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Eury Value-Added Experience Model: A Case Study on the Collective Learning Culture of a Suburban Middle School in the Southeastern Region of the United States

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Eury Value-Added Experience Model: A Case Study on the Collective Learning Culture
of a Suburban Middle School in the Southeastern Region of the United States

By
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A Dissertation Submitted to the
Gardner-Webb University School of Education
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
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Approval Page

This dissertation was submitted by Timothy Merrell Reed under the direction of the persons listed below. It was submitted to the Gardner-Webb University School of Education and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Gardner-Webb University.

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Abstract

The Eury Value-Added Experience Model: A Case Study on the Collective Learning Culture of a Suburban Middle School in the Southeastern Region of the United States. Reed, Timothy Merrell, 2014: Dissertation, Gardner-Webb University, Eury Value-Added Experience Model/ Collective Learning Culture/Dispositions/Professional Experience/Structure/Shared Decision Making/Assessment and Reflection Skills

This dissertation was designed to test the Eury Value-Added Experience Model as a theoretical model to measure and evaluate the collective learning culture of a school organization. The Eury Value-Added Experience Model is based upon five domains of the theoretical model: (1) dispositions, (2) professional experiences, (3) structure, (4) shared decision making, and (5) assessment and reflection skills. This mixed-method case study used the five domains to focus on the collective learning culture of a suburban middle school in the western region of the State of North Carolina. Limited research exists on the use of the Eury Value-Added Experience Model as a means to measure and evaluate the collective learning culture of an organization.

The researcher in this study acquired quantitative data from the 33 participants in this study by using a web-based survey. The Eury Value-Added Experience Model Survey (Reed, 2012) and the Gill (2009) Organizational Learning Culture Assessment Survey were used to acquire empirical data from the 33 participants at the research site. In the qualitative phases of this mixed-methods research study, the researcher employed a questionnaire instrument and two focus-group sessions to acquire detailed narratives on the collective learning culture of the research site. The researcher used the quantitative and qualitative data to conduct a statistical analysis to determine the relationship of the five domains of the Eury Value-Added Experience Model on the collective learning culture of the organization.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Public school reform will continue to face an extraordinary number of challenges in the 21st century. Public education in the United States is currently facing a number of external challenges with regard to school reform. The challenges to the sustainability and effectiveness of public school reform have been considerably influenced by the unstable economic, social, and political trends and events of the last 10 years. The downturns and recessions in the American economy, the rapid development of the globally competitive economic environment, and the fiscal instability at the federal, state, and local levels of government continue to have a direct impact on the sustainability and effectiveness of educational reform in our public schools.

The lasting impact of the recession on the American economy will critically affect the development and quality of human capital in our country (Delong, Golden, & Katz, 2002, cited in Irons, 2009, p. 4). Unfortunately, Irons (2009), Executive Director of the Economic Policy Institute, noted "that the long-term scarring of a recession will have a lasting impact on education in America" (p. 3) because "education–or 'human capital'– plays a critical role in driving economic growth" (p. 3). Delong et al. also stated that "human capital has played a principal role in driving America's edge in twentieth-century economic growth" (p. 3). Historically, a strong education system helps teach America's citizens and propels its economy toward success; however, if current students are not prepared to participate in the global economy, then America will not have the manpower to sustain its position as an economic powerhouse. America's edge from 20th century economic growth will be diminished and reduced significantly by the inability of our youth to obtain a high level of education. Becker, Murphy, and Tamura (1994) identified that there is a direct correlation between human capital development and economic

growth in countries throughout the world. Becker et al. also stated that is "considerable circumstantial evidence also that indicates that countries grow more rapidly when education and other skills are abundant" (p. 347). Norman R. Augustine, retired chairman and chief executive officer of Lockheed Martin Corporation, before the House of Representatives Committee on Science on October 20, 2005, stated that "human capital–the quality of our work force–is particularly important in our competiveness. Our public school system compromises the foundation of this asset" (p. 5). Therefore, to remain competitive in the global economy, the American public education system must produce high quality human capital.

In Iron's (2009) executive summary on the long-term impacts of an economic recession, he provided specific examples of how an economic recession can have a permanent and substantial impact on education and human capital development in the United States of America. The inability of families and parents to provide adequate child nutrition to their children due to rising costs, job loss, and housing accommodations can greatly influence the cognitive development of our children. There are numerous studies that have identified that a lack of early childhood nutrition greatly impacts the cognitive development of children. Hoddinott, Maluccio, Behrman, Flores, and Martorell (2008) discussed how developing countries throughout the world who invest in and improve early childhood nutrition can "lead to a greater grade attainment, reading comprehension, cognitive abilities, and ultimately a wage later in life" (Irons, p. 4). Therefore, the lack of nutrition due to a recession may affect the cognitive development of a large segment of our students.

The second long-term effect of a recession on human capital development in Iron's (2009) executive summary is the inability of our children to obtain a stable, secure,

and regimented way of living outside the school environment. The rising unemployment rates, the loss of high-paying employment opportunities, the increase in the number of home foreclosures, and the rising number of students deemed homeless have a tremendous effect on the future of our society. These four issues are just a short list of a vast array of issues that have a lasting impact on the academic, social, and physical wellness of our children in our public school systems throughout the United States.

Iron's (2009) third long-term effect of a recession on human capital development in the United States of America is the rising number of students who delay or forgo higher education due to the increase in living costs. The cost of higher education is increasing at a rate that is much higher than citizens' incomes. For this reason, students may choose to work instead of pursue higher level degrees. Some citizens eventually may go back to school, but others will not. Other students may choose to borrow money to pay for postsecondary education. Unfortunately, after their studies are completed, some struggle to find a job that pays them enough to easily pay off their loan. This scenario acts as a caution to others thinking of borrowing money to continue their education. Both situations suppress higher education and greatly diminish the quality of human capital produced in the United States. Human capital development will be greatly affected by the number of students obtaining postsecondary education due to the financial instability and burden the economic recession has placed upon the financial instability of the family.

High quality education that is responsive to the global culture is imperative to the economic success of the United States. In December 2005, Hershberg, Director of Operation Public Education at the University of Pennsylvania, stated that "our last four presidents, the Congress, governors and corporate leaders have come to understand that,

if America is to remain a stable, middle-class society, steps must be taken to significantly improve our system of public education" (p. 277).   In his 2011, State of the Union speech to the nation, President Barrack Obama made it clear that

> the most important contest we face today is not between Democrats and Republicans, but rather America's contest with competitors across the globe for the jobs and industries of our time. Because economic progress and educational achievement are linked, educating every American student to graduate from high school prepared for college and for a career is a national imperative.

McNerney noted in (2010) that "the biggest part of the solution must be improving our educational system–which I argue is the most important thing we can do to build a strong economy for the future" (p. 7). The Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan (2009), discussed the continual need to develop more rigorous academic standards for our schools and increasing postsecondary graduates in the math and science disciplines. Duncan noted, "Today, our standards are too low and the results on international tests show it. Worse yet, we see the signals in the international economy as more engineers, doctors, and science and math Ph.D.'s come from abroad" (p. 5).

In McNerney's speech, U.S. Competitiveness in a Changing Global Economy, to the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars on September 10, 2010, he called for the United States of America to renew its position in the global economy by increasing the quality of its human capital. McNerney (2010) discussed the problems that America faces with its present and future workforce. McNerney stated the following:

> I'm sure it is no surprise to you that technology-based companies, academia, and government science-and-technology organizations are already starting to face an impeding skill shortage that will grow significantly worse over the next 5 to 15

years and beyond. This is a global circumstance, by the way. But the problem is

growing acute in the United States, where many seasoned and skilled workers are

close to retiring, and insufficient numbers of capable workers are being prepared

to replace them. I emphasize "capable" because in the United States today we

face a skills shortage, not necessarily a labor shortage. (p. 7)

Hershberg (2005) described how important and severe this issue is to the future of the

American economy and the quality of the human workforce in American society. He

stated,

> Bill Gates is investing millions of dollars to improve our nation's high schools
>
> because he is "terrified" for the future work force of the nation. In the
>
> international competition to have the biggest and best supply of knowledge
>
> workers. Gates declares, "America is falling behind." (p. 277)

Gestner, former chairman of International Business Machines (IBM), stated the

following:

> Our nation, which has prevailed in conflict after conflict over several centuries,
>
> now faces a stark and sudden choice: adapt or perish. I'm not referring to a war
>
> against terrorism but to a war of skills–one that America is at risk of losing to
>
> India, China, and other emerging economies. And we're not at risk of losing it on
>
> factory floors or lab benches. It's happening every day, all across the country, in
>
> our public schools. Unless we transform those schools and do it now . . . it will
>
> soon be too late. (Hershberg, p. 276)

According to Hershberg,

> The simple reality is that the global economy has changed in fundamental ways
>
> and done so far more rapidly than our schools have been able to adapt. It is now

critical to move our school to their next level of excellence. (p. 3)

That being said, the American education model will need to shift to produce different kinds of workers who will fit the needs of the global economy. Schlechty (1990) saw the American economy shifting away from manual work to knowledge work. Schlechty went on to argue that schools must teach students the skills to work in an information-based society (Hargreaves, 1997). The American

economy will need to shift from low-skilled, low-wage jobs to more highly-skilled and thus higher-wage jobs; and from our traditional industrial manufacturing make-up to a twenty-first-century mix of employment in high-tech fields, such as biotechnology, clean energy, information technology, nanotechnology, and advanced manufacturing technology. (Atkinson & Andes, 2010, p. 4)

Hershberg (2005) discussed the reasons for reforming America's public schools. He noted that public education in America has not changed since the early 19th century. In the 19th century, public education was designed to do three things for the American economy.

1. The first was to provide basic universal literacy, and America became the first nation in which everyone in the labor force could read and write at the sixth grade level.

2. The second was to socialize a highly diverse population–millions of immigrants from different nations, cultures, religions and millions of farmers who migrated to cities–for success in an industrial economy. Students were taught to show up on time, respect authority, develop a work ethic, and repeat monotonous tasks.

3. Third, using standardized tests and the bell shaped curve, the schools identified

and sorted out the top one-fifth of their students for higher education, and the best

and the brightest of these went on to run the country. (p. 278)

Bill Gates, co-founder of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, described in a

commentary for the *Los Angeles Times* a thought that reinforced Hershberg's claim that

public education in America is based on 19th century standards. Gates (2005) stated,

the idea behind the old high school system was that you can train an adequate

workforce by sending only a small fraction of students to college, and that the

other kids either couldn't do college work or didn't need to go. We have to do

away with the outdated idea that only some students need to be ready for college

and that the others can walk away from higher education and still thrive in our

21st century society. We need a new design that realizes that all students can do

rigorous work. (pp. 1-2)

Hershberg (2005) stated,

the problem is that people continue to behave as if the current school system–

designed for a different century and a different economy–is the right one to meet

the challenges ahead despite the record of the last three decades. (p. 278)

Overall, the current American public education system must overcome external inhibitors

and create internal reform to increase the nation's human capital and global

competitiveness.

According to Johnson, Oliff, and Williams in their February 9, 2011, update on

state budgets for the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, "with tax revenue still

declining as a result of recession and budget reserves largely drained, the vast majority of

states have made spending cuts that hurt families and reduce necessary services" (p. 1).

The state governments have made budget cuts due to lost revenues from income, property and sales taxes throughout the economic recession. In the spring of 2008, state governments began cutting their budgets and spending. According to budget cut estimates of The National Association of State Budget Officers (NASBO), in the fiscal year of 2009, states would budget cut 4.2% of their state funded services; and in the year 2012, states would budget cut 6.8% of their state funded services. "NASBO projects that state spending for 2011 will remain 7.6% below 2008 levels. At the same time, the need for these services did not decline and, in fact, rose as the number of families facing economic difficulties increase" (Johnson et al., p. 1). According to Johnson et al., "In the 2009 and 2010 fiscal years, the imbalance between available revenues and what was needed for services opened up a budget gap in most states" (p. 3). A combined $425 billion budget shortfall for state governments has taken place during the recent recession affecting the United States of America (Johnson et al.).

