection	Reflection on action and for future action	PLC grade level members	Support with understanding a developing PLC of the stages of an effective PLC
School-wide vertical reflection on the curriculum and data across the school	Promote school-wide reflection on curriculum, instructional practices and student data	Reflection on school-wide student data for future instructional actions	Vertical team members	Structures to analyze curriculum implementation and student data across the school
School-wide staff meetings to reflect on common values	Reflection on common values in the school culture	Reflection on and for future action	All staff	Opportunities to define core values, fostering trust and relationships

Analysis of Case 1: Oceanside Elementary School

In analyzing the principal interview and that of the five teachers from Oceanside Elementary there were themes that emerged across all interview data that are pertinent to promoting and sustaining reflective practice in elementary schools. The themes that emerged in this case study were: definitions of reflective practice as looking back at instructional practices for instructional effectiveness as it related to student learning, administrator modeling of reflective questioning, administrator modeling of reflection, individual differentiated opportunities for building teacher reflection capacity, and administrator support of PLC and school-wide reflection with standards, data school vision, and instruction. Finally, the last area that emerged as a theme from this case study was the role of trust and relationships in the reflective opportunities.

Administrator Modeling of Reflective Questioning

Hannah spoke about the importance of reflection stating that "the most important part for her as an administrator was thinking about how she could get them to reflect." She shared that some staff tended to be reflective while other staff were not reflective but that she believed as a leader that she had to "ask questions, present data and put them in a position to bring about that reflection." She shared that this "Puts it out in front of them and creates the opportunity for them to discuss what is in front of them."

Hannah shared that as a principal she felt an important strategy she used and the most powerful at a school-wide level was her modeling of reflection as an administrator for her staff. She discussed the fact that she felt "I don't think we can grow and get better if we're not willing to look at what we're doing and it is working." She explained that she

did this in a variety of formats including, "staff meetings, weekly updates, and thoughts for the week." She noted that she felt that staff meetings were "the biggest stage that she had to do modeling" of the expectation of reflection. She continued on stating "if I want them to reflect, they have to see me reflecting, and I think that can sometimes be hard as a school leader because it means making yourself vulnerable." She reported that "as leaders, we try to get teachers to reflect, but then we never give them the opportunity to see us do it" and that staff "have to see us intentionally be reflective."

Abby noted that she believed that Hannah was a good role model for reflection because she modeled reflection with the staff by using strategies such as "Sharing her personal thoughts at staff meetings, how she perceived the books they've read, things she's noticed, and modeling the strategies in her staff meetings that she would like for us to implement."

Definitions of Reflective Practice

In summarizing the findings for how reflective practices were occurring at Oceanside, I found there were similarities and themes that emerged across individual teachers, grade levels and across the school. I think it is important to first examine how the staff at this school viewed reflection to understand more clearly how the principal used strategies to promote reflection. It was interesting in note, in this particular case study that the majority of teachers interviewed categorized reflection as "looking back. Abby, a veteran kindergarten teacher indicated "Reflection is something that we do as teachers, as principals, as a staff, to think about what your role is in working with children, thinking about your lessons and how well they've gone or maybe some things

that need to be improved upon, did it work, did it not work, those kinds of self- reflecting

questions." Similarly, third-grade teacher Brenda defined reflective practice as looking

back. She spoke about reflection stating "delivery of instruction, reflection on students

and outcomes, what we're doing, is it working, reflecting on student responses to

instruction within her PLC and looking back when you need to make changes." This

theme of reflection as looking back continued with first grade teacher, Candace. She said

that she thought about reflection as reflecting on what she taught and how she would

change it. Candace discussed the importance of reflection stating, "If you don't reflect on

how it's going or how well they did or how well you did, you're not growing, they're not

growing." Debra, a fourth-grade teacher at Oceanside also talked about reflection as

"going back and thinking about what I would do differently, was it effective, what things

would I change." However, Debra continued to talk about reflection in action saying that

"even throughout teaching your lesson you're being reflective trying to change things as

it's going." Debra also said that she felt that since teachers are so busy with everything

that reflection is "one of the important pieces that is often forgotten about."

Individual Differentiated Opportunities for Building Teacher Reflection Capacity

Hannah shared that she used the North Carolina Educator Evaluation tool to help

promote reflection and the components of that process including the observation post

conference. She explained that every individual teacher was different, how she supported

them and the type of conversations with them had to be different. She compared the

preparation that she needed to do to prepare for these conversations to the prep work that

a teacher does with a lesson plan stating "Just like a teacher plans a lesson, I always tell

teachers you know, you're not going to ask those higher level questions if you don't plan

for them right, so I think kind of planning for those conversations with teachers is really

important." She discussed what she meant by planning for the conversations saying "I

formulate in my mind what it is I want to say, if there are questions that I want to ask

them to get them thinking or to kind of get them to where I want them to go." Hannah

discussed the importance of the questions that she posed for individual teachers being

differentiated to meet their needs. She explained that these might be different for

someone that was more resistant to change or someone who was wanting to grow and

change. She explained that having those conversations with "naturally reflective

teachers" was different than having conversations with "teachers you have to pull it

from." Hannah provided some examples of the questions she posed during the post

conference with teachers including, "What would you rate the engagement of the students

in the lesson, and what were some examples of student success during the lesson."

Several of the teachers noted that their principal used the North Carolina Educator

Evaluation tool as a means to help them with reflecting. Candace shared that her

principal, Hannah helped her with reflecting individually by posing questions to help

facilitate the reflection process. She stated, "I feel like when we have our observation, it's

about me, how I'm doing, what I can do better." Emma spoke about the feedback that she

received from her principal, noting that it provided an opportunity for her to reflect and

think about where to improve her practice. One special part of this feedback is that her

principal allowed her to self-reflect and formulate what she thought she could improve

upon instead of telling her.

Hannah acknowledged that the challenging part "as a principal was being prepared for those different conversations" when principals are switching gears quickly between tasks. She noted that some teachers do not arrive at the level of reflection that you would like them to so you just have to try again, starting at the same place but asking a question in a different way to help them reflect. Hannah addressed how she differentiated for individual reflection on the North Carolina end of year evaluation summative tool for each teacher. She explained that these individual summative meetings presented the opportunity to have individual conversations on what teachers needed in terms of support to help teachers continue to develop. She stated that she always asked one important question as a part of those conversations stating "What can we do to help support you to help you move forward?"

Throughout the school, individual reflection seemed to take on many forms and purposes for all the teachers that were interviewed. Walkthroughs, instructional coaching, professional development plan conferences, pre-conferences, post-conferences and individual data meetings were all strategies that the principal Hannah used to help teachers grow individually. Abby noted that she engaged in individual reflective practice daily, throughout the day as she was thinking. She referenced reflecting on the end of year student data as a mechanism for reflection. Similarly, Brenda stated that her individual reflection was ongoing. She stated,

> Individually, I'm always reflecting and sometimes I think I reflect too much, I think too much about something and then it bothers me because I may mention it to somebody, I'm trying to think of another way to handle this or do this differently and they're like well I didn't see anything wrong.

Brenda spoke about the individual reflective questions that she asked herself, including, "Why aren't they getting something? What do I need to do differently? or What can I change that might help them?" As a result of her individual reflective practice she sought out help from her PLC.

Reflection with Data

Hannah discussed the challenge of meeting the needs of teachers with understanding data "at all different levels of reflecting." She noted that capability and skills to reflect on student data varied among her staff. Hannah shared that with some teachers and grade levels, "I don't have to do a lot of work with them to get them thinking about their data, what they need to do differently; they just naturally go through the process." This differentiated support for reflection on student data was evidenced when Abby explained how reflection on her student data helped her to differentiate her instruction, by stating "it helps me see, like if the children have already attained their goals, maybe some enrichment activities I could include as well as to differentiate for those that maybe still haven't put it all together." These opportunities allowed her to reflect on "student growth and where students are at this point."

Brenda shared that her principal, Hannah helped her to grow in using data. Brenda stated, "Up until the past couple of years I really didn't understand how to use my student data." Hannah recognized that wasn't a strength and helped her learn to use student data. Brenda evidenced the impact Hannah's support made for her stating; "Now I spend more time with my data on my own to gain more information on my students." Most of all,

Brenda shared the most important support from her principal was her "belief in me" in being able to use the data.

PLC Reflective Practice Opportunities

Throughout the case there was a theme of support for reflection within the grade level PLC on standards and data. Brenda discussed how she engaged in PLC reflection on thinking data and curriculum. Brenda's principal, Hannah, provided release time for the PLC to meet quarterly to review their student data as a PLC. During those meetings the PLC discussed assessment data and where they needed to go instructionally to meet student needs. Brenda addressed the crucial nature of reflecting as a team, saying "If you don't reflect as a team or group you won't improve. It is important to "recognize and see the deficit." She shared that the bulk of the reflection that her PLC did was through discussion. In fact, Brenda stated, "We're always asking for help, asking questions, making sure we understand and trying to figure out what needs to happen." Brenda shared that her principal supported the efforts of her PLC to reflect on their data by "listening, offering suggestions and guiding them through the process." Brenda clarified that her principal did not lead the PLC data reflection but guided them to develop more ownership in the process.

Hannah explained the importance of administrative support during the data team process stating, "I've sat through that process and seen them really be able to reflect, but what I have found is they wouldn't do it without the prompting." Hannah shared some of the prompting that administration offered such as, "What worked, what didn't, what does this mean, what are the misconceptions." She shared that some teachers were able to

reflect on the data with little prompting as reflecting on data comes naturally to them but for other teachers the data needed to be broken down into strengths and weaknesses to help them to reflect on the data.

Candace discussed the importance of reflection on her data and that of her PLC stating, "the CFAs gives us a chance to know who really needs to focus on what, especially those kids, who have already mastered it, then they don't need to be involved." Candace explained this process, stating,

> once a week, we do meet to go over how well they are doing. We look at our CFA data, pre-test and then if we have a post-test, we look at our standards to see where we're going next, what we need to focus on and if we need to drop back and focus on something again.

She noted that they worked together as a PLC on reflect on their standards to go deeper versus, skimming the surface. Similarly, Abby shared these PLC data meetings gave them an opportunity to talk about their practices, "What's working, what's not working, what could they do differently to help this particular child that is struggling or what can we do for those students that know this material and need to move on further."

Principal Hannah reported that she and her administrative team worked with some other grade levels that needed more support with analyzing their data or curriculum mapping. She explained that as an administrative team, they asked more intentional questions to get them to reflect. These intentional pre-planning of questions did take time but she noted that just telling the PLC would not have provided them with the opportunity to reflect and have those reflective moments. Hannah discussed the importance of support being differentiated to meet the needs of the PLC based on where

the PLC was in their development. Emma shared that her principal gave each grade level PLC a rubric to reflect on individually on how their PLC was working at this point in the year. Emma discussed the fact that each member of her PLC would be turning in their individual reflections on the PLC and then the administration would be compiling and reflecting on that data to help their PLC team move forward for the next year.

School-wide Reflection

Hannah spoke about her efforts to coordinate school-wide reflection on student data. Her purpose in sharing the data in that way was for the staff to see that "we have to do something different." One strategy that Hannah noted she used to help her staff better understand the data and how to reflect upon it, was the presentation of data in a visual format. She continued on saying that this method allowed them to "go through and look at each child, and get a picture of the grade level" as a whole to determine what their next steps need to be.

Debra explained that at the beginning of the school year her principal began the year by reflecting on the EOG data with the whole staff. She shared that as a part of reflecting on their school-wide data they "looked at subgroups, focused on why they think it happened, what are the reasons that the subgroup didn't show growth that was expected." Setting off the school year with this type of focus of reflection on data helped "get us in that reflective practice mode." She referenced again the school wide focus that her principal set for the school and stated "so it was that kind of focus that set our focus."

Another school-wide strategy that Hannah spoke about further was again using her staff meetings, where all staff attend as reflective opportunities. She shared that this

year they were engaged in revisiting their mission, vision and core values. During this reflective process, she explained that she first asked them to "reflect personally on what was important to them, what they value in work, what they want to be remembered for" and then she took it to the school level. She reported that during this activity "she modeled her personal reflection to get them thinking" and she felt as though "anytime you share, you make yourself vulnerable, which puts them in a position to be willing to do that." Debra referred to the importance of the reflection portion of this activity saying, "It got us thinking, how are we teaching in the classroom, where we stand, and how we're all trying to get on the same page." She articulated that the purpose for undertaking this was to develop a common theme for the staff at Oceanside.

Abby praised her principal's efforts, stating,

She is such as support when she meets with our PLC and even during staff meetings. She offers up suggestions and plans our staff meetings around things that she sees maybe as a need in our building to help us further the reflective piece as a PLC, individually and as a staff.

She noted that her principal, Hannah, supported their collaborative reflective efforts with providing them with the time to reflect on their data but additionally set up the staff meetings to model various methods to differentiate. Abby stated that Hannah "set up the staff meeting to look like what our classroom should look like."