The effects of the budgetary shortfall can be directly seen in the number of teachers, teacher assistants, and administrative layoffs in the 2011-2012 fiscal school year. According to the Office of State Budget and Management (OSBM), North Carolina would see a reduction in 5,313 teaching positions, 13,259 assistant positions, and assistant principal numbers would be substantially lowered to meet the budgetary shortfalls of 2011-2012 fiscal year (NCDPI, 2010, p. 1). June Atkinson, State Superintendent of Education, stated, "North Carolina public schools received less from the state's General Fund in 2010-2011 than in 2006-2007, even though we now have at least 40,000 more students" (NCDPI, 2010, p. 1). Budget cuts add stress to school communities as educators are asked to do more with less. State Board of Education Chairman, Dr. Harrison, stated that "the State Board of Education had expected cuts

during this difficult fiscal time, but they had held out hope that the cuts would not move the state backward" (NCDPI, 2011, p. 1).

Governor Purdue stated, "taken together, all of these budget cuts would severely limit what local schools will be able to offer students and will jeopardize more than 25 years of progress in our state" (NCDPI, 2011, p. 1). Sanchez (2011), correspondent for National Public Radio (NPR), stated, "in North Carolina, the cuts are so severe that Governor Beverly Perdue warns 'they will do generational damage' to public education" (p. 1). North Carolina and other states in the union must work to overcome the external constraints of the economic recession and create internal reforms to the education system so that students are prepared for the global economy.

Statement of the Problem

Tyack and Cuban (1995) addressed the issue for the call for educational reform in American public schools by maintaining that public school reform is a way to improve education and society (Tyack & Cuban). The transitioning of the American economy from an agrarian society to an industrial and manufacturing society created significant social change in the importance of producing knowledgeable and skilled human capital in the United States in the middle of the 1800s. Horace Mann's calling for the creation and development of the common school to increase the human capital–education–was a drastic social change for the American nation in the middle of the 19th century. The economy of the 18th and early 19th centuries was heavily dependent upon the agrarian nature of the American people and the wealth of natural resources that were abundant to the growing economy of the United States. Thus, the rise of the Industrial Revolution in the United States caused drastic reform in the development of human capital to meet the needs of the striving industrial economy.

Tyack and Cuban (1995) noted, "in the 1840s, Horace Mann took his audience to the edge of the precipice to see the social hell that lay before them if they did not achieve salvation through the common school" (p. 1). Mann (1965) continued to call for the increase of human capital and the development of the common school system of public education in the United States of America well beyond his years as an educational and social reformer in America: "If ever there was a cause, if ever can be a cause, worthy to be upheld by all of toil and sacrifice that the human heart can endure, it is the cause of education" (p. 18). Mann's cause for education in the industrial-based economy of the United States of the late 19th century and the 20th century is parallel to the call for educational reform in the 21st century. The same drastic social change and overall reforms of the educational system are needed to meet the new and demanding human capital requirements of the 21st century.

Newman (1998) called for fundamental reform, rather than incremental reform, with regard to educational improvement in public schools in America. According to Cuban, "incremental reforms are those that aim to improve the existing structures of schooling. Fundamental reforms, on the other hand, are those that aim to transform and alter permanently those very same instructional structures" (cited in Newman, p. 289). Darling-Hammond (1993), a leading educational reformer believed that

> rather than seek the current system of schooling perform more efficiently by standardizing practice, school reform efforts must focus on building the capacity of schools and teachers to undertake tasks that they have never before been called on to accomplish. Schools and teachers must work to ensure that all students learn to think critically, to invent, to produce, and to solve problems. Because this goal requires responding to students nonstandardized needs, it far exceeds what

teacher-proof curricula or administrator-proof management processes could ever

accomplish. Reforms that rely on can be accomplished only be investing in

individual and organizational learning, in the human capital of the educational

enterprise. (p. 755)

Overall, to respond to the needs of the global economy and to enjoy continued economic

success, the American education system must undergo significant reform in the 21st

century.

Background of the Study

The intent of this exploratory mixed-methods case study was to investigate the

application of the Eury Value-Added Experience Model (EVAEM) on the collective

learning culture of a middle school organization in a suburban southeastern school.

Traditionally, a value added model

is a term used to label methods of assessment of school performance that measure

the knowledge gained by individual students from one year to another and then

use the measure as a basis for a performance assessment system. It can be used

more generally to refer to any method of assessment that adjusts for a valid

measure of incoming knowledge or ability. (Tekwe et al., 2004, p. 12)

Essentially, value-added models adjust performance ratings so they are based on

individual student growth from one year to the next–instead of meeting a universal

standard. Several states have developed student accountability models based on the

traditional value-added model. The EVAEM is based on the student accountability

models developed in Tennessee and North Carolina during the last 10 years.

In the early 1980s, Sanders and McLean (1984) of the University of Tennessee

explored the possibility of using a "statistical mixed-model methodology" to assess

teachers "to eliminate many of the previously cited impediments to incorporating student achievement data in an educational-based assessment system" (Sanders & Horn, 1994, p. 1). Sanders and Horn (1994) noted that educators were focused on the products, including standardized test scores, not the process of the educational experience, which created an inefficient teaching system. The problems they noted included but were not limited to

> missing student records, various modes of teaching (self-contained classrooms versus departmentalized instruction versus team teaching), changes to teacher assignments, transient students, regression to the mean, different variance-covariance structures across school systems, and the need to concomitant co-variables as needed. (Sanders & Horn, p. 1)

Overall, Sanders and Horn noted that a teacher assessment system based solely on product output presented numerous problems to creating an efficient, successful educational experience for students.

Sanders and McLean (1984) published a study based on 3 years of data from the Knox County students' performance on the California Achievement Test in Grades 2-5. The goal of their study was to use a statistical system of analysis to incorporate student assessment data from the California Achievement Test as a method to assess teachers and their effectiveness as educators (Sanders & McLean). Sanders and McLean had five important findings that led to the development of their value-added assessment model.

1. There were measurable differences among schools and teachers with regard to their effect on indicators of student learning.

2. The estimate of school and teacher effects tended to be more consistent from year to year.

3. Teacher effects were not location specific; a gain score could not be predicted by simply knowing the location of the school.

4. There was a strong correlation between teacher effects as determined by the data and subjective evaluations by supervisors.

5. Student gains were not related to the students' ability or achievement levels of when they entered the classroom. (p. 300)

This study was a precursor for the development of the Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System (TVAAS), designed to measure individual student growth in achievement from year to year in the State of Tennessee. Since the introduction of the TVAAS system for student accountability, numerous other states, including North Carolina, Florida, Pennsylvania, and Ohio, have adopted a value-added assessment system to measure expected student growth in achievement. Hershberg (2005) described the system in the following way:

> The value-added approach to assessment centers on a disarmingly simple but profound notion: schools cannot solve all of society's problems, but *they can and should ensure that every child receives a year's worth of growth in a year*. A year's worth of growth–whether a child started the year below, on, or above grade–is the amount that should be reasonably expected of them based on what they actually achieved in years *past*. This belief–that each child is entitled to at least this much annual growth–lies at the heart of value-added methodology. (p. 5)

McCaffrey, Lockwood, Koretz, and Hamilton (2003) promoted the value-added model (VAM) for two main reasons in their report for the RAND Corporation. First, McCaffrey et al. noted that "VAM holds out the promise of separating the effects of

teachers and schools from the powerful effects of such non-educational factors as family background" (p. xi). This means that educators are assessed in isolation of student issues outside of school. For example, a teacher may be responsible for growing a struggling student's reading level one grade level in a year, not for boosting that student's reading level to the grade-level standard. Second, VAM studies may highlight specific characteristics of effective teachers, which can be used to improve teacher training and education in general.

In the review of the literature from their report, McCaffrey et al. (2003) noted "that while research was limited, they did find that the VAM provided evidence that teachers have discernible, differential effects on student achievement, and that these effects appear to persist in the future" (McCaffrey et al., p. xiii). The VAM could identify general characteristics of successful teachers so that all teachers can enlist those best practices in their classrooms.

Koretz (2008), a professor of education at Harvard University, stated that

the term "value added" is used to represent two very different qualities. The first is students' total growth–how much their achievement increased, for whatever reason, during their fifth-grade year with me. The second is how much my efforts contributed to their growth–how much "value" I added. (p. 19)

Meyer (1997) noted that the "educational outcome indicators are being used to assess the efficacy of American education" (p. 123) or to measure the total growth of students. This means that products, including standardized test scores (Clune, 1991; Smith & O'Day, 1990), are being used to measure the quality and efficiency of education. These measures do not account for the teacher inputs or the process of the educational experience. This notion of measuring how much a teacher helped a student grow in 1 year is the basis of

the EVAEM. The EVAEM aims to measure the claim of how much a collective group of teachers' efforts contributes to student growth within a school organization.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to contribute to the knowledge base by exploring the impact of teacher collective efficacy on the evolvement of a learning culture in a school-based organization. The EVAEM is a theoretical model that has not been validated as a tool to measure the collective learning culture of an organization. A visual representation of the EVAEM can be reviewed in Appendix A of this research study. This study measured the validity and effectiveness of the EVAEM as a conceptual model to collect data, evaluate and analyze the data, and effectively allow the data to be used to promote change in the organization. The immediate measurable results were analyzed to create a descriptive needs assessment that focused on increasing and transforming the collective learning culture of the organization.

Balls, Eury, and King (2011) noted that two foreseeable weaknesses are providing immediate measureable results and to sustaining reform. In addition, "one of the greatest challenges of estimating teacher effects is separating teacher effects from other sources of variability in student achievements, such as student background, peers, and neighborhoods, as well as school district or system inputs" (McCaffrey et al., 2003, p. 19). The EVAEM would aim to overcome challenges and provide a more efficient learning culture in schools. The EVAEM design is based upon the notion of using research-based experiences and theories of sustained learning to spur change in a collective learning culture (Balls et al.). According to Balls et al., "this model suggests new ways of gaining insight into teachers' practices, new way of examining their strengths and weaknesses, and new ways of developing teacher capacity in individual and

collective considerations" (p. 2). The outcome indicators of this study would be used by the school and administrators as means to design, implement, and provide effective professional development that would allow the organization to transform the collective learning culture of an organization. Thus, the positive and effective transformation of the learning culture of the organization would increase student and teacher performance and enhance the sustainability and longevity of the organization.

Research Questions

In this exploratory mixed-methods case study, there are five different domains of the EVAEM that were used to investigate and measure the collective learning culture of a school as an organization. The five different domains are based upon EVAEM, which measures the individual and collective learning culture of an organization by employing the use of a value-added model design. However, in this study the focus was on the collective learning culture of a school organization.

1. What is the impact of the classified staff members' (teachers') dispositions on the collective learning culture of the organization?

2. What is the impact of professional experiences of the classified staff members (teachers) on the collective learning culture of the organization?

3. What is the impact of the physical and organizational structure of the school on the classified staff members' (teachers') collective learning culture of the organization?

4. What is the impact of the shared decision-making process of the classified staff members (teachers) on the collective learning culture of the organization?

5. What is the impact of the assessment and reflections skills of the classified staff members (teachers) on the collective learning culture of the organization?

Theoretical Foundations of the Study

The researcher of this study integrated the EVAEM with five supportive theoretical concepts to "suggest new ways of gaining insight into teacher's practices, new ways of examining their strengths and weaknesses, and new ways of developing teacher capacity in individual and collective considerations" (Balls et al., 2011, p. 2). Gall, Gall, and Borg (2007) discussed the advantages of using theory-based research. Gall et al. stated the following:

> Theory-based research on educational phenomena has several advantages, irrespective of whether it involves the use of quantitative or qualitative methods. First, theory-based research usually yields important findings. Without a theory as starting point or end point, many studies address trivial questions or contribute nothing to the slow accumulation of knowledge needed for the advancement of a science of education. Second, a theory can provide a rational basis for explaining or interpreting the results of research. (p. 45)

The EVAEM is a theoretical model that had not been used as a research tool prior to this study. The researcher in this study used the EVAEM to answer the five research questions set forth in this study to investigate the collective learning culture of an organization. This study attempted to explore and enhance the scholarly knowledge of the importance of collective teachers' perceptions of the organization with regard to dispositions, professional experiences, organizational structures, shared decision making, assessment, and refection skills of a school-based organization. The researcher used both proven quantitative and qualitative research methods to investigate, analyze, and develop a narrative summary that can been used by the organization as a tool for cultural transformation aimed at enhancing overall organizational performance.

The Research Methodology

In the following section of the study, the methods for investigating and carrying out the study are described under five different headings: (a) general research design, (b) essential assumptions of the study, (c) the selection of the study site and the participants in the study, (d) quantitative instrumentation, and (e) qualitative instrumentation.