Emma spoke about how her principal was leading school-wide efforts for reflective practice through vertical curriculum teams. She shared that there was a lot of collaboration in the school and that "if we ever have questions they always support us to be collaborative to one another, discuss what you need and to give each other ideas." She

noted that the administration often "takes the opportunity to sit and talk with them and strategize." One particular example that she shared revolved around the opportunity that her principal created for each grade level to do vertical planning with the next grade level. As a result of this experience Emma said that she had the "opportunity to interrelate with others to understand where we need to go because sometimes we don't see that ourselves." Emma discussed the fact that her administration desired for the grade levels to use this information to help each other and to team build. A powerful part that Debra spoke about was the school-wide focus on team. She stated that her principal will often say "it's not your kids, it our kids, it's not even just fourth grade kids, it's Oceanside Elementary's kids, it's looking at the whole child and seeing how everyone has an impact." Additionally, Debra spoke about the connection that her principal has worked to create from individual teams to school-wide areas of focus. She shared that there are many individual teams that do reflection vertically across several grade levels. Debra shared that the advantage that she sees to this school-wide focus is that they are not merely reflecting on one class but more on "how things are fitting together" across the school. She explained that this helped to encourage discussion.

Debra referenced book studies as a strategy that her principal used throughout the year to help them become more reflective. She noted that her principal weaves the reflection and book study back into her weekly updates, referencing the book and helping them to overall be more reflective "not just with our lessons but just in life." Debra also discussed other types of support including professional development opportunities to

attend data team trainings for each grade level. She explained the huge impact these made on "assessing the grouping and differentiation in the classroom."

Intentional Planning for School-wide Reflection

Principal Hannah addressed the fact that she felt that reflection was critical to school improvement efforts as a principal. She stated, "We have to be able to reflect on what's worked and what hasn't and you have to be willing to figure out a way to finesse that as a school administrator. You also have to be willing to talk about the tough things." She provided an example of how they have not shown the growth that they would like to as a school and that historically they had been a school of high growth. Over the years that had changed and it is now creating a new dynamic for the staff to have to grapple with. She shared, "I have found it is really important, to be able to say, this is where we've been, this is where we're going . . . good enough isn't good enough anymore." She continued on sharing that she had talked with staff to say "We've been good enough and that's worked for us, but probably not going to work for us anymore, so what does that mean, what does that look like?"

Communication and Trust in Reflection

A common contextual theme of trust, effective communication and relationships was apparent throughout the case. All three played an important part of setting the scene for true reflective practice to occur. Trust, effective communication and positive relationships must be in place between administrators and teachers as well as members of the PLC and across the school. In this case Abby stated that "Trust and communication are an extremely important part of her PLC, other staff and the whole school, because it's

really a village effort, with students, they're not really our personal students, they're everybody's students." Brenda talked about the importance of everyone working toward the same goal of helping students to be successful. She noted that her principal, Hannah developed norms to problem solve issues. Candace explained that her grade level PLC decided to create norms for how they would work together and that they posted them in the room with their grade chair. Brenda noted that trust and relationships were important components for her to reach goals for her students with her team. She noted that to be able to trust someone, she had to know that they would not go behind her back and talk if she went to them with an issue. Abby shared that she felt that the support her principal Hannah provided "helps us because she trusts us and is open with us. She has an open door policy where we can come and express concerns or suggestions and she uses that to further support us." Candace noted that her principal, Hannah utilized an "open door" policy and that they could talk about things.

Emma noted that her willingness to share with her grade level PLC was closely related to the fact that they all trusted one another and supported one another with confidential matters. She shared that over time they built that trust with another and that part of that was supporting one another but being open to opinions. She shared that she was open to the opinions of her teammates, and simply, "takes the information, weighs it and uses what she thinks." Emma shared that she felt the success of her PLC was due to the fact that everyone communicated well together, that they all supported one another and that they trusted each other. She stated, "You have to trust in one another to be a good team and a good team player." When there is an issue Emma noted that she wanted

to be treated fairly and if given constructive criticism that "it's not something that's going to discourage or make you feel inadequate."

Similarly, Debra stated, "I care for everybody I work with" and she indicated that the relationship with administration was helpful because it helped create openness and honesty. She also referenced an "open door policy" with administration. Debra stated that she felt the openness "started with administration and trickled down." She said "it's huge knowing that my administrator trusts me to do the right thing." She also talked about the importance of trust with regard to her teammates, saying, "You're trusting your teammate to do their job, make sure that it's done correctly, that they know the standards." In conclusion, she stated, "You have to trust that everyone's doing their job, the right job, following the plans, and doing things appropriately, and if you don't have it things will fall apart in a school."

Implications for Practicing Elementary Principals

There are several takeaways from this particular case that are of particular importance to practicing principals. This case speaks to the importance of principals modeling reflection, as well as providing for differentiated opportunities for building teacher reflection capacity. As a practicing principal this means differentiating how we ask questions to help teachers arrive at the level of self-reflection that is needed for them to continually reflect on their instructional practices. Another critical point that emerged from this case was the support with data analysis that individual teachers, PLCs, and all staff need to truly be able to reflect on the data. With the many data reports being provided to teachers they need time for data analysis, support with understanding the data

and guidance for the next instructional steps. As a principal, the next step after reflecting

on the data is most important to me because that is where the rubber meets the road for

instructional practices in individual classroom, across grade levels and throughout the

school. The true work of reflecting on curriculum standards, curriculum mapping and the

best instructional practices takes instructional coaching for individual teachers, PLCs and

school staff in an environment where there is trust and effective communication.

CHAPTER V

PRESENTATION OF CASE STUDY 2: SOUNDSIDE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

In this chapter I will present the interview data from each of the participants in Case Study 2, themes that emerged from the interview data and an analysis of the themes. I will begin with an introduction to the case study site and participants of Soundside Elementary School.

Table 8

Participants at Soundside Elementary School

Participant	Position
Breanna	Principal at Soundside Elementary
Angela	Kindergarten Teacher
Mary	First-Grade Teacher
Susan	Second Grade Teacher
Joan	Third-Grade Teacher
Danielle	Fifth-Grade Teacher

Soundside Elementary is located in the piedmont of North Carolina and serves approximately 550 students. Soundside is a K-5 elementary school. This elementary school is a Title I elementary school, meaning that is serves a clientele that meets the federal guidelines of 50% or more of their student population that receives free or reduced lunch. Currently the school has 80% of their students qualifying as free or

reduced lunch. This school is located in a suburban area. The demographics include 30% Caucasian, 30% African American, and 30% Hispanic. Historically, this school has struggled with showing proficiency.

The staff of the school was diverse. The principal noted that one-fourth of the staff were new staff in their first few years of teaching, the remaining three-fourths were split between those with ten or more years of teaching experience and those that were nearing retirement. The major struggle the principal spoke about was that the staff were struggling with closing the subgroup gap of their African American population of students and everyone else.

According to the North Carolina School Report card for this school for the 2013-2014 school year the school did meet growth expectations and they have a school achievement score of 44%, and had 71.2% growth. Overall school performance was at 50%, with EOG reading at 49% and EOG math at 46%. These ratings gave the school an overall D rating according to the state school report card standards. According to the 13-14 North Educator Effectiveness database 7.1% of teachers were ranked as developing in the area of reflective practice, while 42.9% were ranked as proficient and 50% were ranked as accomplished.

Breanna: Principal of Soundside Elementary School

The principal of Soundside Elementary school is a Caucasian female. Her name is Breanna and she served as the school's principal for three years. Prior to coming to this school she was principal at another school in the district for three years. She stressed that even with her teachers being at different levels of experience, the experience level was

not always indicative of the level of reflection. Breanna spoke about the need to provide differentiated reflective experiences for her teachers because they all had varying levels of need.

Breanna explained some of the reflective practices she put into place for her beginning teachers. She discussed the fact that some of the newer teachers were coming in with more recent reflective practice experiences from their college experiences. Breanna continued on and shared that the nearby college "stresses reflection" and so "it is more natural when you have conversations with these new teachers." She discussed the fact that when she had conversations with these teachers, it was likely that they had already reflected and were already looking for solutions.

Breanna shared an example of support that she and her administrative team provided for new teachers. She noted that the new teachers shared a desire and need to observe math centers so the academic coach coordinated a visit to another school where there was a strong math teacher. During the observation at the other school, the new teachers were able to observe how she managed guided math and centers.

She discussed the role that reflection played in professional learning and school improvement efforts in general. She spoke directly about the differentiated support that was needed for individual teachers to reflect through the use of purposeful questions and dialogue. She indicated that as the administrator, there was often some "pushing that I do." Breanna indicated that she felt reflection was most beneficial when teachers were able to see the need for changes in their practices.

She shared that some of the strategies she used for promoting individual differentiated professional development included, asking guiding questions or being more directive based on the needs of the teacher. She used guiding questions as she was meeting and as she talked with teachers to help them reflect. As a principal, she indicated that she felt she needed to be proactive and plan differentiated professional development to meet the needs of this group of teachers. She shared her intentional planning to support these higher levels of teacher reflection for the next year. This included putting those individuals in a group, surveying their interest of book topics for professional growth, and letting them be a part of the professional development planning for next school year.

Breanna shared that she used the North Carolina Educator Evaluation tool to help teachers reflect and create an action plan for the next school year. She shared that as part of the end of year process for evaluating teachers they reviewed the progress they made on their professional development tool. Breanna explained that this summative tool created an opportunity to dialogue with some teachers regarding performance concerns. For these teachers the dialogue was a balance of facilitated reflection questions and directed conversation to lead them to reflect. Breanna discussed the fact that some of these directed conversations were more "intentional conversations with some people, to have them have a truer picture when reflecting." This tool allowed "people to really reflect on what they've done during the year" and then "turned it into actions for the next year."

Breanna explained that as part of helping to promote differentiated support for reflection that she asked teachers to identify the qualities of accomplished teachers and to

reflect on what they needed to do to get to that same accomplished level of teaching. She expressed that she did this in an effort "to make things tangible for people who are just proficient, moving to accomplished, to identify what truly is the distinguishing factor between both groups." Thus, there was an intentional focus on moving individual teachers and coaching them on how to move to higher levels of reflection.

One strategy she noted that she intentionally planned to utilize to help people to reflect more accurately was videoing people. Breanna discussed the fact, that she felt videotaping would be a cut and dry way to help teachers reflect on variety of things within their classrooms. She shared that her plan was to "have pre-planned questions to help facilitate reflection that's more accurate." As part of her intentional planning for the next school year, when they "completed summatives or end of year PDPs, there was a need to have a sheet where they can go ahead and write down what they want to do for the next school year." Interestingly, she noted that "most of our end-of-year conversations were thinking about how they wanted to continue to grow the next year based on what they've learned this year."

As principal, Breanna shared how she supported a professional learning community focus of reflection on student data. Part of this support was intentional regular release time for all grade levels as well as time for vertical conversations among the ELA and Math teams. She noted that the focus of work of the PLCs shifted from managerial things to data over the course of the year. She explained that she felt this shift was due in large part to the creation of common formative assessments.

Staff meetings at Soundside Elementary were utilized as a school-wide reflective vehicle. The staff meetings used a book study approach and included all members of the school staff. Breanna shared that during the staff meetings there was "the opportunity for everyone to reflect on what they're already doing, and go ahead and figure out how they want to tweak it and get better, or put new things into practice.

Breanna expressed that there was a school-wide cultural change from individual reflection to more reflection occurring among PLC teams and across grade levels. She noted that she felt the reason this change occurred was due to the normalization of the "data teaming process and asking questions." She shared that this process "pushed teachers to be leaders and ask questions." Breanna spoke further about this stating "finally having some leadership emerge on the teams in a way has made it more accepted to ask questions." She noted that the teams were now asking "more why questions." A challenge she did share was "the whole thing with data talk is you get to a certain point and you discuss the data through and through but then changing your habits later is hard."

Other school-wide efforts Breanna shared included a school-wide focus on closing the achievement gap within the school. This focus required staff members to confront uncomfortable questions to be able to move forward. Breanna noted that she felt that uncovering these gaps in performance required addressing the need to create a culture where teachers felt comfortable having difficult conversations with one another. She stated that she often said, "This isn't a personal conversation, it's a professional conversation" but she noted that "teachers can't do professional without feeling it is personal." She shared the strides they made toward creating this culture by "developing

leaders and having uncomfortable conversations" as part of a book study entitled Monday

Morning Leadership. Part of their work in this area was going through scenarios, talking

about responses and talking about "how with silence you support." Table 9 presents a

summary of Breanna's reflective practices.

Table 9

Breanna: Summary of Reflective Practices

Individual Reflection Strategies	Purpose	Type of Reflection	People	Resources/ Support
Providing differentiated support for beginning teachers by allowing new teachers opportunities to observe other teachers	Promoting reflection on instructional practices through observations	Reflection on action and for future actions	Individual teacher	Differentiated support based on reflective needs of teachers and opportunities for observing instructional practices
Asking purposeful questions	Promote reflective capacity through reflective questioning	Reflection on action and for future actions	Individual teachers	Opportunities for reflective questioning
Supporting differentiated growth through use of the North Carolina Educator Evaluation Tool	Develop reflective capacity and professional growth	Reflection on actions and for future actions	Individual teachers	Posing reflective questions and providing observational feedback
Reflecting on identification of qualities of accomplished teachers	Reflection on effective instructional practices and teacher leaders	Reflection on actions and for future actions	Individual teachers	Opportunities for analyzing effective instructional practices
Collective Reflection Strategies	**Purpose**	**Type of Reflection**	**People**	**Resources/ Support**
PLC reflection on student data	Promote PLC and school-wide reflection on instructional practices and student data	Reflection on instructional actions and for future instructional actions within the PLC	PLC grade level members	Release time for PLCs to discuss instructional planning, curriculum and student data
School-wide staff meetings to reflect on curriculum, instructional practices, and student data	School-wide reflection on instructional practices and student data	School-wide reflection on past instructional actions curriculum, data, and instructional actions for future	All staff	Opportunities and support for staff in understanding school-wide data Book studies focused on instructional practices
Reflect on closing the school achievement gap	Instructional practices to close the gap	Reflection on and for future actions	All staff	Supporting staff through difficult conversations

Angela: Kindergarten Teacher

Angela, a Caucasian female. teaches kindergarten at Soundside Elementary. She explained that she was a structured teacher with high expectations. She shared that her classroom was set up to maximize reading instruction. She was responsible for teaching the literacy block of kindergarten, which included, whole group reading instruction, small group guided reading instruction and writing block.

Angela indicated,

Reflection is basically the practices you're putting into place, what you're doing with the students, and then looking at that to see what's working, what's not working, and even the things that are working instructionally, structurally, how you can improve upon that, what you can do to continue to increase their academics and to meet the expectations and go above them.

Angela noted that she was constantly engaged in individual reflective practice. She shared that often she was engaged in reflecting that was "focused on instructional planning, thinking and looking forward at the assessments." Often that reflection was centered around "how can I change this from last year or from last week to improve the student engagement." This reflection was constant throughout the day as well as the questioning that was occurring in her mind. She shared that often she reflected after the fact about why something didn't work, but during her teaching and for the future as she was planning to meet the needs of the students. Her reflection focused on "reflecting on where the student has been, where the instructional planning has been and how to improve upon that to help them grow."

Additionally, she shared that there were individual opportunities for reflection through the observation and evaluation conferences, walkthroughs and PDP conferences. After the walkthroughs, administration usually provided feedback for staff to reflect upon. Angela noted that her principal was good at using questioning about what had happened in the classroom, having them reflect on step by step of what happened during the lesson and giving us ideas of things we "could think about in the future."

Angela was involved in reflective practice with her grade level colleagues as part of her professional learning community. She shared that her principal provided them with release time for the PLC to meet to work together weekly. She also indicated that her PLC was provided an additional day to support curriculum mapping and another day to support reflection on student data. Their PLC work was focused on reflecting on the content strands, curriculum mapping and creation of common formative assessments. She shared that they were "trying hard to improve on their CFA." Angela noted that they were reflecting collaboratively as a PLC on their students and student needs.

Angela shared that her principal provided each grade level PLC release time to complete assessments, but that also provided two release days each nine weeks. One of the days was allotted as a data day, while the other day was allotted for curriculum mapping and planning. She expressed that they were recently involved with graphing their mClass assessment data. As part of graphing the data, the PLC team looked at and questioned "Which kids are in each group? Why do we think that is?" and "What are we doing throughout our instructional day?" She shared that they finally ended by "writing their goal of how we're going to move those students up, what strategies we are going to

put in place to move these kids and when we will meet again to re-graph the data."

Angela discussed that her principal wanted a concrete plan to come from this, "Detailing

which students are going to be in those groups, how many times a week, and what we are

going to be doing in those groups." Angela shared that these data discussions could

become "pretty intense" when they were discussing why certain students were not

making progress. She noted that teachers could often get defensive and make excuses, but

the principal was creating an expectation of "we're not going to have excuses, we're

going to fix it."

Angela shared that her principal provided staff meetings and vertical team

meetings as other ways to reflect. Her administration provided release time during the

school day so that the vertical math and ELA team could meet to discuss data trends and

instructional implications across the school. Prior to the vertical meeting her principal

provided a detailed agenda of what she wanted them to talk about as a group, and what

they needed to plan. Angela explained that this "Sets the tone on what we need to look at

across grade levels." The principal also brought in district lead teachers to work through

the data and instructional planning.

Angela acknowledged the support that her principal provided to her grade level

PLC. She noted that "Breanna provided resources and supported the efforts of her PLC

by providing release time for data and planning, opportunities to attend professional

development sessions, as well as instructional materials. Table 10 presents a summary of

Angela's reflective practices.

Table 10

Angela: Summary of Reflective Practices

Individual Reflection Strategies	Purpose	Type of Reflection	People	Resources/ Support
Reflection on instructional planning, looking forward at the assessments	Individual reflection on instructional practices	Reflection on action and for future actions	Individual teacher	Providing time and opportunities for teacher to reflect
Reflection on walkthrough feedback	Promote reflective capacity through reflective questioning	Reflection on action and for future actions	Individual teachers	Posing reflective questions and providing observational feedback
Reflection using the North Carolina Educator Evaluation components	Develop reflective capacity and professional growth	Reflection on and for future actions	Individual teachers	Posing reflective questions and providing feedback
Collective Reflection Strategies	**Purpose**	**Type of Reflection**	**People**	**Resources/ Support**
PLC reflection on content standards, curriculum, student data and creating common formative assessments	Reflection on standards, curriculum, instructional practices and student data	Reflection on instructional actions and for future instructional actions within the PLC	PLC grade level members	Release time for PLCs curriculum mapping and data analysis
School-wide vertical team meetings to reflect on curriculum and instruction across the school	Reflection on curriculum and instructional practices across the school	School-wide reflection on past instructional actions curriculum, data, and instructional actions for future	All staff	Release time for vertical data analysis and curriculum planning
School-wide staff meetings to reflect on instructional practices and data	Reflection on student data and instructional practices across the school	School-wide reflection on past instructional actions curriculum, data, and instructional actions for future	All staff	Facilitation of data analysis through reflective questioning

Providing opportunities for all staff to learn instructional practices |

Mary: First-Grade Teacher

Mary, a Caucasian female, is a first-grade teacher at Soundside Elementary. She shared that she taught the literacy block for both a high and low group of students. She explained that she viewed "reflective practice as not necessarily something you have to sit down to do, you can do it as you are teaching, like oh, that didn't go well, so let me change this, it is an on your feet kind of thing." Mary clarified her belief of reflective practice by stating, "Reflection is just thinking about what you are doing, what you've done, and is it working, or it is not working? How can I change it, to ensure it is working?"

One mechanism that helped Mary to reflect was having a student teacher. Mary shared that having the student teacher helped her reflect because "She questioned a lot, which is great and then I had to have to have a reason for why I did this or why I did that so having her has been good for my reflecting." The process of observing the student teacher and providing feedback helped her as a teacher to "think about why I do things a certain way."

She explained that her principal helped her to reflect individually by helping her to think through problems. However, she noted that when she went to her principal she ended up doing much of the problem solving. Mary shared that her principal desired for her become more of a teacher leader in the building and tried to "give me the opportunity to build that up." Mary explained that her principal helped to support the individual reflection of teachers by identifying and putting them into different book study groups

based on needs. Mary expressed that she felt that this book study activity would help her to reflect and incorporate the strategies into her classroom practices.

Additionally, Mary's principal used the North Carolina Educator Evaluation tool as she observed and evaluated teachers. Walkthroughs were used as a mechanism to encourage reflection. She noted that her principal used a rubric and sometimes followed up and sometimes did not.

Mary's principal used both K-5 data teams as well as data days to promote reflective practice across the school. These vertical teams facilitated understanding of the curriculum transition between grade levels. She shared that this was a great tool for seeing where one grade level began and where another ended, while the data days provided an opportunity to dig deeper into the school level data. She noted that during these meetings her principal also called in lead teachers from the district to help facilitate data conversations.

Her principal provided the opportunity for the grade level PLCs to put all the data out there and have time to really examine the data. During these meetings the PLC members examined "where they are and what they need to do to change?" Mary explained that her principal provided time for her grade level team members to engage in data team meetings using student data. This day of time to reflect on data was provided for each grade level PLC once per nine weeks. She shared that they were also provided a day to reflect on the curriculum, doing curriculum mapping and the creation of common formative assessments. During these sessions the grade level was involved in reflecting and clarifying the standards. Mary stated, "We talked about the difference between, are

we trying to teach them how to write a complete sentence to answer the question or are we trying to teach them how to answer the question using the text." She noted that her grade level PLC used this data to drive instruction. Her principal was a part of the data days and provided guiding questions to help the grade level to reflect upon how they were grouping students based on the data. Her principal asked questions such as "Well these five weren't successful, how come and why do you think, what can you change, what do you need to do to make sure they are successful?" During these times they graphed their data with colored cards for each teacher. She shared that she mostly enjoyed the experience of the reflection on the data during data days but noted that "some folks do get offended" by this close look at data. "Maybe it is because they know they could try a little harder, or do something a little different and they're just not willing to step out of that comfort zone." Mary expressed that "data" was important to the principal and to the school. She shared the principal was "big about change and gradually moving our school in the right direction."

Mary indicated that she felt that good relationships and trust with members of her grade level team as well as her student teacher helped her reflection experiences to be positive. "If there wasn't that trust and relationship there I wouldn't feel like I could go over there and discuss the behavioral issues or where they are academically with them." She shared that her student teacher was really "open to feedback and was seeking that feedback constantly."

As a school culture, Mary shared that that some staff did get stressed because of the reflection on data and the changing cultural expectations but "it actually makes you

think about why you are doing things and not just the daily, I've got to get this done."
There was an emphasis on the thought behind why you are doing things. She indicated
that the impact on the school was that "everyone's deliberate and everything's deliberate,
based on the data." Table 11 presents a summary of Mary's reflective practices.

Table 11

Mary: Summary of Reflective Practices

Individual Reflection Strategies	Purpose	Type of Reflection	People	Resources/ Support
Reflection with student teacher observing, providing feedback and asking questions	Provide clarifying information and feedback to student teacher-teacher reflection is a by product	Reflection on instructional actions and for future instructional actions	Individual teacher and student teacher	Providing time and opportunities for teacher to reflect and have student teachers
Reflection through individual problem solving with the principal and differentiated book study	Promote problem solving and reflection capacity Meets the needs of reflective growth of individual teachers	Reflection on action and for future actions	Individual teachers	Opportunities for teachers to interact with administration in a problem solving format with the administrator posing reflective questions in a non-evaluative manner
Reflection using the North Carolina Educator Evaluation components and walkthrough feedback	Promote reflection on instructional actions and professional growth	Reflection on and for future actions	Individual teachers	Posing reflective questions and providing feedback
Collective Reflection Strategies	**Purpose**	**Type of Reflection**	**People**	**Resources/ Support**
PLC reflection on content standards, curriculum, student data and creating common formative assessments	Reflection on standards, curriculum, instructional practices and student data	Reflection on instructional actions and for future instructional actions within the PLC	PLC grade level members	Release time for PLCs curriculum mapping and data analysis
School-wide vertical team meetings to reflect on curriculum and data across the school	Reflection on curriculum and instructional practices across the school	School-wide reflection on past instructional actions curriculum, data, and instructional actions for future	All staff	Structures for effective data meetings Facilitating with reflective questioning Providing additional district personnel for support

Susan: Second-Grade Teacher

Susan, a Caucasian female, is a second-grade teacher at Soundside Elementary. She characterized her classroom as being diverse. The needs of the students included high needs students, as well as students that were academically gifted and in between.

She defined reflection as occurring all the time, "whether I reflect on how I handle discipline, routines, communication or students that aren't making progress and why." Susan indicated that she reflected as she talked with her students, during grade level meetings, with vertical teams, or talking with her student teacher. She noted that "it occurred every day and that I can't turn it off." She noted that "reflecting with the student teacher helped me to reflect and be a better teacher." Susan shared that she preferred to reflect and process things alone. As part of this reflective process she indicated that she liked to think through her plans.

Susan spoke about how her principal planned to support more individualized reflection for teachers. This individualized support included differentiated staff development groups. She noted that as part of this group she was involved in choosing a book that would be best for the school for staff development for the coming year.

One reflection strategy she noted that her principal used was the North Carolina Educator Evaluation Professional Development Planning process. She praised her principal for the "good feedback" she gave by "answering a question with a question." She noted that after observations her principal "always makes her tell more about what she saw, to explain why she was doing what she was doing."

Susan explained that her principal "modeled reflection a lot in her position." She asked questions and expected responses. She maintained and modeled high expectations. She shared that she trusted her principal's vision because she displayed so much knowledge and was always thinking.

Susan noted that she reflected through the data team meetings and curriculum mapping. As a grade level PLC she explained that they looked at their data on the data wall and used it to make smart goals. As a school, she shared that they were engaged in taking the grade levels through the data teaming process. One part of that process was creating a common formative assessment by reflecting on the standards and what mastery looked like. She expressed the fact that her principal was aware of which grade levels were capable of having those types of conversations focused on data. Her principal provided her grade level PLC with release time for a data day where they spent time reflecting on their common formative assessment questions. She shared that they reflected on and evaluated the kinds of questions and encouraged her grade level team members to think more about the types of questions they were creating.