General Research Design

The general research design for this study was based upon the design and enhancement of the EVAEM as the conceptual model to facilitate the evolvement of a collective learning culture in a school organization. The researcher chose the research strategy of a mixed-methods case study to measure the evolvement of the collective learning culture of a specific middle school organization. According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2007), "mixed methods research is an approach that combines or associates both qualitative and quantitative forms. It involves philosophical assumptions, the use of qualitative and quantitative approaches, and the mixing of both approaches in a study" (Creswell, 2009, p. 4). This method creates a stronger study than one conducted using a single research approach.

A theoretical model was used to conduct the research in this research study on the collective learning culture of a middle school. In their publication on research methods, Gall et al. (2007) noted that there are specific characteristics or requirements for case studies to be used as a theoretical model for a research study. Gall et al. defined case study research as "(a) the in-depth study of (b) one or more instances of a phenomenon (c) in its real-life context that (d) reflects the perspective of the participants involved in the phenomenon" (p. 447). The researcher in this case study on the collective learning culture of a suburban middle school in the southeastern region of the United States

selected to use the conceptual definition of a case study based upon Gall et al. The researcher developed an in-depth case study focusing on one or more instances of a phenomenon of the classified staff members (teachers). Murray (2003) noted in his publication on research methods in theses and dissertations that while the case study approach is limited in that it can produce generalizations that can be risks or error, it also provides considerable advantages. Murray noted that "the greatest advantage of a case study is that it permits a researcher to reveal the way a multiplicity of factors have interacted to produce the unique character of the entity that is the subject of the research" (p. 35). The researcher of this study further developed the research design by using a mixed-methods case study to focus on a sequential exploratory strategy.

Molina Azorin and Cameron (2010) noted from the work of Creswell and Plano Clark (2007) that "the overall purpose and central premise of mixed methods research is that the use of quantitative and qualitative approaches in combination may provide a better understanding of research problems and complex phenomena than either approach alone" (p. 95). Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) defined mixed-methods research as "the class of research where the researcher mixes or combines quantitative and qualitative research techniques, methods, approaches, concepts or languages into a single study" (p. 17). Creswell (2009) noted that "sequential mixed methods procedures are those in which the researcher seeks to elaborate on or expand on the findings of one method with another method" (p. 234). The sequential exploratory

is characterized by the collection and analysis of quantitative data in a first phase of research followed by the collection and analysis of qualitative data in a second phase that builds on the results of the initial quantitative results. Weight typically is given to quantitative data, and the mixing of the data occurs when the initial

quantitative results informs the secondary qualitative data collection. Thus, the

two forms of data are separate but connected. (Creswell, 2009, p. 211)

According to Creswell (2009), "weight in mixed methods research is the priority given to

quantitative or qualitative research in a particular study. In some studies, the weight

might be equal; in others, it might emphasize qualitative or quantitative data" (p. 239). In

this case study on the collective learning culture of a school-based organization, the

weight of both quantitative and qualitative research was equal. A simplified visual

representation of the course of action for how both quantitative and qualitative research

methods were used in the research design for this sequential exploratory case study may

be reviewed in Appendix B of this research study.

Essential Assumptions of the Study

In this exploratory mixed-methods case study on the collective learning culture of

a southeastern middle school, there were three essential assumptions. First, the

participants in this case study actively participated and answered the qualitative survey

instrument in this study in a truthful and honest representation of their attitudes and

beliefs towards the questions that were being measured. Second, the participants in the

second phase of this case study participated and answered truthfully and honestly their

beliefs, attitudes, and concerns in the questionnaire and also in the focus group sessions

of this study. Third, a vast majority of the classified teaching staff at the research site

actively participated in this study.

Research Site and Participants

The research site opened its doors of schooling middle age adolescents in the fall

of 1971 as a junior high school for a rural/suburban area in western North Carolina. The

present middle school was originally opened as junior high school. The change in

organizational structure and name took place in 1996 with the transition from a junior high school to that of a middle school model. Presently, the research site has 237 students enrolled in sixth grade, 225 students enrolled in seventh grade, and 205 students enrolled in eighth grade.

The middle school research site has three different grade levels divided into interdisciplinary team configurations. The eighth-grade team has two 4-person interdisciplinary teams. The seventh grade is comprised of two interdisciplinary teams with four teachers appointed to each team. The sixth-grade interdisciplinary team configurations are based on a one 3-teacher interdisciplinary team and one team of four interdisciplinary teachers. The research site has a total of six teams: five teams are 4-teacher teams, and one team is comprised of three people. The fine arts, physical education, and exceptional needs teachers are actively involved in the six different interdisciplinary teams at the research site.

The vision of the research organization is that the school will provide a safe environment that fosters academic, physical, emotional, and social growth and prepare students to be successful 21st century citizens. The mission statement of the research organization is "the school will maintain a safe school that engages students in meaningful and relevant instruction that encourages critical thinking and problem solving."

The 2010-2011 student enrollment for the research site was 644 students. The research site's current ethnic and racial breakdown of the student population is as follows: African American, 107 (16.8%), Caucasian 470 (73.8%), Hispanic 41 (6%), and other (3.4%). Over the past 4 years, the racial and ethnic composition of the student body has remained basically consistent with the exception of an increase in the Hispanic

population. The school attendance rates for the 3-year period were 2009-2010, 95%; 2008-2009, 95%; 2007-2008, 95%. In 2010-2011, 89 of the 636 (13.9%) students enrolled at the research site were identified as exceptional students.

According to the requirements and standards of No Child Left Behind legislation, 100% of the 37 classified teaching staff members meet the highly qualified standards for middle grades. In the year 2009-2010, 23% of the staff at the research site had advanced degrees. In the 2011-2012, school year there was one teacher, one administrator, and one counselor who were currently National Board Certified at the research site. However, a number of teachers were enrolled in advanced degree courses and additional licensures at local universities. There are presently 56 total staff members at the research site. The number of classified staff members as teachers is 37 individuals or (66%) of the staff, while 14 individuals (25%) of the total staff members are unclassified staff members. The remaining four staff members at the research site make up the administrative team and the counseling team with two members on each team. The seven male classified staff members comprise of 22% of the entire staff population at the research site. The female members of the staff represent 78.3% of the total number of classified staff members at the research site. The present racial and ethnic background of the school faculty is as follows: African American, 8 (14.2%); Caucasian, 47 (83.9%); and Hispanic, 1 (1%).

Quantitative Instrumentation

In the quantitative phase of this mixed-methods case study, the researcher created and developed a survey instrument to measure the collective learning culture of the organization. The researcher developed an instrument to obtain data from the participants in the study via the use of a survey. The first part of the survey instrument dealt specifically with the five domains of the EVAEM. The second part of the survey

instrument dealt with Gill's (2009) Organizational Learning Culture Assessment Survey (GOLCAS). A visual representation of the GOLCAS instrument can be reviewed in Appendix C of this research study. The organizational learning culture assessment for Gill's publication has its origins in The Urban Institute's publication of *Building Capacity in Nonprofit Organizations.*

Qualitative Instrumentation

The researcher employed the data from the quantitative phase to develop the questions and themes for the qualitative phase of this case study. The researcher used a web-based questionnaire and focus groups as a means to obtain the narrative and thematic data necessary to actively analyze the qualitative data for this case study. The researcher further expands and develops the two types of data collection instruments and the data analysis procedure in Chapter 3.

The framework for this sequential exploratory mixed-methods case study design is based on the EVAEM. The value-added model in this study allowed the researcher and the research site the ability to obtain a measurement of the collective learning culture of the organization. Balls et al. (2011) noted that "a measure can be calculated by individual and by school through the implementation of an instrument that provides measures in five domains. The instrument would yield an individual index and a collective index for baseline considerations" (p. 3). In this research study, a collective measure was calculated for the perceptions of the teachers' perceptions based upon the five domains (variables) that are found in this study's research questions.

Creswell (2009) noted that the term "variable" is something that varies in two or more ways and can be measured (p. 235). Gall et al. (2007) stated that a variable is "a characteristic that can vary in quantity or quality" (p. 44). The researcher identified the

independent variable in this case study as the collective learning culture of the school-based organization. The five domains chosen by the researcher to investigate in this study are from the EVAEM and are the dependent variables of this case study. The dependent variables or domains in this mixed-methods case study are (1) dispositions, (2) professional experience, (3) the physical and organizational structure of the school-based organization, (4) the shared decision-making process of the organization, and (5) the assessment and reflective skills of the members of the organization. A visual representation of the EVAEM may be reviewed in Appendix A of this research study on the collective learning culture of a school organization.

Definitions

Assessment. Taggart and Wilson (1998) defined the ability of a teacher to employ reflective thinking in the classroom as "the process of making informed and logical decisions on educational matters, then assessing the consequences of those decisions" (p. 2).

Balanced scorecard framework.

The Balanced Scorecard allows managers to look at business from four different perspectives. It provides answer to four basic questions: (1) How do customers see us? (costumer perspective) (2) What we must excel at? (internal perspective) (3) Can we continue to improve and create value? (innovation and learning perspective) (4) How do we look to shareholders? (financial perspective). (Kaplan & Norton, 1992, p. 72)

Case. The case for this study was to investigate and measure the collective learning culture of the classified teaching staff at the research site. "A case is a particular instance of the phenomenon" (Gall et al., 2007, p. 633).

Coding. "The process of organizing the material into chunks or segments of text in order to develop a general meaning of each segment" (Creswell, 2009, p. 227).

Collegiality. Little and Bird (1986) defined collegiality as "(1) Specific staff discussions of teaching practice, (2) observing and being observed at work, (3) working together on plans and materials, and (4) learning from and with each other" (p. 468).

Culture. Schein (1992) noted that culture is "the idea that certain things in groups are shared and held in common" (1992, p. 8). Schein created a list of these words or phenomena:

(1) observed behavioral regularities when people interact, (2) group norms, (3) espoused values, (4) formal philosophy, (5) rules of the game, (6) climate, (7) embedded skills, (8) habitats of thinking, mental modes, and linguistic paradigms, (9) shared meanings, and (10) root metaphors or integrating symbols. (p. 8)

Dispositions. "Professional attitudes, values, and beliefs demonstrated through both verbal and non-verbal behaviors as educators interact with students, families, colleagues, and communities" (National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education Glossary, 2013).

Field test.

Complex, resource-intensive, collaborative operations that draw upon the knowledge/information/data and skills possessed by various sources/agents (e.g., content and design specialists; interviewers and other field staff; respondents; statisticians) to optimize questionnaire design for the ultimate purpose of gathering high-quality data about a particular domain-of-interest. (Esposito, 2010, p. 1)

Focus. The focus of this case study on the collective learning culture of a

suburban middle school was on the five domains of the EVAEM. The five domains are (1) dispositions, (2) professional experience, (3) the physical and organizational structure, (4) the shared decision making process of the organization, and (5) assessment and reflective skills.

> The focus is the aspect, or aspects, of the case study on which data collection and analysis will concentrate. Selection of a focus depends on the audience that the case study will address and the message that the researcher wants to convey. (Gall et al., 2007, p. 640)

Focus group. "A focus group is a carefully planned discussion designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive, nonthreatening environment" (Krueger, 1994, p. 6). Typically, a focus group consists of people with a common interest.

Learning organization. Gavin (2000) defined a "learning organization as an organization skilled at creating, acquiring, interpreting, transferring, and retaining knowledge, and at purposefully modifying its behavior to reflect knowledge and insights" (cited in Ngwenya-Scorbough, 2009, p. 4).

Local education agency (LEA). A public board of education or other public authority within a state which maintains administrative control of public elementary or secondary schools in a city, county, township, school district, or other political subdivision of a state (United States Department of Education, 2004).

Middle school. According to the North Carolina General Statutes, "A 'middle school' is a school that includes all or part of grades six through nine" in the state of North Carolina (North Carolina General Assembly, 2014, 115c-75).

Organizational culture.

A pattern of shared basic assumptions that a group of people learn as it solved its

problems of external adaption and internal integration, that has worked well

enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the

correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems. (Schein,

1992, p. 12)

Phenomenon. The phenomenon researched in this case study is the collective

learning culture of the classified staff at a southeastern middle school. A phenomenon is

"a process event, person or other item of interest to the researcher" (Gall et al., 2007, p.

648).

Professional experience. Balls et al. (2011) defined professional experiences "as

the past personal experiences of each community member as a learner, teacher, team

member, and leader" (p. 73).

Professional learning community.