Susan also shared that the principal, Breanna, incorporated opportunities for reflection to occur in staff meetings. One reflective activity they focused on during the year was the book study. As part of the reflective book study the principal was "clear about what she was expecting, letting the teachers have input, and asking the hard questions." She shared that this year her principal incorporated a book study on curriculum, which involved the whole school. One school wide strategy she noted that her principal used was the K-5 vertical math and literacy teams. These teams provided

the opportunity for staff to meet across a variety of areas with a focus on a common goal. There was protected time once a week for each vertical team to meet.

Susan expressed the fact that she felt trust was essential to moving forward. She also spoke about the importance of building relationships with others. She noted the relationships she had with her grade level PLC members promoted trust because she felt that she could talk with them. She provided the examples of the team building activities her principal Breanna used to build the sense of team. Table 12 presents a summary of Susan's reflective practices.

Table 12

Susan: Summary of Reflective Practices

Individual Reflection Strategies	Purpose	Type of Reflection	People	Resources/ Support
Reflects daily through talking with students and thinking through lesson plans	Provide clarifying information and feedback to student teacher-teacher reflection is a by product	Reflection on instructional actions and for future instructional actions	Individual teacher	Opportunities for teachers to reflect
Reflects with student teacher	Promotes reflective thinking as teacher articulates why she does things to the student teacher	Reflection on instructional actions and for future instructional actions	Individual teacher and student teacher	Opportunities for teachers to reflect and have student teachers
Differentiated book study to support reflective capacity	Builds staff capacity to reflect in a differentiated manner addressing teacher needs	Reflection on action and for future actions	Individual teachers	Opportunities and support for all levels of reflection within the organization
Reflection using the North Carolina Educator Evaluation components and walkthrough feedback	Promote reflection on instructional actions and professional growth	Reflection on and for future actions	Individual teachers	Posing reflective questions and observational feedback in a manner that allows the teacher to reflect
Collective Reflection Strategies	Purpose	Type of Reflection	People	Resources/ Support
PLC reflection on content, curriculum, student data and creating common formative assessments	Reflection on standards, curriculum, instructional practices and student data	Reflection on instructional actions and for future instructional actions within the PLC	PLC grade level members	Protected time for PLCs curriculum mapping and data analysis
School-wide reflection on curriculum and data through the vertical data teaming process	Reflection on school-wide curriculum progression and student learning across the school	School-wide reflection on past instructional actions curriculum, data, and instructional actions for future	Vertical team members across the school	Protected time for vertical teams to meet once a week additional district personnel for support
School wide staff book study	Reflection on practices	Reflection on and for future action	All staff	Opportunity and books for all staff

Joan: Third-Grade Teacher

Joan, a Caucasian female, is a third-grade teacher at Soundside Elementary. She taught using an ability block schedule and provided services to 44 students. She indicated that her classes were comprised of EC, ESL, and AIG students. Her class was comprised of a transitional class of struggling learners.

She defined reflective practice as looking back on what had occurred. She noted that reflection was critical to being an effective teacher. Joan explained that she felt that "you can't be effective without being reflective, making changes and growing as a teacher." She discussed the fact that reflection "had a huge impact on how you become a teacher leader, reflecting with someone else." Joan indicated that she constantly reflected on student learning through reflecting back on a lesson or even reflecting before a lesson on student needs.

She shared that she reflected by doing a lot of talking things out by herself. In general, she explained that she did some general individual reflection and there were other opportunities for reflective practice during grade level PLC meetings. She shared that administration or the academic coach came and guided them through the reflective process. Joan shared that her principal also engaged her in a self-reflective activity using a rubric she created. Joan's principal worked with her to "self-reflect and indicate where she was in relation to learning targets and identify where it was that she wanted to go."

Joan shared that her principal promoted reflective practice individually and engaged staff in self-reflection type activities by providing feedback. One strategy her principal used was that of walkthroughs to promote reflection. Although she indicated

that she did receive feedback from her principal, the feedback from walkthroughs tended to be more general school trend feedback and not as much focused on individual feedback. Joan explained that her principal conducted individual data meetings with teachers. During these meetings she focused the conversation on what they could control and how they could implement sound instruction.

She shared that she felt her principal considered each teacher's strengths and weakness as she was sending staff to professional developments. Joan commented the professional development was tiered to help her to reflect based on where she was as a teacher." She shared that her principal presented her with a challenge and tried to push each teacher to determine "where you are and what you are willing to do."

Joan noted that reflection with her PLC team was successful due to the trust with the PLC. She indicated the principal helped to develop that trust among the staff by engaging them in activities. She shared that when her principal took the job that she interviewed each staff member, asking them, "What do you think we need at this school to make it successful?" She also referenced other activities that the principal engaged the staff in to build morale, trust and investment.

Joan shared that she was part of a school wide vertical math blocking team that was focused on going deeper with the math standards. As part of this process she shared that questioning and data were huge components that facilitated work with the vertical team. She noted that the data was not the "end all be all," but being a part of this team allowed her the opportunity to learn and try new strategies.

Other schoolwide strategies that Joan discussed were staff book studies, and professional development. They used a rotation system for professional development that allowed them to rotate through three sessions during their staff meetings. Staff were empowered to present and share their expertise for staff meetings. Table 13 presents a summary of Joan's reflective practices.

Table 13

Joan: Summary of Reflective Practices

Individual Reflection Strategies	Purpose	Type of Reflection	People	Resources/ Support
Reflecting on student learning by looking back at a lesson, talking through and reflecting before a lesson based on student needs	Self-reflect by looking back and analyzing lesson success, and needs. Using the reflection to drive what occurs next	Reflection on and for future actions	Individual teacher	Opportunities for teachers to self- reflect
Individual data meetings with teachers	Build capacity of individual teachers to reflect on instructional actions and analyzing student data	Reflection on and for future action	Individual teachers	Opportunities for individual teachers and staff to reflect
Differentiated support to build reflective capacity	Builds staff capacity to reflect in a differentiated manner addressing teacher needs	Reflection on action and for future actions	Individual teachers	Understanding staff strengths and needs, building on these and empowering staff to continue growing
Reflection using the North Carolina Educator Evaluation components and walkthrough feedback	Promote reflection on instructional actions and professional growth	Reflection on and for future actions	Individual teachers	Posing reflective questions and observational feedback in a manner that allows the teacher to reflect
Collective Reflection Strategies	**Purpose**	**Type of Reflection**	**People**	**Resources/ Support**
PLC reflection on content, curriculum, data and creating common formative assessments	Reflection on standards, curriculum, instructional practices and student data	Reflection on instructional actions and for future instructional actions within the PLC	PLC grade level members	Protected time for PLCs curriculum mapping and data analysis
School wide vertical team reflection focused on going deeper with math standards	Reflection on school-wide curriculum progression and student learning across the school	School-wide vertical reflection on instruction actions across the school and for future actions	All staff	Support from administration by helping lead them through the reflection process
School wide staff book study	Reflection on instructional practices	Reflection on and for future action	All staff	Opportunity and books for all staff

Danielle: Fifth-Grade Teacher

Danielle, a Caucasian female, is a fifth-grade teacher at Soundside Elementary. She shared that her classroom makeup was a heterogeneous grouping of low and high academic students. Danielle shared that she was working on her National Board certification and that she was engaged in lots of reflective practice throughout that process.

Danielle stated that reflective practice to her was considering how we look at what we've done. She stated, "Reflective practice is how we look at what has happened or what we have done in our classroom, actually reflective practice goes across the board for everything and trying to decide, how we can adapt it to work better or ditch it if it doesn't work."

She shared that she did have many opportunities to reflect. She reflected individually, with her grade level PLC and, on the school-wide level, with a vertical team. Danielle also engaged in reflective practice with her student teacher. She explained that when she was beginning her teaching career that reflection on her practice was not emphasized, so having a student teacher helped her to have a new outlook. She discussed that both she and the student teacher had been engaged in reflection when she stated, "I have been working with her to reflect on her lessons and she's been helping me think though my National Boards." Danielle noted that she engaged herself in her own individual private reflective practice as she thought about better ways to teach certain standards.

The principal provided a full day for each grade level PLC to analyze data. She shared that during these opportunities they displayed the data on the wall and "reflected on what we felt worked and the strengths of our students. I won't call it peaceful but we're able to see without distractions."

Danielle shared more about the opportunities for school wide reflection through staff meetings, and professional developments. Additionally, there were times that were specifically set aside for school-wide reflection as a vertical team. Danielle gave an example of how the staff was involved in developing a school wide walkthrough rubric. Table 14 presents a summary of Danielle's reflective practices.

Table 14

Danielle: Summary of Reflective Practices

Individual Reflection Strategies	Purpose	Type of Reflection	People	Resources/ Support
Thinking about what been done and how to adapt it, ways to teach certain standards and the national board reflective process	Promote individual self-reflection on teaching practices and instructional delivery	Reflection on and for future actions	Individual teacher	Encouraging teachers to pursue personal and professional growth opportunities Creating opportunities and expectation of self-reflection for professional growth
Reflection with student teacher on lesson design and standards	Promote reflection on content standards and effective instructional methods	Reflection on and for future action	Individual teachers	Opportunities for reflection
Collective Reflection Strategies	**Purpose**	**Type of Reflection**	**People**	**Resources/ Support**
PLC reflection on content, curriculum, data and creating common formative assessments	Reflection on standards, curriculum, instructional practices and student data	Reflection on instructional actions and for future instructional actions within the PLC	PLC grade level members	Release time for PLCs curriculum mapping and data analysis
School wide vertical team reflection on school data	Promotes school-wide analysis of student data and reflection on instructional actions to meet student needs	Reflection on action and for future actions	All staff	Protected time for vertical team reflection and support with understanding data
School wide reflection through staff meetings and professional developments	Promotes school-wide reflection and knowledge of effective instructional strategies	Reflection on school-wide instructional actions and future actions to meet student needs	All staff	Opportunity for professional learning for all staff

Analysis of Case Study 2: Soundside Elementary School

In analyzing the principal interview and that of the five teachers from Soundside Elementary there were themes that emerged across all interview data that were pertinent to promoting and sustaining reflective practice in elementary schools. The themes that emerged in this case study were: administrator modeling of reflective questioning, individual differentiated opportunities for building teacher reflection capacity, administrator support of PLC and school-wide reflection with standards, data and instruction. Finally, the last area that emerged as a theme from this case study was the role of trust and relationships in the reflective opportunities.

Administrator Modeling of Reflective Questioning

Throughout all of the interview data, there was the theme of the principal setting the tone of the culture toward one of inquiry and reflection by the questions that she posed to staff. In fact, the principal viewed her role to be one that put teachers in a position to reflect. In her own interview she explained that challenge. The challenge, she explained, was "trying to coach people through better self-reflection." As a principal, part of this challenge of coaching is

> balancing telling people directly, which is certainly, what they need to hear, but asking questions like you know the answer to in a way that maybe they hadn't considered it that way, to get to a point so that they maybe arrive at the conclusion on their own, rather than having it come from me, and them not taking it to heart.

She noted that teachers that self-reflect were "intrinsically motivated" to do so themselves without prompting. Susan praised her principal for giving "good feedback" by "answering a question with a question." Joan shared her experiences with the school wide

vertical math team. As part of her work with the vertical team she noted that her principal "sent us questions as a team and answers our questions with questions."

Individual Differentiated Opportunities for Building Teacher Reflection Capacity

A theme that was clear from the principal and teacher interviews was that the principal was focused on providing differentiated individual support. This was done in an effort to help teachers to grow in their capacity to self-reflect using a variety of individual mechanisms including both formal and informal methods. Principal Breanna explained that she differentiated her approach based on the need of the teacher and where they were in the reflection process. For some teachers, that were struggling she discussed that it required a more direct approach. She indicated that with some teachers, the need to be directive came in an effort to help the teacher to identify the problems and solve the problems. She continued sharing that the next level of teachers up was able to reflect on their own and needed only a small amount of guidance to help them to reflect. She shared that this particular group of teachers needed her to "provide a little bit of guidance with questioning" and then the next group was able to "see the need for change and change it themselves." Breanna explained more about this differentiated level of reflection in teachers, stating that some "teachers have come to me and they've already reflected and problem solved."

The teachers all indicated that the principal posed questions and provided resources that made them think more deeply about their practice and to self-reflect. Mary shared that when she went to her principal she ended up doing much of the problem solving. "She made me talk through it with her and she will say, what about this or what

about that, so she made me do a lot of the thinking." Mary explained that her principal

helped to support the individual reflection of teachers by identifying and putting them

into different book study groups based on needs. Her principal continued to support her

individual learning as a teacher by "putting some books choices out there for book studies

and we were able to choose which one we were most interested in." Joan shared that "the

professional development was tiered to help her to reflect based on where she was as a

teacher."

The teachers shared how the principal used the formal components of the North

Carolina Educator Evaluation tool to help them to grow professionally and in their ability

to accurately reflect on instruction and data. Angela shared that her principal supported

her growth as an individual teacher through use of the North Carolina Educator

professional development plan because "we set our individual goal at the beginning and

then the principal meets with us to see if we're meeting those goals. Also during the pre-

and post-conference there was an opportunity for individual reflection." Additionally,

Mary shared that the principal used the North Carolina Educator Evaluation rubric after

the formal observation, to engage her in dialogue and conversation during the post

conference about "What could you have done differently?" Susan explained that this

process "helped a lot because it forced us to sit down and look at what's happening in the

classroom."