Professional community of learners in which the teachers in a school and its

administrators continually seek and share learning and then act on what they

learn. The goal of these actions is to enhance the teachers' and administrators'

effectiveness as professionals so that students benefit. The arrangement has also

been called a community of continuous inquiry and improvement. In recent

years, the arrangement has become better known as a professional learning

community. (Astuto, Clark, Read, McGree, & Fernandez, 1993, cited in Hord,

2007, pp. 1-2)

Qualitative research. "The collection, analysis, and interpretation of

comprehensive narrative and visual data in order to gain insights into a particular

phenomenon of interest" (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2006, p. 568).

Quantitative research. "The collection of numerical data in order to explain, predict, and/or control phenomena of interest" (Gay et al., 2006, p. 600).

Questionnaire. Malhorta (2006) defined a questionnaire as

a formalized set of questions for obtaining information from respondents. The overriding objective is to translate the researcher's information needs into a set of specific questions that respondents are willing and able to answer. While this may seem straightforward, questions may yield very different and unanticipated responses. (p. 176)

Shared decision making. According to Bauer (1992)

shared decision-making emphasizes several common beliefs or premises. First, those closest to the children and "where the action is" will make the best decisions about the children's education. Second, teachers, parents, and school staff should have more say about policies and programs affecting their schools and children. Third, those responsible for carrying out decisions should have a voice in determining those decisions. Finally, change is most likely effective and lasting when those who implement it feel a sense of ownership and responsibility for the process. (cited in Liontos, 1994, p. 2)

Structure. According to Balls et al. (2011), "structures guide a school through day-to-day operations. Structures can include how students and teachers are grouped, teacher leadership, and student relationships" (p. 53).

Survey. "A survey design provides quantitative or numeric descriptions of trends, attitudes, or opinions of a population by studying a sample of that population" (Creswell, 2009, p. 145).

Survey research. "The use of questionnaires or interviews to collect data about

the characteristics, experiences, knowledge, or opinions of a sample or a population"

(Gall et al., 2007, p. 655).

Symbolate. White (1959) defined a symbolate as "things and events dependent upon symboling are considered and interpreted in terms of their relationship to human organism, i.e., in a somatic context, they may properly be called human behavior" (p. 231).

Unit of analysis. The unit of analysis for this case study was a suburban middle school in the southeastern region of the United States of America. "In a case study, the unit of analysis is the aspect of the phenomenon that will be studied across one or more cases" (Gall et al., 2007, p. 448).

Value-added model (VAM).

A quasi-experimental statistical model that yields estimates of the contribution of schools, classrooms, teachers, or other educational units of student achievement (or other student outcomes), controlling for other (non-school) sources of student achievement growth, including prior student achievement and student and family characteristics. (Meyer & Dokumaci, 2009, p. 3)

Chapter 2: A Review of the Literature

Public education in the United States is currently facing a number of external challenges with regard to school reform. The economic, social, and political challenges that are presently affecting our country are in turn affecting the sustainability and effectiveness of public education in the United States. The downturns and recessions of the American economy, the rapid development of a globally economic environment, and the fiscal instability at the federal, state, and local levels of government continue to affect the sustainability and effectiveness of school organizations through the United States. The aim of this research study was to investigate the collective learning culture of a school organization in the southeastern region of the United States. The positive and effective transformation of the learning culture of an organization would increase performance and enhance the sustainability and the longevity of the organization.

This chapter is organized around a number of theoretical constructs that are important in understanding the scope of this research study on the collective learning culture of a school organization. The researcher chose to discuss the importance of a number of theoretical constructs in the beginning of the chapter and then discusses in the literature review the domains of the EVAEM. The following theoretical constructs were chosen by the researcher to develop the literature review of this research case study on the collective learning culture of a southeastern middle school organization in the United States. The theories of culture, learning, and efficacy are the basic building blocks of this research study.

The first theoretical construct of this study is based upon the belief that culture is the underlying and significant cornerstone in the development and utilization of the EVAEM as a means to measure, develop, and enhance the individual and collective

learning cultures of the organization. The second theoretical concept of this study and the EVAEM is the concept of learning, both individually and collectively within the organization. The third theoretical construct deals with Bandura's (1977) social cognitive theory and the importance of individual and collective efficacy. The researcher chose to discuss each domain of the EVAEM as separate entities in the literature review of this research study. The researcher identifies the basic constructs, investigates current scholarly literature, and summarizes current research for each domain of the five domains of the EVAEM.

Culture as a Theoretical Construct

What is culture? Straub, Loch, Evaristo, Karahanna, and Strite (2002) stated that "culture has always been a thorny concept and even thornier research construct" (p. 14). The reasoning behind why it is so difficult to define the term *culture* is due to the fact that it has been studied and defined in different disciplines, ranging from cultural anthropology to cross-cultural business management and used for different purposes (Straub et al.). Definitions for culture range from the simple to the complex, incorporate

> and extend previous definitions, and even contradict prior definitions.
> Many researchers have used more than one definition of culture depending on the
> time the definition was formulated and the subject manner to which it referred.
> (Straub et al., p. 14)

Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952) found more than 160 different examples of the definition (as cited in Straub et al.). Schein (1992), a leading organizational and managerial theorist, stated that there are problems with the ability to define what culture is: "Most people have a connotative sense of what culture is, but have difficulty defining it abstractly" (p. 8). Because culture differs depending on the context, it is very difficult to

provide an all-encompassing definition.

According to Sewell (2005), "culture is one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language" (p. 76). According to Kroeber (1949), culture was first used in the context of "nurture, from agricultural and pearl cultures, and from test tube cultures in 1871" (cited in Straub et al., 2002, p. 14). Before then, "the term culture was used with its modern meaning in the German word 'Cultur' as early as 1843" (Kroeber, cited in Straub et al., 2002, p. 14). Today, culture is commonly referred to as the characteristics or beliefs that are shared by a group of people. Schein (1992) stated that "culture as a concept has had a long and checkered history. The meaning of the word has shifted since it was first used in English language, and it continues to evolve to meet current demands in numerous disciplines" (p. 3).

> The concept of culture has been the subject of considerable academic debate in
> the last twenty five years and there are various approaches to defining and
> studying culture (for example, those of Hofstede, 1991; Trice & Beyer, 1993;
> Schultz, 1995; Deal & Kennedy, 1999; Cameron & Quinn, 1999; Ashkanasy,
> Wilderom, & Peterson, 2000; and Martin, 2002). (cited in Schein, 2004, p. 12)

The inability to clearly develop a construct or a refined definition of what culture is, is a major hurdle in understanding the importance of the role culture has in the collective learning culture of the organization. Thus, a brief anthropological and organizational perspective in the formation and development of a definition on culture is needed to understand the linear development of the construct of culture.

Anthropological Construct of Culture

Tylor (1871) defined culture as "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, laws, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as

a member of society" (cited in Straub et al., 2002, p. 14).

> Culture consists only in the mind, according to some; it consists of observable things and events in the external world to others. Some anthropologists think of culture as consisting of ideas, but they are divided upon the question of their locus; some say they are in the minds of the peoples studied, others hold that they are in the minds of ethnologists. (White, 1959, p. 227)

In White's (1959) research on culture, he stated that "virtually all cultural anthropologists take it for granted, no doubt, that culture is the basic and central concept of their science" (p. 227). White further described the internal discrepancies of defining the construct of culture by using the comparison of the term culture to that of an individual taking a Rorschach test. In reality, no two individuals will view the classic Rorschach test in the same perspective or light. Thus, the term culture is the same. Individuals who attempt to define what culture is have a wide variety of ideals, images, or beliefs about the true meaning of culture. Osgood (1951), a leading anthropological theorist in the 1940s, defined culture explicitly as consisting of ideas in the minds of anthropologists: "Culture consists of all ideas of the manufactures, behaviors, and ideas of the aggregate of human beings which have directly observed and communicated to one's mind and of which one conscious" (p. 208). Goodenough (1964) stated that an

> anthropologist's basic task, on which all of the rest of his endeavor depends, is to describe specific cultures adequately . . . culture, being what people have learn as distinct from their biological heritage, must consist of the end product of learning: knowledge, in a most general, if relative, sense of the term. (p. 36)

Overall, there are many concepts of culture, depending on its purpose. These discrepancies make it very difficult to define the word.

Culture in the Context of an Organization

In a management and business perspective, Frederick (1995) developed three different perspectives of what culture is in an organization. According to Frederick's first perspective of culture, he believed that "culture is conceived as consciously transmitted, cumulative symbolic learning, which enjoys an established continuity with pre-cultural, natural processes, and forces" (p. 82). According to Fredrick, "culture, when seen as symbolic learning, braces both tangible aspects (technology and other physical artifacts) and intangible aspects (mental symbols of all kinds) involved in human life" (p. 82). White (1959) described what symbolic learning is in the terms of using the word *symbolate*. "Symbolates may be considered and interpreted in terms of relationship to human organism, or they may be considered in terms of their relationships to one another, quite apart from their relationship to the human organism" (White, p. 232). White described several examples of symbolates in terms of the relationship of the action to a person or a collective group of individuals. White noted a number of specific examples of the construct of a symbolate and its relationship to humans as examples of an anthropological construct of culture. White noted, "I smoke a cigarette, cast a vote, decorate a pottery bowl, avoid my mother-in-law, say a prayer, or chip an arrowhead. Each one of these acts is dependent upon the process of symboling" (p. 232). White also described how symbolates or symbolate clusters may be treated in terms of their relationship to one another.

> If we are concerned with voting we consider it in terms of political organizations
> (tribal, state), kind of government (democratic, monarchial, fascist), age, sex, or
> property qualifications, political parties, and so on. In this context, our
> symbolates become culture–culture traits, trait clusters, i.e., institutions, customs,

codes, etc. (White, pp. 232-233)

According to White, culture can be the characteristics and customs shared by a group of individuals.

Frederick's (1995) second perspective on determining what culture is from an organizational and a managerial perspective is based upon the belief that "culture is, among other things, an amalgam of experienced-based efforts to solve perceived problems as its human carriers adapt to their environment" (p. 83). The second perspective is based upon the idea that if we perceive that there is a problem in the environment, then we will attempt to remedy and find a solution to the problem. "Through culture humans share learned systems of defining meaning and in given situations of practical action human often seem to have created similar meaning interpretations" (Erickson, 1985, p. 126). Frederick believed that the perceived problem and the methods to solve the problem are through our cultural lenses.

Wolcott (1991) explained the acquisition of culture is formed from the meaning systems that emerge through particular shared experiences. Wolcott also noted that no two individuals share the same set of meaning systems in precisely the same way. Thus, individually in an experience or collectively in a shared experience, no two individuals will perceive the problem and adjust to solve the problem in the same way. The experiences that we have in any situation will inevitably create a meaning system in our individual culture.

Schein (1992) noted that "commonly used words relating to culture emphasize one of its critical aspects–the idea that certain things in groups are shared and held in common" (p. 8). Schein created a list of these words or phenomena that are the most commonly used words relating to culture.

1. *Observed behavioral regularities when people interact:* the language they use, the customs and traditions that evolve, and the rituals they employ in a wide variety of situations.

2. *Group norms*: the implicit standards and values of working groups, such as a particular norm of a "a fair day's pay for a fair day's work" that among workers in the Bank Wiring Studies within the Hawthorne Studies.

3. *Espoused values:* the articulated, publicly announced principles and values that the group claims to be trying to achieve, such as "product quality" or "price leadership."

4. *Formal philosophy:* the broad policies and ideological principles that guide a group's actions toward stakeholders, such as the highly publicized "HP Way" of Hewlett Packard.

5. *Rules of the game:* the implicit rules of getting along in the organization, "the ropes" that a newcomer must learn to become an accepted member, "the way we do things around here."

6. *Climate:* the feeling that is conveyed in a group by the physical layout and the way in which members of the organization interact with each other, with customers, and with other outsiders.

7. *Embedded Skills:* the special competencies group members display in accomplishing certain tasks, the ability to make certain things that gets passed from one generation to another generation without necessarily being articulated in writing.

8. *Habits of thinking, mental models, and/or linguistic paradigms:* the shared cognitive frames that guide perceptions, thought, and language used by members

of a group and are taught to new members in the early socialization process.

9. *Shared meanings:* the emergent understandings that are created by group members as they interact with each other.

10. *Root metaphors or integrating symbols:* the ideas, feelings, and images groups develop to characterize themselves, that may or may not be appreciated consciously but they become embodies of the group. This level of culture reflect group member's emotional and aesthetic responses as contrasted with their cognitive of evaluative response. (pp. 8-10)

Frederick's (1995) third perspective on a managerial and business perspective on what culture is focused on how culture is viewed from a managerial/business perspective. He believed in that case, culture is viewed as what we give value to as human beings. "Because culture is a phase in natural evolution and because culture has adaptive functions, it extrudes values that reflect human experiences in coping with an environment that either sustains or diminishes life" (Frederick, p. 84). Values, according to Frederick, "provide, meaning significance, order, priorities, and guidance for human actions taken in a world of impressions, stimuli, and forces that would otherwise be seen as entirely and overwhelmingly confusing, hostile, and overpowering" (p. 84). Values, according to Fredrick, are a driving force to creating organizational structure.

Organizational Culture

In this case study, the researcher used Schein's (1992) conceptual definition of culture to investigate and measure the collective learning culture of the organization. Schein defined organizational culture as

a pattern of shared basic assumptions that a group learned as it solved its problems of external adaption and internal integration, that has worked well

enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems. (p. 12)

In Fuentes' (2008) study, she hailed Schein's definition of culture and stated that "Schein's definition provides insight into how an organizational culture is formed, structured, and maintained over time" (p. 14). "In a way, organizational culture is a reflection of an organization's 'personality,' and, similar to an individual's personality, can enable us to predict attitudes and behaviors" (Bowditch & Buono, 1990, p. 238). In other words, the culture of an organization becomes the embodiment of *who it is*. "The culture of an organization is founded upon the assumptions, beliefs, values, and habitats that constitute the norms of that organization- norms that shape how people think, feel, and act" (DuFour & Eaker, 1998, p. 131). In an organization, a set of shared values, beliefs, symbols, and artifacts are shared by the collective members of the organization to allow the organization to survive and to pass down knowledge to future members. "Nonetheless, strong held beliefs, a sense of mission, or the consistency that comes from a set of shared values and beliefs do provide a fundamental basis for coordinated action with an organization" (Denison, 1990, p. 6).

Over time, if the culture of the organization is not passed down through newly acquired stakeholders, the culture of the organization will change. Members of an organization must take the proper steps and procedures to ensure that the culture of the organization is passed from one individual to another over time to allow the organizational culture to survive.

Organizational culture requires organizational members, through a process of formal and informal socialization, to behave in certain ways as well as direct the way which decisions are made. As new members enter an organization, learning

becomes a mutually occurring and multifaceted process of behavioral, cognitive,

and emotional integration. (Schein, 1985, pp. 3-4)

Thus, if the culture of the organization is not passed onto a newly acquired stakeholder, then the values, beliefs, mission, symbols, and inevitably the culture of the organization will diminish and cease to prosper. Marquardt (1996) noted in his book that for "a successful organization of the future (those offering high value), only one asset grows more valuable as it is used–the knowledge skills of people" (p. 6). For this reason, the process for teaching the existing culture is essential to the success of organizations.

The process of changing an organization's culture is a slow and tedious task for all members to complete in a short amount of time. Donahoe (1997) noted that

in recent years, many organizations have been convinced that they need to change

their culture. But culture–the values, beliefs, behaviors, rules, products, signs,

and symbols that bind us together–is not something we can change like a flat tire

of a car (cited in Fullan, 1997, p. 245). According to Donahoe, culture is an organic construct, so if you change the culture of a school or organization, everything will change in the school or the organization. The ability to enhance, to sustain, and to create continual positive growth in the culture of a school or organization is critical for future success and effectiveness in supplying a service or product to the stakeholders. Hargreaves (1997) supported Donahoe's position on reforming the culture of schools and organization by stating, "it is time, I believe for the concept of school culture and the strategy of re-culturing schools to be opened. In the midst of growing interest and advocacy for school re-culturing, some stock-taking and soul searching is now due" (p. 59). According to education experts, American public schools are ready for a new culture. The following three studies demonstrate the importance of investing in the

organizational culture of an organization. In each of the three studies below, the importance of organizational culture on the sustainability, effectiveness, and growth of the organization is demonstrated in the research and data obtained from the three different researchers.

In Coleman's (2004) qualitative case study, he provided insight into the development of leadership and culture of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and also provided a systematic review of the organizational cultural traits and practices identified from the Columbia Accident Investigation Board (CIAB, 2003) Report. Coleman noted that "the Columbia accident echoed the Challenger accident in that repeated patterns and flawed practices imbedded in the NASA's organizational structure were identified as contributors to both incidents" (p. 1). According to Coleman,

> the specific problem, identified by the Columbia Accident Investigation Board
> (CAIB) Report (2003), is that NASA does not have the leadership processes and
> organizational culture traits and practices in place to support the influence of
> employee contributions and professional differences of opinions in the decision
> making processes while responding to: (a) evolving organizational priorities, and
> (b) emerging requirements based on the Columbia Accident Investigation Board
> (CAIB) Report (2003). (p. 5)

Coleman described the history of NASA in the last 60 years and further provided details and insight into the differences in the agency's organizational culture over an extended period of time. Coleman noted that "NASA's culture originated in the 1950s, and was created around technical preciseness and military-like control" (p. 6, Feldman, 2000; Vaughn, 1996). Unfortunately, over the years of the existence of the space agency, the

organizational culture has changed. "NASA was viewed as a high-performance government organization, and developed the self-perception of being a perfect place (Brewer, 1989; Launius, 2003; McCurdy, 1993)" (Coleman, p. 6). Launius (2003) noted that "this has led to a basic overconfidence–some would call it arrogance although I think that too strong a term–that all necessary knowledge and understanding resides within the institution" (p. 2). Brewer (1989) noted that "an organization that views itself as a perfect place suffers the consequences of righteousness, flawed decision making, self-deception, introversion and a diminished curiosity about the world outside the perfect place" (p. 159).

In Coleman's (2004) case study, data were gathered and analyzed from three different sources of information: (1) 120 interviews, (2) documented data, and (3) past records of NASA. Coleman was able to discover in his case study that NASA "revealed an organizational culture that supports employees' and stakeholders' input, reduces employee turnover, allows for innovations, for the recruitment of knowledge workers, and for the elimination of future disasters" (p. iii). Coleman's case study shed light on the importance of an organization's culture on the effectiveness and sustainability of the organization. The values, beliefs, and customs of an organization are crucial in its sustainability, effectiveness, and quality control of the organization's mission and vision for the future. Coleman's study on the organizational culture of NASA is a clear example of the decisive role that organizational culture has within a large government-sponsored agency.

Carroll's (1998) paper noted that in "efforts to enhance performance and use resources efficiently, the nuclear power industry along with many other industries have turned to the improvement of culture" as the means for organizational change (p. 2).

Carroll's study on organizational culture investigated one department of a nuclear power

plant that had major issues with the culture of the department with regard to issues of

safety. The goal of Carroll's study was to demonstrate that the use of a culture survey

could be used as a means to increase inquiry from within and to invest in the change of

the organization's culture. In his study on a department of a nuclear power plant, Carroll

noted that the use of a cultural safety survey was instituted in the beginning of the case

study to understand and obtain information that would be beneficial for the project team

to focus on specific concerns of safety within the department of study. Carroll noted that

"we used the survey to identify areas for further discussion and clarification through a

series of individual and group interviews" (p. 4). Carroll also noted that this inquiry

method was used not only for "information gathering in pursuant of corrective actions,

but also as an intervention to signal the importance of safety culture and to model a more

open and collaborative approach to self-assessment and change" (p. 4).

The information gained from the culture safety survey and one-on-one interviews

identified a troubling relationship between managers, supervisors, and other employees.

Carroll (1998) noted that

> communication in general is perceived to be weak. Decision making processes
>
> and management behaviors are perceived to as too hierarchical. Many people
>
> commented that too many decisions are being made at too high a level–
>
> supervisors are unwilling to decisions without management review, there is
>
> rhetoric of empowerment but little evidence of it. (p. 19)

The data and information gained from Carroll's study on the safety culture of a nuclear

power plant site clearly demonstrate the overall importance organizational culture has on

the sustainability, effectiveness, and safety of the organization. The organizational

culture of the entire organization and the safety culture of the organization were greatly affected by the decision-making process of the upper managers and the lack of decision making of the department supervisors. The investment in changing the organizational culture of the organization and employees of the nuclear power plant was crucial in the overall safety of the entire organization.

A third study that clearly outlined the importance organizational culture has in a large organization can be seen in Carpenter's (2006) research project on the United States Army's *Strategic Imperative for Transformation*. Carpenter noted that President George W. Bush, speaking to the class of Citadel cadets on December 11, 2001, stated that "our military culture must reward new thinking, innovation, and experimentation" (p. 1). Carpenter described the reasons why the United States Army needs to transform the organizational culture of the entire Army to ensure that they are being innovative and effective in their design to meet the ever-changing needs of the global world. The following reasons were given by Carpenter:

1. Today's army is suffering from mission creep as it becomes more involved in the diplomatic aspects of stabilization and rebuilding phases of operations while including humanitarian assistance both at home and abroad (Snider, 2005, p. 151). These missions are diametrically opposed to how most of the current "20-year career" professional soldiers were trained during the Cold War. (p. 1)

2. Generations of Army officers came of age eating, sleeping, and breathing the tactics and organization of the Soviet forces east of the Elbe. However, we can no longer be certain of our enemy's order of battle, or even who our enemy is likely to be, the officer's task becomes correspondingly more difficult. (Snider, 2005, p. 151, cited in Carpenter).

3. Our current ever-changing and illusive enemy has made it much more difficult to train our leaders, who primarily relied on a battle drills and tactics' template. With ever-changing enemies come ever-changing tactics and technology. Accordingly our leaders have a significantly more demanding job to adapt to more complex and shifting situations. The environment is rapidly changing and innovation continually remakes the world–traditionally regarded as progress–to create a modern civilization. (Nygren 2002, p. 86, cited Carpenter)

The focus of Carpenter's (2006) strategic research project was to change the "institutional culture (organizational culture) to one that fosters innovations. It also explores how culture is affected at the strategic and organizational levels of leadership" (p. 2). Carpenter's theoretical constructs for his strategic leadership project were based on the theoretical work of Schein and Anthony. According to Schein (1999), "culture is the sum total of all shared, taken-for-granted assumptions that a group has learned through its history. It is the residue of success" (p. 29, cited in Carpenter, p. 6). Carpenter noted the importance of institutional culture by citing the theoretical constructs proposed by Anthony (1999). Anthony noted that "an organization's culture determines how it really functions; this culture consists of deep embedded values, beliefs, philosophies, attitudes, and operation norms. Essentially, culture accounts for how things are done around here" (p. 1). Carpenter noted that according to the U. S. Army's Field Manual 22-100, "the Army defines organizational and institutional culture as shared attitudes and values, goals, and practices that characterize the larger institution. It's deeply rooted in long-held beliefs, customs, and practices (U. S. Department of the Army, 1999, pp. 3-14, cited in Carpenter).

The conclusions for Carpenter's (2006) study on the organizational culture of the

United States Army were

    1. Changing the Army's culture starts with a strategic vision that supports the cultural change at all levels.

    2. Organizational leaders must stress the values in this vision to junior offices in order to influence change.

    3. To change the organizational culture, new behavior articulated in the vision must be embedded and rewarded by both strategic and organizational leaders.

    4. Strategic leaders maintain the Army's institutional culture. But before the institutional culture can be changed the culture must change at the organizational level.

    5. For change to be successful, organizational leaders must support the change in culture. Organizational leaders set the tone for their organization by changing the short-term climate in order to support long-term change in culture.

    6. It is important to influence the behavior of junior leaders through mentorship from organizational members. This is the most important method for promoting change.

    7. Army Leadership must avoid sending inconsistent signals in its effort to change the culture. Inappropriate embedded and reinforcing mechanisms and inconsistent signals could have unwanted effects. (p. 13)

Thus, all three of these studies clearly demonstrate the importance of organizational culture on the ability of the organization to change effectively and efficiently. The ability to access, investigate, and change one's organizational culture is imperative for the sustainability, growth, and effectiveness of the organization. The ability to change the organizational culture within an organization is an internal

investment that will enhance and foster internal dividends in the future.

Learning as a Theoretical Construct

Learning can be defined in a number of different ways. Once again, the construct of learning will be reviewed and discussed in a number of different theoretical perspectives. In this study on the collective learning culture of an organization, the theoretical perspective of what is learning is based upon previous research of Edgar Schein, Chris Agyris, and Donald Schon. This study on the collective learning culture of a southeastern middle school did not investigate or attempt to create a literature review of different learning theories. In this mixed-methods case study on the collective learning culture of an organization, an in-depth analysis and literature review on the three different theories of learning were not needed. However, the influence of a behavioral, cognitive, or constructivist point of view was important. The key to understanding the definition of learning in this study is divided into two different categories. The individual as a learner and the collective individuals of an organization are the two different separate constructs in this mixed-methods case study.