Administrator Support of PLC with Standards, Data, and Instruction

The principal and teachers all discussed support of grade level professional

learning community work on analyzing data and clarifying learning standards as well as

instructional practices. A part of this principal support included release time for grade levels, structures for analyzing data, standards and instructional practices. In this particular case there was a cultural shift due to these practices being shifted from those modeled by the principal to the professional learning communities becoming empowered and taking over this role.

Principal Breanna discussed the fact that there was an overall cultural change with some of her PLCs. She shared one example, of a second grade PLC that was making the shift stating "I had a few questions, but they had many more questions" and this was a change because "before I was the one asking questions and they would give me the answers, now they have the question and then I have to go find out the answers." She expressed that this was a neat experience for her because "you want them to move to that train of thought of they're asking the questions and I don't have to prompt them with it."

Angela indicated that a lot of reflection was coming from this focus on data that impacted planning. Included in this reflection was the grade level PLC "really questioning." "Why is this happening?" and "What can we do to fix it?" She shared how reflection on her student data helped her to differentiate her instruction by stating, "it helps me see, like if the children have already attained their goals, maybe some enrichment activities I could include as well as to differentiate for those that maybe still haven't put it all together." Mary noted that during the time that her grade level PLC met they reflected on "Why the students were successful, and what does that mean that they need to do instructionally?" Mary shared that she felt part of the success of the data days was the principal's approach stating "she gives us suggestions but she doesn't enforce like

you will do this, she lets us try and figure out the best strategies that we think the child

needs to get to." Danielle stated that these data days were of great benefit because they

got them to "truly reflect on what we're doing and share with each other how we're doing

things."

Administrator Support of School-wide Reflection with Standards, Data, and

Instruction

The support and work that has been done with PLCs transferred to the larger

school culture. The theme of support of allotted time for vertical planning, questioning

and the focus on data were all clearly evidenced throughout the interviews of this case.

Angela noted that her principal, Breanna supported their collaborative reflective efforts

by providing them with the time to reflect on their data, plan as a grade level PLC and as

a vertical team. Additionally, she shared that her principal set up the staff meetings to

reflect on instructional strategies. Angela spoke to the importance of this time stating

"having that allotment of time to meet vertically, helped us to be able to set a school plan

and vision in place for what the expectations should be."

Principal Breanna shared that school wide reflection on end of year data helped to

begin conversations of looking at "layers of data." She addressed other strategies used as

well to promote school wide reflection on data including vertical patterns across the

school and pinpointing root causes. She explained that this focus on schoolwide data was

changing the culture to one of reflection using data and where the staff was "trying to dig

deeper." This school-wide focus promoted vertical collegial conversations where staff

were not afraid to ask difficult questions. Brianna noted "they had talked about test scores

as a staff" and that "gets people thinking" and "having open conversations." She shared

that she felt "putting this information out there, helped people reflect on it individually,

what their part is, and their impact they make on school-wide data."

She shared that her challenge in promoting reflective practice was "how to make

it a K-5 change." She shared, "that is where we struggle, we're not solid in reflective

practice across K-5, they're not all reflective in nature." In fact, the principal explained

that her plan for the coming year was to help all staff reflect vertically through utilization

of the school improvement plan. She noted that plan was to "help people think about the

bigger picture, reflect on not just what's happening in their individual class, but also

where their piece falls in the school, to actually make the changes happen that we want to

make."

Role of Trust and Relationships in the Reflective Opportunities

This shift to collective reflective practice was positive for each of the participants

because there were strong positive relationships, positive communication patterns and

trust within their culture. Mary shared her grade level team members displayed a

"relationship of professionalism and trust because they spent so much time together."

Mary even indicated that her reflection experiences with her principal were positive due

to the manner in which her principal communicated with her. She noted that the manner

in which her principal presented the information did not come across as a directive and

therefore was more positively received. Susan explained that "you have to trust one

another at your grade level, and trust the principal's leadership."

Angela noted that she feels

> staff members really have to be open and continuously reflecting or if not the school's just going to stay stagnant, because we know the education system is constantly evolving and changing, the community is changing, the students that come in you know, everything else is changing, so if we don't change our way of thinking then the school is not going to improve. Having that reflection piece is extremely important for our school as a whole.

Implications for Practicing Elementary Principals

This case presented several critical concepts for implementing reflective practice at a cultural level in a school. An essential takeaway from this case was that the principal sets the tone for reflection in the way that they model reflective questioning with staff. The principal in this case noted that the challenge came in balancing telling staff when instructional changes needed to be made versus coaching them to a point where they could self-reflect. As a practicing principal, this is probably the hardest challenge when time and excellent instruction are time sensitive. Changing the way I ask questions and provide feedback to staff is a manageable and powerful way to impact instruction throughout the school that will lead to sustainable change. The principal in this case differentiated the type of reflective support that she provided to individuals and PLCs to grow their capacity for reflection. She included support for PLCs, by providing designated time for data analysis and clarification of content standards. As a principal, this speaks to the importance of implementing structures for analyzing data, examining instructional practices, and standards with reflective questioning.

CHAPTER VI

SYNTHESIS OF CASE STUDIES

The purpose of this study was to examine, through a multiple case study approach, how two elementary principals in the North Carolina Piedmont implemented and sustained reflective structures and practices in their schools. To understand how all of these pieces fit together, I researched the questions below as part of the research study:

1. How do elementary principals strategically promote and sustain effective reflective practices in their schools?

2. What are the reflective practices and structures used in these schools?

3. What is the relationship between individual reflection and collective reflection in the school?

In this chapter I will present a synthesis of data from both case studies as it relates to these research questions. After each research question, the researcher will present the responses from each case study that are most relevant and representative of the case study site. The first research question that was considered was:

1. How do elementary principals strategically promote and sustain effective reflective practices in their schools?

Table 15 illustrates the activities that the principal at Oceanside Elementary used to strategically promote and sustain reflective practice in her school.

Table 15

Oceanside Elementary Principal Actions that Promote and Sustain Reflective Practices

Administrator Actions that Promote Reflective Practice	Administrator Actions that Sustain Reflective Practices
Creating Opportunities for Reflection	Asking questions
Principal Hannah shared she believed as a leader that she had to put staff in a position to reflect by "asking questions, presenting data and putting them in a position to bring about that reflection." She shared that this puts it out in front of them and creates the opportunity to for them to discuss what is in front of them.	Presenting data
Posing Reflection Questions for Differentiated Reflective Support	Differentiated support and questions to build teacher reflection capacity
Principal Hannah discussed the importance of the questions that she poses for individual teachers are differentiated to meet their needs. She acknowledged that the challenging part "as a principal being prepared for those different conversations" when principals are switching gears quickly between tasks.	Administrative preparation for differentiated reflective conversations
Hannah shared that every individual teacher was different and how she supported them and had conversations with them had to be different. Hannah explained that a good reflective conversation was her as the principal "being prepared for the conversation." She compared the preparation that she needed to do to prepare for these conversations to the prep work that a teacher does with a lesson plan stating "Just like a teacher plans a lesson, I always tell teachers you know, you're not going to ask those higher level questions if you don't plan for them right, so I think kind of planning for those conversations is really important."	
She discussed what she meant by planning for the conversations saying "I formulate in my mind what it is I want to say, if there are questions that I want to ask them to get them thinking or to kind of get them to where I want them to go." She shared that it was about differentiating for each individual person whether they might be someone that is more resistant to change or someone that is wanting to grow and change. She explained that having those conversations with "naturally reflective teachers" was different than having conversations with "teachers you have to pull it from."	

Table 15

(Cont.)

Administrator Actions that Promote Reflective Practice	Administrator Actions that Sustain Reflective Practices
Supporting Reflection on Data with the PLC Data Teaming Process Principal Hannah discussed using the data team process to promote reflection by putting the staff in a position to reflect with data. She shared that they had been using the data team process with some of their grade level PLCs. This process enabled them to have discussions and ask questions about the data. "I've sat through that process and seen them really be able to reflect, but what I have found is they wouldn't do it without the prompting." Hannah shared some of the prompting that administration has offered such as, "What worked, what didn't, what does this mean, what are the misconceptions."	Administrative support during the data team process Modeling prompting and questioning support for data reflection by administration
Using the North Carolina Educator Evaluation Tool to Promote Reflective Practice Hannah made reference to the observation/ post conference as a means to promote individual reflection on practice. She shared that during the post conference it is easy to ask questions about what teachers feel went well or what they would change, however she noted that in her experience she has found it good to pose questions focused on the students. Hannah reported that these types of questions help lead to good conversations about "teaching and learning." She shared that in one particular case it led to a conversation where the teacher acknowledged that she needed some help in a particular area. However, Hannah explained that she felt that reflective moment would not have naturally come about if they had not had that type of open discussion.	Observing Presenting data Asking clarifying reflection questions to get teachers to arrive at conclusion. Directing teachers when necessary to reflect
Supporting Opportunities for Schoolwide Reflective Practice Debra shared that as a part of reflecting on their school-wide data they had "looked at subgroups, focused on why they think it happened, what are the reasons that the subgroup didn't show growth that was expected." Setting off the school year with this type of focus of reflection on data helped "get us in that reflective practice mode."	Provide time, structure and support for vertical curriculum reflection Present staff with school level data and help them to understand what it means Design structured opportunities for staff to see school needs and dissect the data in a way that is meaningful to both PLCs and individual teachers.

Table 15

(Cont.)

Administrator Actions that Promote Reflective Practice	Administrator Actions that Sustain Reflective Practices
Supporting Opportunities for Schoolwide Reflective Practice (cont.)	Move the data analysis and instructional implications to action through professional development
Hannah spoke about further was again using her staff meetings, where all staff attend as reflective opportunities. She shared that this year they had been engaged in revisiting their mission, vision and core values. During this reflective process, she explained that she first asked them to "reflect personally on what was important to them, what they value in work, what they want to be remembered for" and then she took it to the school level.	
Debra shared that there are many individual teams that do reflection vertically across several grade levels such as RTI or PBIS. She noted that then each member of the vertical teams comes back to share with their grade level PLC team. Debra shared that the advantage that she sees to this school-wide focus is that they are not merely reflecting on one class but more on "how things are fitting together" across the school.	
Emma shared that her principal has brought the grade levels together vertically to reflect upon how the curriculum builds and "how important each grade level is in the growth and the success of the child's learning." She spoke about the personal impact it made on her saying "I got that big impact that day when we reflected on each grade level's role, we laid out expectations for each standard and saw where it started in kindergarten."	

Table 16 illustrates the activities that the principal at Soundside Elementary used to strategically promote and sustain reflective practice in her school.

Table 16

Soundside Elementary Principal Actions that Promote and Sustain Reflective Practices

Administrator Actions that Promote Reflective Practice	Administrator Actions that Sustain Reflective Practices
Providing Differentiated Individual Support Principal Breanna spoke directly about providing the differentiated support that is needed for individual teachers to reflect through the use of purposeful questions and dialogue. She shared that some of the strategies she used for promoting individual differentiated professional development included, asking guiding questions or being more directive based on the needs of the teacher. She noted as a principal, the part that was challenging "balancing telling people directly, which is certainly, what they need to hear, but asking questions like you know the answer to in a way that maybe they hadn't considered it that way, to get to a point so that they maybe arrive at the conclusion on their own, rather than having it come from me, and them not taking it to heart."	Asking purposeful guiding questions that engages teachers in reflective thought and dialogue Differentiating reflective support based on teacher's reflective capacity
Supporting Reflection on Data with the PLC Data Teaming Process Principal Breanna shared how she supported a PLC focus of reflection on student data. She shared that they had provided intentional regular release time for all grade levels as well as time for vertical conversations among the ELA and Math teams. She noted that the focus of work of the PLCs had shifted from managerial things to data over the course of the year. She explained that she felt this shift was due in large part to the creation of common formative assessments. Breanna discussed the fact that there had been an overall cultural change with some of her PLCs. She shared one example, of a second grade PLC that had made the shift stating "I had a few questions, but they had many more questions" and this was a change because "before I was the one asking questions and they would give me the answers, now they have the question and then I have to go find out the answers." She expressed that this was a neat experience for her because "you want them to move to that train of thought of they're asking the questions and I don't have to prompt them with it."	Administrative support during the data team process Modeling prompting and questioning support for data reflection by administration Empowering PLC members to ask prompting questions to reflect on their student data Regular release time provided by administration to allow for continual reflection focus on student data

Table 16

(Cont.)

Administrator Actions that Promote Reflective Practice	Administrator Actions that Sustain Reflective Practices
Using the North Carolina Educator Evaluation Tool to Promote Reflective Practice Angela shared that her principal support her growth as an individual teacher through use of the North Carolina Educator professional development plan because "we set our individual goal at the beginning and then the principal meets with us to see if we're meeting those goals. Also during the pre and post conference there is an opportunity for individual reflection." Additionally, Mary shared that the principal uses the North Carolina Educator Evaluation rubric after the formal observation, to engage her in dialogue and conversation during the post conference about "What could you have done differently?" Susan explained that this process "helps a lot because it forces us to sit down and look at what's happening in the classroom."	Reflecting on where teachers are, identifying where they want to be, the skills necessary to meet that goal and empowering staff to reach the goal through opportunities provided to them. Engage teachers in conversation Preparing for and facilitating reflective questioning to help them acknowledge the practices in their classrooms.
Supporting Opportunities for Schoolwide Reflective Practice Principal Breanna shared that school wide reflection on end of year data had helped to begin conversations of looking at "layers of data." She explained that this focus on schoolwide data has changed the culture to one of reflection using data and where the staff is "trying to dig deeper." This school-wide focus has promoted vertical collegial conversations where staff is not afraid to ask difficult questions. Brianna noted, "they had talked about test scores as a staff" and that "gets people thinking" and "having open conversations." She shared that she felt "putting this information out there, helped people reflect on it individually, what their part is, and their impact they make on school-wide data."	Provide time, structure and support for vertical curriculum reflection Modeling reflective questioning to support data analysis Present staff with school level data and help them to understand what it means Design structured opportunities for staff to see school needs and dissect the layers of data in a way that is meaningful to both PLCs and individual teachers. Move the data analysis and instructional implications to action through professional development

Table 17 illustrates the activities that both principals used to strategically promote and

sustain reflective practice in their schools.

Table 17

Cross Case Analysis of Principal Actions that Promote and Sustain Reflective Practices

Administrator Actions that Promote Reflective Practice	Administrator Actions that Sustain Reflective Practices
Both of these elementary school administrators took on the role of putting staff in a position to reflect through the use of facilitative questioning.	Posing questions that help teachers to reflect and build reflective capacity themselves.
Both of these elementary school administrators provided differentiated support for reflective practice through questioning techniques	Differentiating the types of feedback, support and resources to support building reflective capacity.
Both of these elementary school administrators provided administrative support for PLC data reflection.	Providing and setting aside time for reflection on data Providing structures/strategies to analyze data Providing guiding questions to help grade levels reflect on the data Facilitating conversations that balance a "no excuses" philosophy but are not directive
Both administrators use components of the North Carolina Educator Evaluation Tool to build reflective capacity among teachers.	Facilitating individual differentiated growth through a personalized focus on individual goals
Both administrators used school wide vehicles to move reflective practice from individual level to PLC level and finally to the schoolwide level.	Facilitating reflective practice through analyzing school level data and instructional implications. Facilitating reflective practice of instructional practices through professional development in identified school level areas of need.

The second research question that was considered was:

2. What are the reflective practices and structures used in these schools?

Table 18 illustrates the reflective practices and structures that the principal at Oceanside
Elementary used to strategically promote and sustain reflective practice in her school.

Table 18

Structures/Strategies Utilized for Oceanside Elementary School

Structures/Strategies Utilized
1. Reflective questioning
2. Providing differentiated support for reflective practice
3. Administrative support with PLC data reflection
4. Utilization of the components of the North Carolina Educator Evaluation Tool to build reflective capacity among teachers (Professional Development Plans, Observations, Pre/Post Conferences)
5. School-wide Vertical Teams
6. School-wide Book Studies
7. School-wide Data Discussions

Table 19 illustrates the reflective practices and structures that the principal at Soundside
Elementary School used to strategically promote and sustain reflective practice in her
school.

Table 19

Structures/Strategies Utilized for Soundside Elementary School

Structures/Strategies Utilized
1. Reflective questioning
2. Providing Differentiated Support for Reflective Practice
3. Providing Differentiated Professional Development Options
4. Administrative support with PLC data reflection
5. Utilization of the components of the North Carolina Educator Evaluation Tool to build reflective capacity among teachers (Professional Development Plans, Observations, Pre/Post Conferences)
6. Differentiated Book Studies based on Teacher Needs
7. School-wide Vertical Teams
8. School-wide Book Studies
9. School-wide Data Discussions

Table 20 illustrates the reflective practices and structures used by both principals to

strategically promote and sustain reflective practice in their schools.

Table 20

Cross Case Analysis of Structures/Strategies Utilized

Structures/Strategies Utilized
1. Reflective questioning
2. Providing Differentiated Support for Reflective Practice
3. Administrative support with PLC data reflection
4. Utilization of the components of the North Carolina Educator Evaluation Tool to build reflective capacity among teachers (Professional Development Plans, Observations, Pre/Post Conferences)
5. School-wide Vertical Teams
6. School-wide Book Studies
7. School-wide Data Discussions

The third research question that was considered was:

3. What is the relationship between individual reflection and collective reflection
   in the school?

Table 21 illustrates the relationship between individual reflection and collective reflection

at Oceanside Elementary School.

Table 21

Relationship between Individual and Collective Reflection at Oceanside Elementary

School

Individual Structures/ Strategies	Purpose	Type of Reflection	People	Resources/ Support
Reflective questioning *observation feedback *pre/post conferences * instructional coaching *walkthrough feedback	Promote reflective thinking	Reflection on and for future actions	All staff as individuals	Opportunities and support for reflection
Examination of Instructional Practices *observation feedback *pre/post conferences *instructional coaching *walkthrough feedback	Reflection on instructional practices and impact	Reflection on and for future actions	All staff as individuals	Opportunities for reflection on instructional practices Instructional coaching support Asking questions
Analyzing Data *individual data analysis	Reflection on student data, effectiveness of instruction and instructional implications	Reflection on and for future instructional actions	All staff as individuals	Time Support with data and reflective guiding questions

Table 21

(Cont.)

PLC Structures/ Strategies	Purpose	Type of Reflection	People	Resources/ Support
Reflective questioning *Clarification with standards and instructional practices	Promote reflective thinking	Reflection on and for future actions	All grade level PLCs	Opportunities and support for reflection Instructional coaching

PLC Structures/ Strategies	Purpose	Type of Reflection	People	Resources/ Support
Examination of Instructional Practices * creation of common formative assessments as grade levels clarify curriculum and learning standards	Reflection on instructional practices and impact	Reflection on and for future actions	All grade level PLCs	Opportunities for reflection on instructional practices Instructional coaching support
Analyzing Data * PLC data team process analyzing data, interpreting data	Reflection on student data, effectiveness of instruction and instructional implications	Reflection on and for future instructional actions	All grade level PLCs	Time Support with understanding data and reflective guiding questions

Collective Structures/ Strategies	Purpose	Type of Reflection	People	Resources/ Support
Reflective questioning * Vertical Teams *School Improvement Team *Book Studies *Staff Meetings	Promote reflective thinking	Reflection on and for future actions	All staff	Opportunities and support for reflection Administrator modeling of asking questions

Table 21

(Cont.)

Collective Structures/ Strategies	Purpose	Type of Reflection	People	Resources/ Support
Examination of Instructional Practices * Vertical Teams *School Improvement Team *Book Studies *Staff Meetings	Reflection on instructional practices and impact	Reflection on and for future actions	All staff	Opportunities for reflection on instructional practices, curriculum and data Time
Collective Structures/ Strategies	**Purpose**	**Type of Reflection**	**People**	**Resources/ Support**
Analyzing Data * Vertical data team process analyzing and interpreting data and curriculum needs	Reflection on student data, effectiveness of instruction and instructional implications	Reflection on and for future instructional actions	All staff	Time Support with understanding data and asking reflective guiding questions

Table 22 illustrates the relationship between individual reflection and collective reflection

at Soundside Elementary School.

Table 22

Relationship between Individual and Collective Reflection at Soundside Elementary

School

Individual Structures/ Strategies	Purpose	Type of Reflection	People	Resources/ Support
Reflective questioning *observation feedback *pre/post conferences * instructional coaching *walkthrough feedback	Promote reflective thinking and build reflective capacity	Reflection on and for future actions	All staff as individuals	Opportunities and support for reflection by asking questions Instructional coaching
Examination of Instructional Practices *observation feedback *pre/post conferences *instructional coaching *walkthrough feedback	Reflection on instructional practices and impact	Reflection on and for future actions	All staff as individuals	Opportunities for reflection on instructional practices by posing reflective questions Instructional coaching
Analyzing Data * Individual data meetings	Reflection on student data, effectiveness of instruction and instructional implications	Reflection on and for future instructional actions	All staff as individuals	Time Support with understanding data
PLC Structures/ Strategies	**Purpose**	**Type of Reflection**	**People**	**Resources/ Support**
Reflective questioning *PLC data meetings *PLC curriculum mapping and unwrapping of content standards	Promote reflective thinking and build reflective capacity of grade level PLC	Reflection on and for future actions	All grade level PLCs	Opportunities and support for PLC reflection Instructional coaching Support with understanding data

Table 22

(Cont.)

PLC Structures/ Strategies	Purpose	Type of Reflection	People	Resources/ Support
Examination of Instructional Practices *PLC data meetings *PLC curriculum mapping and unwrapping of content standards * Creation of common formative assessments as grade levels as grade level clarify curriculum and learning standards	Reflection on instructional practices and impact	Reflection on and for future actions	All grade level PLCs	Opportunities for reflection on instructional practices Instructional coaching Support with understanding data Support with reflective guiding questions
Analyzing Data * PLC data team process analyzing and interpreting data	Reflection on student data, effectiveness of instruction and instructional implications	Reflection on and for future instructional actions	All grade level PLCs	Support with reflective questions and understanding data

Collective Structures/ Strategies	Purpose	Type of Reflection	People	Resources/ Support
Reflective questioning * Vertical teams *School Improvement Team *Book Studies *Staff Meetings	Promote reflective thinking and build capacity for reflection on school level data and instructional implications	Reflection on and for future actions	All staff	Opportunities and support for reflection on curriculum and data Instructional coaching

Table 22

(Cont.)

Collective Structures/ Strategies	Purpose	Type of Reflection	People	Resources/ Support
Examination of Instructional Practices * Vertical Teams *School Improvement Team *Book Studies *Staff Meetings as a way to create common expectation at a school level to clarify learning standards and set a course for the school	Reflection on student data, effectiveness of instruction and instructional implications across the school Focus on clarifying expectation and need for certain teaching practices to impact student learning and address needs	Reflection on and for future actions	All staff	Opportunities for reflection on instructional practices Opportunities and support for reflection on curriculum and data Instructional coaching Professional Development Resources Books for book study
Analyzing Data * Vertical data team process *Analyzing and interpreting data at a school level *School Improvement Team	Reflection on student data, effectiveness of instruction and instructional implications	Reflection on past instructional actions Reflection on current instructional practices and expectations Reflection for future instructional actions and individual growth Reflection on how the pieces for individual practice impact the school	All staff	Time Support with reflective guiding questions Support with understanding school level data and reflecting on instructional implications

Table 23 illustrates the relationship between individual reflection and collective reflection

at both schools.

Table 23

Relationship between Individual and Collective Reflection at Both Elementary Schools

Individual Structures/ Strategies	Purpose	Type of Reflection	People	Resources/ Support
Reflective Questioning *observation and walkthrough feedback *pre/post conferences * instructional coaching	To help teachers to develop reflective thinking capacity	Reflection-on-action Reflect in action Reflection for future actions	All staff as individuals	Opportunities for reflection Support with reflective guiding questions Instructional coaching support
Examination of Instructional Practices *observation and walkthrough feedback *pre conferences * instructional coaching *professional development planning *curriculum mapping	To help teachers self-reflect on effectiveness of instructional practices Goal is to get teachers to be able to reflect in the moment and adapt instructional practices in the minute to adjust to student needs.	Reflection-on-action Reflect in action Reflection for future actions	All staff as individuals	Time Instructional coaching support with unwrapping content standards, curriculum mapping Support with reflective guiding questions Reflective feedback
Analyzing Student Data *Individual data meetings * post conferences	Reflect on student data and learning, impact of instructional practices and delivery	Reflection-on-action Reflection for future actions	All staff as individuals	Time and opportunities for data analysis Support with analyzing and reflecting on student data

Table 23

(Cont.)

Collective Structures/ Strategies	Purpose	Type of Reflection	People	Resources/ Support
Reflective questioning *Staff meetings *Book studies *PLC and vertical team curriculum mapping *PLC, vertical team and school improvement team data analysis	Promote reflective thinking about school level data and instructional practices across the school Builds reflective capacity of all staff	Reflection-on-action Reflect in action Reflection for future actions	PLC, Vertical Teams All Staff	• Time • Opportunities for reflection as a staff • Posing reflective questions • Instructional coaching • Books for book study
Examination of Instructional Practices * PLC creation of common formative assessments *Curriculum mapping with PLC and vertical teams *Book studies for professional development *Data team process across the school	Promote reflective thinking about data and instructional implications for instructional delivery across the school Promote thinking of grade level and individual impact on school performance.	Reflection-on-action Reflect in action Reflection for future actions	PLC, Vertical Teams All Staff	• Time • Professional development • Books for book studies • Instructional coaching • Support with curriculum mapping, content standards and creating common formative assessments
Analyzing School Level Data *Data analysis and reflection with PLCs, vertical teams, school improvement team, and all staff through staff meetings *Data team process utilized across the school	Promote reflective thinking about school level data and instructional practices across the school Reflection for school wide program planning	Reflection-on-action Reflection for future actions	PLC, Vertical Teams All Staff	• Time • Opportunities for school level data analysis and reflection • Support for understanding the data • Instructional coaching to support instructional implications from the data

Currently as part of the North Carolina teacher evaluation system, school principals must evaluate how well teachers reflect on their practice. The teacher evaluation instrument defines teacher reflection in three areas: how teachers analyze student learning, how they link professional growth to their professional goals, and how they function in a dynamic environment. The instrument further breaks the section on how teachers analyze student learning down into three areas including:

> Teachers think systematically and critically about student learning in their classrooms and schools, why it happens and what can be done to improve achievement. Teachers collect and analyze student performance data to improve school and classroom effectiveness. They adapt their practice based on research and data to best meet the needs of students. Teachers link professional growth to their professional goals. Teachers participate in continued, high quality professional development that reflects a global view of educational practices; includes 21st Century skills & knowledge; aligns with the State Board of Education priorities; and meets the needs of students and their own professional growth. (McRel, 2015, p. 12)

The principals in both studies provided opportunities for their staff in all of these reflective areas by providing opportunities for staff to reflect individually through the use of facilitative reflective questioning, examination of instructional practices and the analysis of student data. These principals extended and engaged their staff in these same opportunities within the context of grade level professional learning communities through the data team process. Thus they had a natural progression for implementing school-wide reflective practice through use of the same structures and strategies but on a school-wide level with school-wide data.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSIONS/IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to examine, through a multiple case study approach, how two elementary principals in the North Carolina Piedmont implemented and sustained reflective structures and practices in their schools. When I began my study I considered the conceptual framework (see Appendix A) as a way to think about how principals lead reflective practices from the individual to the school-wide level in their schools.