Schein, a professor of management at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Sloan School Management, has extensively researched learning as it relates to organizational management. Schein (1993) discussed the importance of understanding the unitary concept of learning. According to Schein,

> there are at least three distinctly different kinds of learning that require different
> time horizons and that may apply to different stages of organizational change
> process: (1) knowledge acquisition and insight, (2) habit and skill learning, and
> (3) emotional conditioning and learned anxiety. (p. 86)

Schein described that "our most commonest view of learning is the acquisition of

information to build our knowledge base" (p. 86). The process of acquiring information to build up our knowledge basis, such as memorizing spelling words, completing multiple sets of math problems, reading for information, and studying for a history test are all examples of learning that take time and effort at the cognitive development level of learning.

Organizational Learning Construct

The concept of organizational learning has been present in managerial organizations and the educational community for the last 40 years. A number of different definitions of the construct of organizational learning have been created during this time period. Agyris and Schon (1978) clearly defined the importance of understanding, developing, and integrating organizational learning into our businesses, corporations, and educational institutions. Argyris and Schon developed two different theories to describe how members learn in an organization. The first theory that Argyris and Schon developed dealt with the concept of theories-in-action. Theories-in-action describe the process of how individual members learn and later take action from their learning in an organization. Argyris and Schon stated that "when we attribute theories of action to human beings, we argue that deliberate action had a cognitive basis, that reflects norms, strategies, and assumptions or models of the world which had claims to general validity" (p. 10). Argyris and Schon noted that all human interaction was based on a theories-in-action concept of learning. "Theories-in-action (espoused theories) are the routines and practices that express knowledge of an organization" (Collinson, Cook, & Conley, 2006, p. 108). Therefore, theories-in-action take place in organizations everyday as members learn and later act according to the organization's culture.

On the other hand, "theories-in-use, as the term implies, are the theories-in-

actions that guide what members do. Theories-in-use represent the assumptions and

beliefs that members say guide organizational behavior" (Collinson et al., 2006, p. 108).

Collinson et al. (2006) provided a common theory-in-use example and a common theory-

in-action example with regard to education and schooling.

> A common theory-in-use in schools that students learn best in classes organized
>
> by chronological age. Additionally, espoused theories and theories-in-use may be
>
> contradictory; that is, a high school's slogan (espoused theory) may be *Students*
>
> *First*, but bus and school schedules may be influenced by business concerns rather
>
> than by research on teenage sleeping patterns (theories-in-use). (Collinson et al.,
>
> p. 109)

Theories-in-use are often accepted and followed because they are imbedded in the

culture, not because they are best for the organization.

> According to Argyris and Schon (1996),
>
> learning is defined as the detection and correction of errors, and error as any
>
> feature of knowledge or of knowing that makes actions effective. The detection
>
> and correction of error produces learning and the lack of either or both inhibits
>
> learning. (p. 365)

Argyris and Schon (1978) have developed two different perspectives to address learning

in the theories-in-use model to investigate how learning takes place in an organization.

According to Argyris and Schon (1974), single-loop learning is when individuals of an

organization "are encouraged to perform as long as the learning does not question the

fundamental design, goals, and activities of their organizations" (p. 367). In the theories-

in-use model of learning,

> it was hypothesized that human behavior, in any situation, represents the most

satisfactory solution people can find consistent with the governing values and variables, such as achieving a purpose as others define it, winning, suppressing negative feelings, and emphasizing rationality. (Argyris & Schon, 1974, p. 367).

Argyris and Schon (1974) also noted in their development of the theories-in-use model of learning that the human behavior "primary strategies are to control the environment and tasks unilaterally and to protect themselves and their group unilaterally" (p. 368). In a single-loop learning experience, "individuals are expected to be articulate about their purpose, goals, and so forth, and simultaneously control the others and environment in order to ensure achievement of the goals" (Argyris & Schon, p. 368). This means that an individual will use their personal morals, ethics, and feelings about a situation or problem and justify their action or the group's actions based upon their own personal perspective.

On the other hand, double-loop learning is the exact opposite of single-loop learning. In the case of double-loop learning, single individuals or collective individuals in an organization question the status quo, obtain feedback, and develop new and alternative methods to solve problems. Double-loop learning is significant to the learning process due to the fact that individuals must understand the values, policies, and procedures of the organization, but they must also know they are able to develop, question, and give alternative methods to address the issue or problem. Argyris and Schon (1974) noted the

double-loop model, the unilateral control that usually accompanies advocacy is rejected because the typical purpose of advocacy is to win; and so, articulateness and advocacy are coupled with an invitation to confront one another's views and to alter them, in order to produce the position that is based on the most complete valid information possible and to which participants can become internally

committed. (p. 369)

In a school organization, the ability of individual members and the collective group of members to use double-loop learning is important for the organization to be sustainable, successful, and effective to adjust to change.

Fuentes's (2008) study "explored the relationship between the constructs of learning culture and organizational performance in for-profit, US corporations who are actively using the Balanced Scorecard framework (Financial, Internal, Customer, and Learning and Growth) for measuring performance" (p. 2). In Fuentes's study, the researcher used a confidential online survey instrument to collect data from a sample size of 220 companies in the United States. She noted that only 9%, or 45 companies, in the sampling frame responded to her survey to be collected and analyzed. Fuentes employed a multiple regression analysis in her study on the link between a learning culture and organizational performance in organizations using the Balanced Scorecard framework. The analyses of her data showed that "no statistically significant relationship exists between the seven dimensions of learning culture and the Learning and Growth" of the balanced scorecard (Fuentes, p. viii). However, Fuentes noted that a strong relationship was apparent in how a "learning culture plays a role in the knowledge and financial gains in for-profit, US-based companies using the Balanced Scorecard, and organization size, business type, and annual revenues mediate the relationship in some way" (p. ix). Therefore, an organization's culture can affect the financial success of organizations.

Balls et al. (2011) noted, "a number of indicators are pre-requisites for organizational learning" (p. 39). According to Balls et al., the following list of indicators may identify the precursor for the development of a learning organization:

1. A vision for the future is understood and supported. This vision must

address the concept of a learning culture. Most visions may use the rhetoric of learning culture, but contains verbiage of being better than current conditions. A viable vision for learning culture should include the rationale and the explanation of what entails a learning culture.

2. Employees have ownership in the mission and are committed to the mission. Mission statements for an organization are best developed with role clarification. As individuals in the organizations identify their roles in personal life and in the organization, they can begin to consider how they want to be perceived in their roles. That perception directs the meaning of the mission for the organization through common identified characteristics.

3. Continuous improvement is part of the language of the organization. Care should be taken to clarify continuous improvement as more than an increase in outputs. While the outputs are important, continuous improvement in the context of learning culture is a continuous improvement of learning by all in the organizations, learners, and facilitators.

4. Leaders are continually being developed. Leadership development in the learning culture should align with the vision and mission. Developing leaders of the old paradigm does more than create more of the same. Care is needed in setting the leadership training that measures outcomes in line with self-efficacy and collective efficacy.

5. Change is provided by an analysis of the possible benefits. Educators are notorious at creating and implementing change based on subjective opinion or the attractiveness of others. Change should follow with a thorough needs assessment with alignment of research-based solutions to deal with the identified needs.

6. Adequacy of resources is a constant driving force. This includes human and non-human resources. While the organization may not have full control over the personnel, the quality of personnel can be addressed with adequate experiences for the individual.

7. Controlling boards should monitor organizational performance. The controlling boards need to be a part of the development of the learning culture vision. Those boards have the most impact through policy and resource allocation and distribution.

8. Assessment is accepted and practiced. It is stressed that assessment goes beyond measurement and is a continuation of an evaluation process. All too often, educators and leaders use the measurements to drive decisions. Assessment more correctly aligns measures of meaning and implications. Evaluation makes uses of assessments as it pertains to individual and unit improvement.

9. Organizational planning reflects the evaluation results. Of the three phases of action that include planning, implementing and assessment, the planning is the most crucial. When overlooked in a reactive environment, planning should be based on the full assessment and evaluation by incremental divisions and as full organizational units. (pp. 39-41)

Schools as a Learning Organization

 Fullan (1997) stated that

a great deal of lip service is given to the concept of learning organizations, but what does it really mean in concrete terms? At the general level it means continually acquiring new knowledge, skills and understanding in order to improve one's actions and results. (p. 9).

The ability for a teacher or a group of teachers to obtain professional development, collaborate among themselves, use self-reflection and group reflection on instructional strategies, acquire new knowledge skills with regard to effective research-based strategies of instruction, and use effective assessment are all examples of the interaction that would allow a school to be called a learning organization.

Fullan (1997) recognized the work of Wohlstetter, Smyer, and Mohrman (1994) in his study on the new boundaries for school-based management by discussing the connection of school reform and the development of schools as a learning organization. Wohlstetter et al. examined "the utility of the school-based management (SBM) model as a means for generating school improvement and applies a model of high involvement management, developed in the private sector, to determine what makes SBM work and under what conditions" (p. 268). Wohlstetter et al. noted "that in the relatively successful restructuring schools they studied, focused time was devoted to the development of knowledge and skills and the acquisition and examination of information" (cited in Fullan, 1995, p. 232). Fullan stated in his own words the information from the Wohlstetter et al. study that the "continuous capacity development was a feature of these schools both in terms of know-how (knowledge and skill expansion) and action inquiry (information sharing and processing)" (p. 232). The time for development and reflection were common to both schools and, thus, maybe the key to changing the culture in other schools.

Three Levels of a Learning Organization

There are three levels of a learning organization according to Watkins and Marsick (1993, 1996). Yang, Watkins, and Marsick (2004) noted that the first level or the individual level is made up of the organization's capacity for continuous learning,

dialogue, and inquiry: "The first dimension, *continuous learning*, represents an organization's effort to create continuous learning opportunities for all of its members" (p. 34). Marquardt (1996) stated that continuous learning is "the milieu and the environment in which people are encouraged and enabled to learn in an ongoing, continuous basis" (p. 228). In an organization such as a school, continuous ongoing professional development for teachers, administrators, and support personnel is a major element in the construct that identifies a school as a learning organization. Schools must encourage its stakeholders to engage in continuous learning. The resulting understandings will enable the school organization to be sustainable, effective, and productive in the services provided to the students, parents, and community of the organization. In a school organization, the ability to use a system-wide professional development initiative such as implementing professional learning communities (PLCs), balanced literacy initiatives, or any other form of ongoing professional development initiative that would involve continuous learning and dialogue would be an example of the first dimension in a learning organization.

The second dimension within the first level of a learning organization (Individual: *inquiry and dialogue*) "refers to an organization's effort in creating a culture of questioning, feedback, and experimentation" (Yang et al., 2004, p. 34). The ability and the necessity for all stakeholders in a learning community to inquire and create dialogue among the individual members of the organization is a fundamental requirement of a learning organization. If an individual does not participate in the culture of inquiry and dialogue as a member of the learning organization, then the individual or a collective group of individuals will impede the sustainability and effectiveness of a learning organization. The ability of individual members of the organization to be able to

effectively discuss and create dialogue within the collective members of the organization is crucial to the second dimension of a learning organization. The individual member is the catalyst for the first level of the learning organization. Thus, if the individual of the organization does not participate in the culture of inquiry, the learning culture of the organization will be hindered at the individual level.

The second level of a learning organization is the collective team or group level (Yang, 2003, p. 14). The concept of team learning represents the "spirit of collaboration and the collaborative skills that undergird the effective use of the term" (Watkins & Marsick, 1996, p. 6). According to Dixon (1997), "collective learning is more effective when organizational members talk with each other as equals, rather than as disparate members of a hierarchy" (p. 30). An example of the second level of a learning organization can be identified with the PLC model in a school organization. There are a number of benefits associated with the PLC model that enable individual teachers to meet collectively together to gain new knowledge and to apply this new knowledge to the school organization. Morrissey (2000) noted that "the collegial relationships that result (from the use of professional learning communities) produce creative and appropriate solutions to problems, strengthening the bond between principals and teachers and increasing their commitment to improvement efforts" (p. 6).

The third and final level of organizational learning, according to Yang et al. (2004), is the organization. Organizational learning (organization) is made up of four distinct dimensions: empowerment, embedded systems, system connections, and providing leadership for learning. The ability to obtain all four dimensions will allow the organization in the third level of organizational learning to be a sustainable and rich learning environment that enables the individual members and the collective membership

of the organization to be at a level of significant learning. Yang et al. believed that the first of the four dimensions of organizational learning is the concept of empowerment. Empowerment "signifies an organization's process to create and share a collective vision and get feedback from its members about the gap between the current status and the new vision" (Yang et al., p. 34). The second dimension of organizational learning is the idea that an organization is viewed as an embedded system. Yang et al. noted that an embedded system in an organization is the ability of its members to capture, control, and further develop their own learning to enhance the overall effectiveness of the organization. System connection is the third dimension of organizational learning. System connections are the ability of the collective members of the organization and the organization as a whole to have a worldly view of the place in a global perspective. The organization must be able to connect systematically to the internal and external environment to ensure that the learning organization is connected in a global perspective. The final dimension of organizational learning is the concept of strategic leadership. Strategic leadership is defined as leaders in an organization who "think strategically about how to use learning to create change and to move an organization in new directions or new markets" (Watkins & Marsick, 1996, p. 7). If a school organization is creating and developing the identity to be at the third level of organizational learning, the organization and the members of the organization must be able to meet the four dimensions of Yang et al.'s model of what is a learning organization. The ability of an organization's members to meet all four dimensions of organizational learning will enable the organization to be sustainable, effective in their purpose of existence, and able to meet the demands of a changing environment.

Huber (1991) noted that "organizations often do not know what they know" (p.

100). In Huber's paper, he stressed the importance of information distribution in an organization to allow effective organizational learning to take place. Huber discussed the importance of information distribution to effective organizational learning. He noted,

> except for their systems that routinely index and store 'hard' information, organizations tend to have only weak systems for finding where a certain item is known to an organization. But when information is widely distributed in an organization, so that more and more varied sources for it exist, retrieval efforts are more likely to succeed and individuals and units are more likely to be able to learn. Thus, information distribution leads to more based organizational learning. (Huber, pp. 100-101)

> Ngwenya-Scoburgh (2009) noted in her study on the value of organizational learning relative to organizational performance that

> what is lacking is the fundamental knowledge that in order for organizational learning to be effective, the organization needs to function as a whole system. The organization has to create an inclusive culture of learning that incorporates collections of parts (subsystems) integrated to accomplish an overall goal (a system of people as an organization. (p. 8)

Ngwenya-Scoburgh also noted that "true organizational learning does not take place unless the new knowledge is disseminated to those in an organization who can make effective use of it, and is stored in organizational memory for future use" (pp. 8-9). Both Huber (1991) and Ngwenya-Scoburgh gave specific insights and reasons as to why a behavioral and cultural change of the organization are imperative for the organization to be able to transfer knowledge and sustain continual growth and effectiveness in the future. If an organization such as a school does not utilize all three parts of the learning

organization–the individual, the collective team, and the organization–in an effective

manner, the learning organization does not exist.

Learning Organization and Organizational Learning

In Yang et al.'s (2004) study, the researchers gave details with regard to the

differences in the constructs of organizational learning and a continuous learning

organization.

> The construct of the learning organization normally refers to organizations that
>
> have displayed these continuous learning or adaptive characteristics, or have
>
> worked to instill them. Organizational learning, in contrast, denotes collective
>
> learning experiences used to acquire knowledge and develop skills. (Yang et al.,
>
> pp. 34-35)

Hodgkinson (2000) gave additional characteristics to the definition of organizational

learning in her research study that "organizational learning is identified, as the coming

together of individuals to enable them to support and encourage one another's learning,

which will in the longer term be of benefit to the organization" (p. 157). In Reynolds and

Ablett's (1988) article, they stated that "a working definition of the learning organization

is where learning is taking place that changes the behavior of the organization itself" (p.

27). The changing of the behavior of culture of the organization is the true essence of a

learning organization. A school can be an effective and sustainable learning organization

if the culture and behavior of the organization is willing to accept continual change and to

transform to the needs of the members of the learning organization.

In Ngwenya-Scoburgh's (2009) study on organizational learning, she noted that

the terms "learning organization and organizational learning are closely related and

sometimes used interchangeably, although a distinction can be made" (p. 5). Ngwenya-

Scoburgh used the work of Easterby-Smith and Araujo (1999) to illustrate the differences

of organizational learning and a learning organization. According to Easterby-Smith and

Araujo,

> organizational learning has concentrated on the detached collection and analysis
>
> of the process involved in individual and collective learning inside organizations;
>
> whereas the learning organizations has an action orientation, and is geared toward
>
> using specific diagnostic and evaluative methodological tools which can help to
>
> identify, promote and evaluate the quality of learning processes inside
>
> organizations (p. 2, cited in Ngwenya-Scoburgh, 2009, p. 5).

All in all, both the learning organization and organizational learning must be

present to create successful and beneficial change in an organization.

Efficacy and Teacher Self-Efficacy as a Theoretical Construct

One of the major theoretical foundational cornerstones of the EVAEM is the

theoretical construct of efficacy. The foundation of the EVAEM is largely dependent on

Bandura (1986) and the development of his social cognitive theory of self-efficacy.

Pajares (1997) stated that "According to Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory,

individuals possess a self-system that enables them to exercise a measure of control over

their thoughts, feelings, motivation, and actions" (p. 3). Bandura (1997) clarified by

noting, "The ability to secure desired outcomes and to prevent undesired ones, therefore,

and provides a powerful incentive for the development and exercise of personal control"

(p. 2). Bandura's (1997) self-system of control that individuals use to determine their

course of action is called the construct of self-efficacy. "Bandura (1997, p. 2) defines

self-efficacy as 'beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action

required to manage prospective situations'" (Erdem & Demirel, 2007, p. 576). This

requires individuals in an organization to be empowered to take action to improve the group product. In the teaching profession, Cantrell (2003) noted that "efficacy expectations influence teachers' thoughts and feelings, their choice of classroom activities, the amount of effort they are willing to expend, and their persistence in the face of obstacles" (p. 177). Erdem and Demeril noted that "it is not simply matter of how capable one is, but how capable one believes oneself to be" (p. 576). That said, teachers must feel confident and empowered to maximize their effectiveness in the classroom and throughout the organization.

Bandura (1997) in his theory of self-efficacy, "identified four primary sources of information people utilize while constructing their beliefs or self-efficacy" (Balls et al., 2011, p. 14). The primary sources of information to allow individuals to construct and develop a personal belief system can be categorized into four sources: "enactive mastery, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and physiological forms of information," according to Bandura (1997, p. 79). Enactive mastery experience specifically deals with the successes and failures and the effects the course of action has on the individual's perceived self-efficacy.

> Successes build a robust belief in one's personal efficacy. Failures undermine it, especially if failures occur before a sense of efficacy is firmly established. If people experience only easy success, they come to expect quick results and are easily discouraged by failure. (Bandura, p. 80)

In the teaching profession, a teacher's ability or inability to create or develop a high level of perceived self-efficacy is a critical element in how effective and successful a teacher can be in the educational environment. McCormick, Ayres, and Beechey's (2006) study noted that

mastery experiences are generally the most influential sources of efficacy beliefs.

Hence in the terms of the proposed study, if a teacher has experienced past

success in delivering components of a curriculum, he or she is likely to have high

self-efficacy for that activity. (p. 55)

A first-year teacher fresh out of a beginning teacher education program at a university

would be a classic example of how a new teacher could gain a stronger sense of efficacy

as they develop and grow through the first couple years of teaching. The continual ability

of a beginning teacher to experience, reflect upon their courses of action, and redesign

their instructional lessons and content may greatly increase their level of efficacy in the

classroom.

The second source of information utilized to create a level of self-efficacy deals

with Bandura's (1997) belief in the opportunities for individuals to obtain vicarious

experiences. Bandura noted that the ability to model and experience others' successes is

instrumental in the development of a high level of self-efficacy. "More often in everyday

life, people compare themselves to particular associates in similar situations, such as

classmates, work associates, competitors, or people in other settings engaged in similar

endeavors" (Bandura, p. 86). An individual who has a limited knowledge of a subject or

the skills required for a new course of action can easily increase their level of perceived

self-efficacy by having the opportunity to observe and model their actions to a peer,

colleague, or co-worker. The ability for educators to be able to observe and model their

teaching practices to their peers and evaluators is necessary to enhance or increase

teachers' levels of efficacy.

The third source of information utilized to create a level of self-efficacy deals

with the ability of an individual to obtain verbal feedback of their course of action from a

fellow human being. "It is easier to sustain a sense of efficacy, especially when struggling with difficulties, if significant others express faith in one's capabilities than if they convey doubts" (Bandura, 1997, p. 101). Bandura (1997) noted that "people are persuaded verbally that they possess the capabilities to master given tasks are likely to mobilize greater effort and sustain it than if they harbor self-doubts and dwell on personal deficiencies when difficulties arise" (p. 101). The role of verbal persuasion in the development of a high level of self-efficacy is apparent in the educational environment of school organizations. One of the key requirements for new teachers throughout the United States is the requirement of pairing a master teacher (mentor) with a new teacher to the teaching profession (mentee). The pairing of the mentor and mentee is a classic example of how verbal persuasion in the teaching profession plays a significant role in the development of new teachers in the teaching profession. Bandura acknowledged the work of Crundall and Woody (1981). Crundall and Woody found that

> people are inclined to trust evaluations of their capabilities by those who are themselves skilled in the activity, have access to some objective predicators of performance capability, or possess a rich fund of knowledge gained from observing and comparing different aspirants and their later accomplishments. (cited in Bandura, 1997, p. 105)

This means that receiving and reflecting on verbal feedback by an expert are essential to developing self-efficacy.

The fourth and final method that individuals utilize to increase their level of self-efficacy is to enhance the physiological forms of information. Erdem and Demirel (2007) discussed the importance of the physiological influence by stating that

> one way to raise self-efficacy beliefs is to improve the physical and emotional

well-being and reduce the negative emotional states. As individuals have the

capability to alter their own thoughts and feelings, their self-efficacy beliefs can,

in turn, powerfully influence their own physiological beliefs. (p. 576)

Thus, in a school organization, a teacher who is not physiologically healthy may

inevitably affect the learning of others in the organization. The physical and emotional

wellness of a teacher has a drastic influence on their perceived self-efficacy and the

collective efficacy of the organization.

Balls et al. (2011) used the definition of teacher efficacy as "teachers' beliefs

about their capability to impact students' motivation and student achievement" (p. 43).

The researcher in this case study used the same definition of teacher efficacy as Balls et

al. to describe and discuss the construct of teacher efficacy in this case study on the

collective learning culture of a southeastern middle school. Balls et al. noted that "the

increase focus on teacher efficacy has been substantiated from over 500,000 studies

whose authors have attempted to assess the most contributing factors that influence

student achievement" (p. 43). In the educational realm, teachers may live through a vast

rollercoaster of experiences that are both positive and negative in nature. The physical

environment of the classroom, the student make-up of the classroom, the administrative

leadership of the organization, the physical structure of the school, curriculum concerns,

etc. are all possible experiences that can extensively lower one's self-efficacy in the

teaching profession. "People who experience negative, aversive arousal or anxiety

associated with a particular activity are likely to interpret this as an indication of low

capability to successfully perform the activity, with a consequent lowering of self-

efficacy for the activity" (McCormick et al., 2006, p. 5). Thus, a teacher with a high

level of self-efficacy and a dispositional belief toward reflection of one's self would

significantly enhance the individual and collective learning culture of the organization.
An individual who does not have a strong belief in his/her own self-efficacy and the
disposition of one's self would limit or bring down the individual and collective learning
culture of the organization.