The research questions I investigated in this study were:

1. How do elementary principals strategically promote and sustain effective reflective practices in their schools?

2. What are the reflective practices and structures used in these schools?

3. What is the relationship between individual reflection and collective reflection in the school?

In this chapter I will present my conclusions regarding how to lead school-wide reflective practice, including:

• Administrator modeling of reflective questioning

• Individual differentiated opportunities for building teacher reflection capacity

• Administrator support of PLC with standards, data and instruction

• Administrator support of school-wide reflection with standards

- Data and instruction

- Role of trust and relationships in the reflective opportunities

Then I will offer recommendations and implications for practicing school principals that are interested in promoting and sustaining reflective practices in their schools.

As a practicing principal I knew school-wide reflective practice was my goal but I was unsure of the path that I needed to navigate to reach that goal. After investigating through a multi-case study approach I would acknowledge that there are more intricate details that must accounted for as principals are promoting and sustaining reflection in their schools.

In both cases there were principal actions that were utilized that promoted reflective practice. One of those actions included the elementary school administrators taking on the role of putting staff in a position to reflect through the use of facilitative questioning. These principals did this through posing questions that help teachers to reflect and build reflective capacity themselves. This takes time and preparation on the part of practicing principals. In fact, Principal Hannah acknowledged that the challenging part "as a principal is being prepared for those different conversations" when principals are switching gears quickly between tasks.

Both elementary school administrators provided differentiated support for reflective practice through questioning techniques, differentiating the types of feedback, support and resources to support building reflective capacity. Breanna noted as a principal, the part that was challenging was "balancing telling people directly, which is certainly, what they need to hear, but asking questions it in a way that maybe they hadn't

considered it that way, to get to a point so that they maybe arrive at the conclusion on their own, rather than having it come from me, and them not taking it to heart."

Providing administrative support for PLC data reflection is another mechanism that these elementary principals used to promote and sustain reflective practices. These principals sustained this by:

1. Providing and setting aside time for reflection on data

2. Providing structures/strategies to analyze data

3. Providing guiding questions to help grade levels reflect on the data

4. Facilitating conversations that balance a "no excuses" philosophy but are not directive

5. Creating opportunities for PLC data reflection

Both of the principals in this study utilized the components of the North Carolina Educator Evaluation Tool to build reflective capacity among their teachers. They facilitated individual differentiated growth through using this tool which has a personalized focus on individual goals. Additionally, the tool helps principals to reflecting with teachers on where they are, identifying where they want to be, identifying the skills necessary to meet that goal and empowering staff to reach the goal through professional development opportunities provided to them. This tool engages principals in conversation with the teachers, and facilitates reflective questioning to help teachers acknowledge the practices in their classrooms. In Case Study 2, Angela shared that her principal support her growth as an individual teacher through use of the North Carolina Educator professional development plan because "we set our individual goal at the

beginning and then the principal meets with us to see if we're meeting those goals."

Additionally, Mary shared that her principal, Breanna, uses the North Carolina Educator

Evaluation rubric after the formal observation to engage her in dialogue and conversation

during the post conference about "What could you have done differently?" Susan

explained that this process "helps a lot because it forces us to sit down and look at what's

happening in the classroom."

Finally, to promote and sustain reflective practices in their schools, both

administrators used school wide vehicles to move reflective practice from individual

level to PLC level and ultimately to the school-wide level. They did this through

facilitating reflective practice through analyzing school level data and instructional

implications. Additionally, they facilitated reflective practice of instructional practices

through professional development in the identified school level areas of need.

Implications for Principal Actions to Promote and Sustain Reflective Practices

As a practicing principal and researcher it is important to consider the practical

implications of these research findings to ensure that I am promoting and sustaining

reflective practice. The first take away for principals from this study is that principals

must create opportunities for reflection by taking on the role of putting staff in a position

to reflect through the use of facilitative questioning. This is often a difficult task as

principals when we see teachers that are struggling and students not getting the

instruction they deserve and need. Part of this challenge is learning to develop our

capacity as principals to pose questions that will help teachers to reflect and build

reflective capacity versus directing them.

Just as it is important for our teachers to differentiate instruction based on the needs of their students, it is important that we as principals identify and recognize the reflective capacities and levels of our teachers. We must then provide them with differentiated support to build their capacity for reflective practice through questioning techniques that help them to learn how to develop a reflective mindset. As principals we can do this through differentiating the types of feedback, support and resources to support building reflective capacity.

Much of our work as principals focuses on using data to drive instruction and program planning within our schools. While we are familiar with the ins and outs of data, some of our staff have a wealth of data but do not clearly understand it. As principals it is important for us to recognize that if we want staff to reflect on the data, we must first provide some supports for data reflection. Some of those supports include, providing and setting aside time for reflection on data, with structures/strategies to help with analyzing the data, providing guiding questions to help grade levels reflect on the data and facilitating data conversations that are focused on what teachers can control, which is "instruction."

Principals across North Carolina and across the nation are using components of educator evaluation tools that are built off of a growth mindset to develop the capacity of teachers over time. These components that teachers engage in include self-assessments, pre- and post-observation conferences, as well as the development of professional development plans. When we as principals educate our staff and utilize the tools in a growth centered manner it facilitates individual differentiated growth through a

personalized focus on individual goals and helps each of our teachers to develop their

capacity to self -reflection on their practices. Darling-Hammond (2013) argues for this

type of system stating,

> In short, what we really need in the United States is a conception of teacher
> evaluation as part of a teaching and learning system that supports continuous
> improvement, both for individual teachers and for the profession as a whole. Such
> a system should enhance teacher learning and skill, while at the same time
> ensuring that teachers who are retained and tenured can effectively support
> student learning throughout their careers.

As principals we all want to arrive at the destination that principal Breanna spoke

of where there is a "school-wide cultural change from individual reflection to more

reflection occurring among PLC teams and across grade levels." She shared that she felt

the reason this change was occurring was due to the fact that it had become the norm with

the PLC "data teaming process and asking questions." Ultimately, she moved this type of

reflective practice from individual level to the PLC level and finally to the school-wide

level. In this particular case the principal used reflective practices that the PLC grade

levels were familiar and successful with before moving it on to the school level. As

principals there are implications for how we facilitate that reflective practice through

analyzing school level data, instructional implications, and facilitating reflective practice

of instructional practices through professional development in identified school level

areas of need.

The goal of these reflective practices was to build the capacity of individual

teachers as well as cultural reflective capacity at the school level. While individual

reflective practice has been acknowledged to be powerful tool in changing the practices

of individual teachers, York-Barr et al. (2006) propose that the "greatest potential for reflective practice to improve schools lies within the collective inquiry, thinking, learning, understanding and acting that result from school-wide engagement" (p. 23). It is important that all members of the learning organization are involved with learning that is reflective of the goals and mission of the school context.

General Implications

This study has implications for all principals in North Carolina as well as school principals across the nation. It is important to develop structures that create opportunities for teachers to reflect in a variety of ways to develop teacher reflection and professional growth. It is essential that principals are intentionally planning for reflective practice to occur by considering the purpose, people, resources, design, results and the overall context. The structure, processes, procedures and settings for reflective practice to occur must attend to the importance of communication, relationships and trust. In the age in which we live principals are now evaluated on how well their teachers are performing with regard to reflective practice but it must be clearly established that teachers can only improve when school leaders set reflective professional learning structures in place. This will help re-culture schools into successful school communities of practice.

Recommendations

As a practicing elementary school principal, I began this journey of researching how to promote teacher reflection as a means to improve instructional practices within my elementary school. It seemed straight forward that reflection on your practice makes you more aware and effective at delivering instruction. However, the piece that was

troubling for me as a principal was that some teachers naturally reflected during the course of their instruction, while analyzing their data and as they were planning for future instruction to meet their student needs. On the other hand, there were teachers that struggled with utilizing effective instructional practices, monitoring for student engagement, student learning and student understanding but they did not have an awareness that their students were not learning.

It was both a frustrating and eye-opening experience for me as I realized that the teachers that were struggling had no idea they were struggling. There was really only one option that would be beneficial in the situation and that was to figure out how to increase their capacity to be reflective. I had to decide as a principal that teacher development in our building would include a focus on teaching and learning for teachers through professional development, coaching and feedback. Some reflective teachers come to teaching hard wired to be reflective while other teachers need coaching to build their reflective capacity. Reflective teachers' minds are constantly on and thinking about what can be done to improve instruction in their classroom. However, I knew that having a handful of individually reflective teachers was not as strong as having a school where reflective practice is a part of the school culture as a whole. As a principal I knew that moving reflective practice from a few individual teachers to a school-wide level was about implementation and sustainment efforts but I did not understand how to coordinate it all in an effective manner.

I underestimated the power that modeling reflective questions could bring to a culture until I was at the Soundside site and witnessed how it had changed the vocabulary

of the school culture of the participants. I saw firsthand the importance and power in of

modeling reflective questioning and listening to aid teachers in developing their own

reflective. The teachers with student teachers made reference to the positive impact that

having a student teacher had on them by helping them to be more reflective because of all

the questions the student teachers were asking. Knight (2015) also speaks to this, stating,

"Good questions open up conversations, generate respect, accelerate learning, and build

relationships. Questions are the yang to complete the yin of listening, the balance to

advocacy" (p. 1428). As a principal, I have found it difficult to let teachers arrive at their

own findings with limited time in situations where there is an urgent need to change

instructional practices. But the long term benefits are well worth the time in developing

reflective capacity among staff. Table 24 represents a list of reflective questions that the

principals in the case studies posed to their teachers.

Posing individual reflective questions was just a first step in conjunction with

many others that were occurring simultaneously at these school sites where they were

also guiding reflective questions for professional learning communities and even for the

whole staff based on the needs. Both principals acknowledged their teachers had

strengths and weaknesses as would many principals. These principals compared their

teachers need to differentiate for students to the importance of meeting the diverse

learning needs of teachers. The teacher participants also acknowledged that their

administrator knew them and was trying to push them to grow in varied areas. That was

powerful hearing that from the teachers that they acknowledged their administrator knew

them and was pushing them to grow into teacher leaders.

Table 24

List of Reflective Questions

1. What do you think you should do?

2. What's your first step?

3. What do you think is your next step?

4. What would be your initial reaction?

5. How did you teach it? How did the kids receive it and how do you know?

6. What does the content standard actually mean?

7. How are you going to measure student mastery?

8. Based on your data, what is the impact?

9. What influence does attendance have on where they fall on the data?

10. What is causing them to perform in this way? What needs to be done to address the issue?

11. What impact does ethnicity and race have on where they fell on their data?

12. Sixty percent are successful, 40% were not, this teacher had 80%, so what are you doing that was effective?

13. What did you feel went well in the lesson? What would you change?

14. How would you rate the engagement level of the students in that lesson?

15. Looking at the school data, how does it make you feel?

It seems simple that we would provide teachers with the strategies, tools, information and opportunities that they need to continue growing if we are to strengthen our school. These teachers in both of the cases wanted to grow and were seeking ways that they could not only improve instruction in their classrooms but also help lead those efforts within the school. For me as a principal, the commitment of the teachers spoke

volumes about the importance of providing more differentiated professional development options for teachers and opportunities to develop teacher leaders in our schools.

One crucial area that evolved as I conducted the study was the need of administrators to develop strategies to help teachers, PLCs and school staff with reflecting on student data. This then led to reflection on the content standards, curriculum, and instructional planning. Both the principals and teachers acknowledged that staff was in different places in terms of understanding student data and deciphering the instructional implications. Both administrators at the school sites did provide support for understanding student data at the individual, PLC, vertical, and school-wide level, which proved to support reflection with data across the school. Part of this support came in the form of data team staff development, while other supports were in the release time that was provided to analyze and reflect on the student data. As a school principal, I do believe that we have to develop and support the capacity of teachers in a safe environment to both analyze student data and be able to make informed instructional decisions that meet the needs of their students individually and across the school.

Analyzing student data alone is not helpful without the connection to reflection on instructional actions and for future instructional actions. At both of the case study sites there was time devoted to understanding the data and time for doing reflection on content and instructional practices. Both of the school site administrators were active participants during both processes and asked guiding reflection questions. Their presence and involvement was crucial to the success of moving this reflection from individuals to PLCs, vertical teams and finally to analyzing instructional practices across the school. As

principals we often have juggle priorities and we think about which course of action will

best improve our school. These principals modeled the power, value, and importance of

simply being present and actively participating in leading grade level PLCs, vertical

teams, and with the entire school.

School-wide
Reflection on on
data and content

Vertical Reflection
on data and
content

PLC Reflection on
data and content

Individual
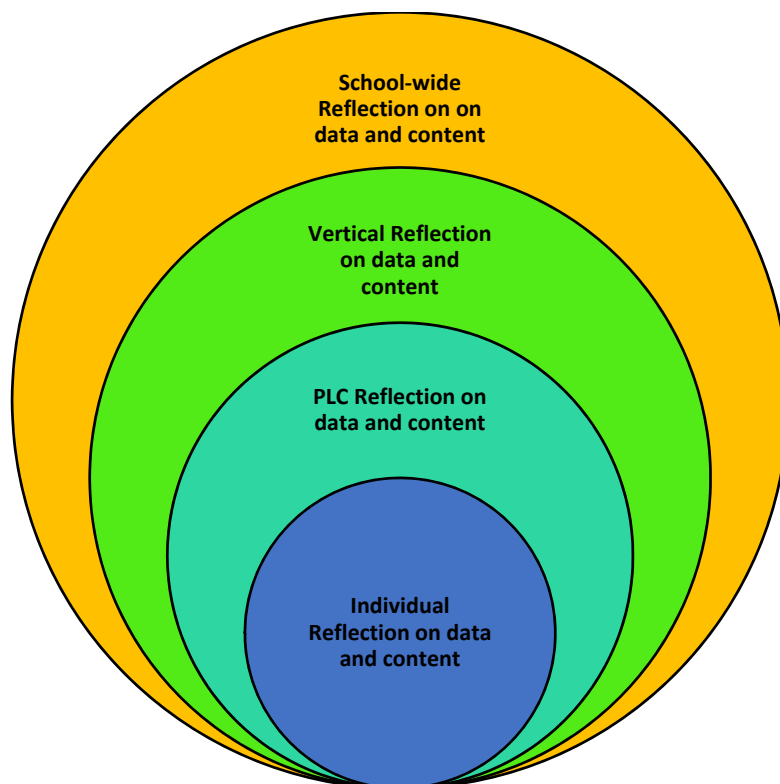Reflection on data
and content

Figure 2. Connecting Reflection on Data and Content from Individuals, PLCs, Vertical

Teams, and at a School-wide Level.

Both reading literature and completing this research study has changed the way I

view leading reflection at a school-wide level. While I recognized that developing the

reflective capacity in schools was important, I now see that it isn't a linear progression.

Reflection needs to be occurring simultaneously as teachers are part of reflecting

individually and collectively. Figure 2 illustrates a way for principals to connect the levels of reflection for teachers from the individual, PLC, vertical, and school-wide level. This helps teachers to see the connection between reflecting on their instructional practices in their classroom and the instructional practices being utilized throughout the school.

Teachers are engaged in reflecting on their data and content both at the individual level and at the collective level which is important for teachers to see the connection at the school-wide level. Collectively teachers need to have opportunities to reflect with their grade level PLCs on their data and content before they are ready to reflect on the vertical progression across the school.

Leading Reflective Practice and Next Steps

As an elementary principal and researcher I want to ensure that I leave you, my readers with five practices that you can easily implement in your buildings to sustain reflective practice.   Although the reflective structures varied to a small degree between the schools in this study, the important components were the same across both schools. They are not magic but given the right environmental conditions they can help all schools to thrive.

1. Model and create opportunities to utilize reflective questions with staff so that it engages them as active reflective thinkers.

2. Examine and reflect upon instructional practices with individuals, PLCs, vertical teams and school leadership teams. Instructional coaching and release

time is needed to unwrap content standards, determine curricular progression and the map out the best instructional practices.

3. Create and support opportunities to reflect on individual student data, PLC data, vertical curriculum data, and school level data. Support is needed to understand the data first and then reflect on the instructional implications. Providing release time for data reflection to occur is critical to moving to needed instructional actions.

4. Create opportunities to ensure that all staff members have an opportunity to participate in reflective practice at each level including individual, PLC, vertical and school level.

5. Finally, but most importantly as principals we have to create the right conditions for honest reflection to occur. This includes creating conditions that build strong relationships, trust and effective communication.

Completing this research study provided me with valuable insights both as a researcher and as a practicing elementary principal. While I do believe that the key findings I have shared can have positive results when implemented, I do also acknowledge that this study has some components that could be further researched in future studies. One limitation in this study was that all the participants were Caucasian females. It would have been interesting to see if there was a difference if the participants had been from varied genders or races. The participants' frame of reference, may have been the reason that there was little discussion regarding reflection on race. Both principals eluded to the fact that the student populations in their schools were shifting.

They shared that they were struggling with closing the achievement gap, however only one of the principal respondents specifically addressed the issue of reflection on race as it related to instructional practices to close the achievement gap. As demographics continue shifting there will be a need for future researchers to study how elementary principals work with the staff to reflect on the impact of race.

Principals do set the tone for reflection in their schools but to sustain reflection at a cultural level it has to become the mindset of all staff members. While there is much collaboration among teachers in schools there is often an acceptance of established practices because it is comfortable. This reflective mindset requires a paradigm shift from acceptance of established practices to questioning and digging deeper. Digging deeper with reflection on data and content can be uncomfortable. It means that staff members will have to pose questions and move beyond the "what" is being done in schools to get to the "why." In both cases presented, the respondents noted that trust and communication were important elements in working with others. Principals that create these type of conditions, will be able to lead sustainable change in their schools through empowering staff throughout the organization to build the reflective capacity of the organization.

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APPENDIX A

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK
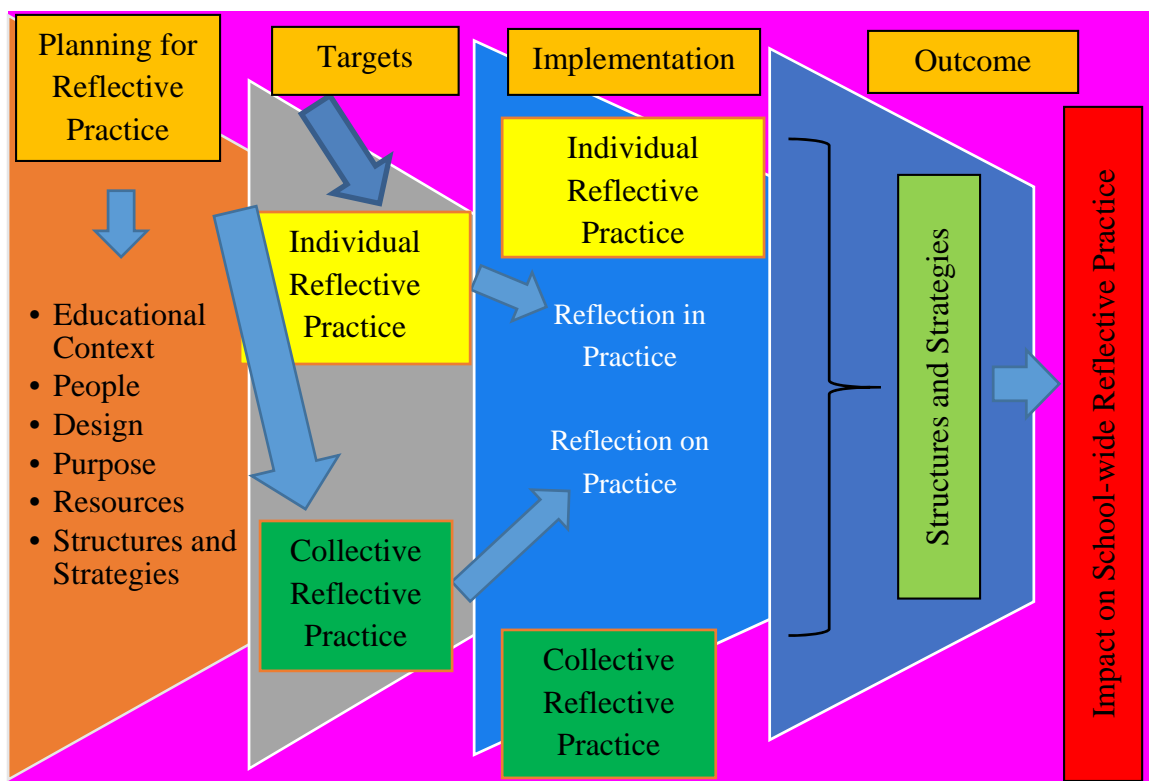
APPENDIX B

ADMINISTRATOR INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Research Questions

How do elementary principals effectively promote and sustain reflective practices in their schools?

What is the relationship between individual reflection and collective reflection in these "reflective" schools?

What are the reflective practices and structures utilized in these schools?

Question 1   Tell me about your school.

Question 2   Currently teachers are evaluated on how they reflect on their practice and administrators are evaluated on this from an instructional leadership and human resources leadership frame of reference. How do you define reflection? What is reflective practice?

Question 3   What do you believe about the role reflection plays in professional learning opportunities and school improvement?

Question 4   Tell me about reflection and reflective practice in your school

Question 5   Do you intentionally plan for reflection to occur?

Question 6   How do you go about planning for reflective practice for individual teachers? Vertical teams? School improvement or leadership teams?

Question 7   How do you go about planning for reflective practice at the collective level to ensure it is a part of your school culture?

Question 8   What impact do you think it has in your school?

Question 9   How often do you engage in reflective practice activities with your staff?

Question 10   What role do you see yourself playing in your school with regard to reflective practice?

Question 11   How do you work with others to move them toward reflective practice?

Question 12   How do you address the need for reflection and create opportunities for professional learning to occur?

Question 13   Which reflective structures and strategies do you feel most knowledgeable about implementing?

Question 14   Which structures and strategies have you been most successful at using with your staff?

Question 15   What role did relationships, trust and communication play into your decisions to implement these reflective structures and strategies?

Question 16   What type of resources and support have you provided to ensure these reflective practices lead to professional learning?

Question 17   How are these reflective practices and professional learning evidenced in your daily work, tell me about reflection during a typical day?

Question 18   How do you balance providing reflective feedback to staff and designing reflective structures with other leadership demands?

Question 19   What do you feel that you do well concerning integrating reflective structures and how do you think that it aids organizational learning?

Question 20   What techniques do you use to support individual teacher reflection? What techniques do you use that support school-wide reflection? How do you connect these for your staff?

Question 21   Which of these strategies and structures has the most potential to result in professional learning? Why? How do you plan to sustain these practices over time?

Question 22   How will you intentionally provide resources and support to sustain these structures and strategies?

Question 23   How will you use the relationships you have built to empower staff to sustain these practices over time?

Question 24   What part has instructional leadership played in your efforts to coordinate school-wide reflective practices?

Question 25   What part has school improvement planning had in your efforts to coordinate school-wide reflective practices?

APPENDIX C

TEACHER INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Research Questions

How do elementary principals effectively promote and sustain reflective practices in their schools?

What is the relationship between individual reflection and collective reflection in these "reflective" schools?

What are the reflective practices and structures utilized in these schools?

Question 1   Tell me about yourself and your classroom?

Question 2   How do you define reflection—what is reflective practice?

Question 3   What opportunities do you have, to engage in reflective practice at school?

Question 4   What individual strategies does your principal use to promote reflective practice? Does your principal use walkthroughs? Instructional coaching? Individual data meetings? Professional development conferences? Observation/evaluation conferences?

Question 5   What impact has these opportunities for individual reflective practice had on your instructional practices—how have you applied what you learned to practice?

Question 6   How has your principal supported those efforts?

Question 7   How does your principal follow up and provide feedback after these individual sessions?

Question 8   What did your principal do/not do that made it a successful experience?

Question 9   What other strategies does your principal use to promote reflective practice in the school? Vertical planning teams? Data teams? Protocols? Critical friends protocols?

Question 10   How has your principal connected what you do in individual reflective practice to what you do with your team or school?

Question 11 What do you believe about the role reflection plays in school improvement?

Question 12 What is your administrator's expectation of all staff regarding the implementation of these practices? Are there norms in place for communication and respectful relationships?

Question 13 How does your principal address the need for reflection and create opportunities for school-wide professional learning to occur?

Question 14 What role do relationships, trust and communication play into your active participation in these reflective structures and strategies?

Question 15 What type of resources and support has your principal provided to ensure these reflective practices lead to professional learning school-wide?

Question 16 How often are these reflective practices and professional learning evidenced in your daily work—tell me about a typical day?

Question 17 How does your principal incorporate reflective practices with data?

Question 18 How does the school culture as a whole feel about reflective practice and the strategies your principal has used to support their implementation?