Collective Self-Efficacy and Collective Teacher Efficacy as a Theoretical Construct

Bandura (1997) further developed his efficacy construct on one's self or
individual (perceived self-efficacy) to that of a collective group of individuals or a whole
social system of individuals. An underlying tenet of the collective efficacy is the belief
that collective efficacy predicts levels of group performance (Bandura, 1993; Hodges &
Carron, 1992; Little & Madigan, 1994). According to Bandura, "perceived collective
efficacy is defined as a group's shared belief in its conjoint capabilities to organize and
execute the course of action required to produce given levels of attainments" (p. 477).
Bandura's "perceived personal (self) and group (collective) efficacy are clearly separable
conceptually, in reality they usually go together because people have to rely, at least to
some extent, on others in accomplishing their tasks" (p. 469). Goddard, Hoy, and
Woolfolk Hoy (2004) noted in their article on collective efficacy beliefs "that teachers
work almost exclusively in isolation of their classrooms, one might reasonably ask how
perceived collective efficacy could make a meaningful difference to their perceptions of
self-efficacy for teaching, in turn, their teaching practice" (p. 8). The ability to
understand and develop individual efficacy beliefs in oneself is critically linked to the
development of the collective efficacy of the entire organization. Bandura stated,

> people's beliefs in their collective efficacy influences the type of future they seek
>
> to achieve, how they manage their resources, the plans & strategies they
>
> construct, how much effort they put into their group endeavor, their staying power

when collective efforts fail to produce quick results or encounter forcible opposition and their vulnerability to discouragement. (p. 478)

If the group or organization has a high level of collective efficacy then a high level of goal attainment will be met by the collective group of individuals. If a collective group of individuals have a low level of collective efficacy then the goal attainment may not be met and difficulties and issues will be prevalent in the course of action to attain the desired outcomes. Thus, a high level of perceived collective efficacy will enable a collective group of individuals to sustain change, obtain the desired goals and attainments of the course of actions, and ultimately allow the sustainability and continued growth of the organization in the future. Bandura (1997) noted that "teacher's beliefs in their collective efficacy contributes significantly to how well their schools perform academically after controlling for the socio-economic & racial composition for student bodies, teachers' experience level, and prior school achievement" (p. 469). If teachers believe that they can accomplish success as an organization, then the probability of a triumph is multiplied.

A positive correlation between teacher self-efficacy and teachers' collective efficacy beliefs and student achievement can be supported by a large number of efficacy studies from the last 30 years. In Salloum's (2011) study, she focused on the role of collective efficacy and student achievement. Salloum's purpose of this mixed methods

> study was to (1) confirm that collectively efficacy was related to fourth grade
> students' odds of passing state standardized assessments in reading and
> mathematics across an entire state, and (2) learn how collective efficacy operates
> to impact student achievement. (p. ix)

The researcher was able to obtain results

drawn from a stratified random sample of schools in a large state, the Hierarchal

Generalized Linear Modeling (HGLM) results demonstrate that for every standard

of deviation increase in collective efficacy, a student's individual odds of passing

a state assessment increased by 35% and 42% in mathematics and reading

respectively to answer the first purpose of the research study. (Salloum, p. ix)

Salloum (2011) noted that the second purpose of her dissertational study was to

understand how collective efficacy affected student achievement in a school

organizational environment. In the researcher's second phase of her mixed-methods

study on the effects of collective efficacy on student achievement, she used a quantitative

case study. The researcher sampled two high-poverty schools in the same school district

to obtain quantitative data. The researcher used a variety of methods to obtain data for

her quantitative analyses of the effects of collective efficacy on student achievement.

Interviews, focus groups, and classroom observations supplied the quantitative sampling

of data to allow the researcher to develop an analysis of the data collected. Salloum's

"study illustrates that the degree to which schools were organized to support teachers'

work contributed to their levels of collective efficacy; in other words, collective efficacy

and PLC's were mutually supportive with both contributing to student achievement

levels" (p. x). Basically, those teachers who worked together were more efficient and

more successful in helping students reach expected achievement levels.

Goddard, Hoy, and Woolfolk Hoy's (2000) study investigated the theoretical

construct of collective teacher efficacy with regard to student achievement. Goddard et

al. noted that "one of the greatest challenges for those who study schools is to learn how

school organizations contribute to students' academic success" (p. 480). The purpose of

their quantitative research study was to "extend the concept of teacher efficacy to the

organizational level, to explore the theoretical nature of collective teacher efficacy, to develop a reliable and valid measure, and to examine the effects of collective teacher efficacy on student achievement" (Goddard et al., p. 480). Goddard et al. hypothesized in their research study on the effects of collective teacher efficacy on student achievement that collective teacher efficacy "is positively associated with differences between schools in student-level achievement" (p. 493). The researchers chose to use the dependent variables of student achievement in math and reading due to the fact that Bandura (1993) "observed a relationship between collective efficacy and mathematics and reading achievement" (Goddard et al., p. 493). A second reason for the researchers to use math and reading achievement was the fact that math and reading are significantly important for students' futures, and the two variables are separate and different from one another (Goddard et al.). Goddard et al.'s research study on the effects of collective teacher efficacy on student achievement in math and reading focused on a sample of elementary schools within a large urban midwestern school district. A total of 47 elementary schools agreed to participate, with a minimum of five participants from each elementary school participating in the study. "A total of 452 teachers completed the surveys and over 99% of the forms returned were usable" to develop a multi-analyses of the data (Goddard et al., 2000, p. 493). Goddard et al. noted in their conclusions that

as predicted, collective teacher efficacy is a significant predictor of student achievement in both mathematics and reading achievement. Indeed, the effect of collective teacher efficacy is greater in magnitude than that of any one of the demographic controls of both achievement variables. This is consistent with Bandura's (1993) assertion that collective teacher efficacy has a greater effect on student achievement that does student SES (socioeconomic status). That is, the

negative association between SES and achievement is more than offset by the

positive association between collective teacher efficacy and student achievement.

(p. 500)

Williams (2011) noted that "teacher collective efficacy has consistently been

found to be a significant predictor in student achievement over and above the impact of

student socioeconomic status (Adams & Forysth, 2006: Bandura, 1993; Goddard,

LoGerfo & Hoy, 2004; Goddard, Hoy & Woolfolk Hoy, 2000; McCoach & Colbert;

2010" (pp. 1-2). In her qualitative case study, Williams

focused on how the professional learning communities' (PLC's) conditions of

shared vision, collective learning, shared personal practice, shared and supportive

leadership, and supportive conditions influenced the development of the collective

efficacy beliefs of three fourth grade teachers in one elementary school. (p. 46)

She relied heavily on the use of teacher interviews, administrator interviews, and

observations of teachers interacting with their colleagues to obtain data and to develop a

qualitative analysis of the responses to the beliefs, behaviors, and effects of the PLCs'

conditions on the collective efficacy of the research site. Williams concluded that the

research has demonstrated the potentially powerful nature of teachers' collective

efficacy beliefs. Linked to the effort and resilience of teachers and positively

correlated to student learning outcomes, understanding the development of

teachers' collective efficacy has the potential to positively impact teaching and l

earning. (p. 157)

In a time when change in our schools is seen as imperative, increasing teacher collective

efficacy may provide an internal solution for school organizations.

Disposition Domain of the EVAEM

There is little or no argument to the fact that the role of a teacher in a child's life is by far one of the most important influences on the cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development of that child. The reality in the teaching profession is that not all educators are effective teachers. "The myth that we cannot tell an excellent teacher from a mediocre or poor teacher is as pernicious as it is false" (Cross, 1987, p. 501). "It is believed that teacher dispositions play as critical role in teacher effectiveness as do teacher's pedagogical and content knowledge/skills" (Wasicsko, 2002, cited in Singh & Stoloff, 2008, p. 1). Stookesberry, Schussler, and Bercaw's (2009) study on conceptualizing dispositions noted that "dispositions emerged in the teaching landscape abruptly in the early 1990s, becoming a consistent part of the vernacular within a decade" (p. 1). The National Council for the Accreditation of Teachers (NCATE) "defines dispositions as the values, commitments, and professional ethics that influence a teacher's behavior toward his/her students, families, colleagues, and communities" (Singh & Stoloff, 2008, p. 2).

Mann, in his Fourth Annual Report in 1840, introduced the concept of a teacher/scholar must have the inherent preconceived aptness to teach. According to Mann (1965), "aptness to teach involves the power of perceiving how far a scholar understands the subject-matter to be learned, and what, in the natural order, is the next he is to take" (p. 71). Mann's statement above discussed the necessary requirements that a teacher must possess with regard to the information and subject knowledge to be an effective classroom teacher. Mann also referenced the *natural order* as he described the pedagogical requirements a teacher must possess to ensure student learning:

He who is apt to teach is acquainted, not only with common methods of common

minds, but with particular methods for pupils of peculiar dispositions and

temperaments; and he is acquainted with the principles of all methods whereby he

can very his plan according to any difference if circumstances. (p. 73)

In other words, teachers must not only obtain the skills, pedagogy, and knowledge of how

to teach children, but they must also possess the skills, values, and commitment to ensure

that their students will learn from their instruction. Taylor and Wasicsko (2000) noted

that "being effective as a teacher means not only being proficient in teaching process

(methods, strategies, and behaviors) that lead to students products (knowledge,

achievement, etc.), but also being a person who can facilitate positive change in people's

lives" (p. 9).

The Role of Dispositions in the Teaching Profession

Dottin's (2009) article focused on teacher dispositions that are required in teacher

preparation programs for preservice teachers. Dottin noted the following in his article:

dispositions therefore, concern not only what professional educators can do

(ability) but also what they are actually likely to do (actions). The question "can

you play a guitar" is a question about one's knowledge and skill. The question

"do you play the guitar" is a question about one's inclination, that is one's

disposition. (p. 85)

Taylor and Wasicsko (2000) also noted the importance of dispositions in the teaching

profession by stating that

parent, teachers, educators, and researchers agree that effective teaching happens

when the teachers thoroughly know their subjects, have significant teaching skills,

and possess dispositions that foster growth and learning in students. Leave out

any one of these and learning which is essential to a productive life will not occur.

(p. 3)

Therefore, it is imperative that teachers have the dispositions to help students learn, in addition to being a subject area expert.

Taylor and Wasicsko (2000) identified that there is a direct correlation or relationship between teacher effectiveness and teacher dispositions. They noted that there is a vast amount of research on the role in which dispositions influence the effectiveness of a teacher in the teaching profession. In their presentation to the Southeastern Regional Association of Teacher Educators (SRATE), Taylor and Wasicsko noted that a number of

> researchers have been examining the dispositions (albeit by names such as attitudes, perceptions, and beliefs, etc.) of effective teachers for decades and have found relationships between effectiveness and the dispositions that teachers hold. Now, with the national spotlight on teacher quality and increasing pressures from political and business concerns, it appears that dispositions of effective teachers will become of even greater interest. (p. 1)

> Wesson (2008) noted that

> a widely supported idea in the field of education is that teacher beliefs and behaviors directly influence students' education achievement, including their social and academic success (Brattesani, Weinstein & Marshall, 1984; Brophy & Good, 1984; Darling-Hammond, 2000) and are predictors of teaching strategies used in the classroom (Lortie, 1975; Pajares, 1992). (p. 12)

In Wesson's case study, the researcher examined the concept of dispositions in action of lateral entry and traditionally certified elementary teachers in the State of North Carolina. Wesson's study focused on the dispositions of alternative (lateral entry) and traditional

certified teachers in an elementary setting. The purpose of his study was to examine "how those dispositions manifested themselves in the classroom and the factors that seem to mediate the development of those dispositions" (Wesson, p. 1). Wesson noted that there were no other studies that examined or compared the dispositions of alternative (lateral entry) certified teachers to traditional certified teachers. Thornton's (2006) disposition in action instrument was used by Wesson "to examine teacher's patterns of thinking and how they are disposed to act towards students in the classroom" (Wesson, p. 57). Wesson noted that Thornton's disposition in action instrument "was developed around the assumption that researchers can make inferences about a teacher's dispositions based upon the ways they interact with the students and the types of dialogue (communication) observed in the classroom" (p. 57). The dispositions in action instrument contained three different domains:

> (1) ways of interacting with students, (2) ways of assessing understanding, and (3) ways of interacting with instruction. Interaction is measured in a range of "responsive" to "technical" orientation. This range represents a continuum of dispositions that are foundational to the patterns of thinking of classroom teachers. (Thornton, cited in Wesson, p. 57)

Wesson described a responsive orientated disposition as a

> representative of a view of teaching and learning that embraces the idea that teaching is a learned profession and that dispositions can be taught and cultivated. A teacher who exhibits these dispositions is responsive to: the needs and actions of the learner; the learner's developmental characteristics; his/her cultural background and experiences; levels of understanding, questions, student work samples, and the learning context; and expectations of the profession and society.

(p. 58)

According to Wesson, technical orientated dispositions are

> largely non-responsive in nature and are aligned with the view that the teacher is a
>
> technician who knows how to employ the skills of teaching but not necessarily
>
> know why. A technical-orientated teacher may show little variation when
>
> interacting with the needs and actions of learners, the learner's developmental
>
> characteristics, and his/her cultural background. (p. 58)

Wesson (2008) reported that the findings of his study on dispositions were the

results of coding observations, formal interviews of teachers and administrators, cards

sorts, and the analysis of student products. The results of Wesson's study "demonstrated

that beginning lateral entry teachers and traditionally licensed teachers did display

different dispositions in action in terms of classroom management, instruction, and

assessment" (p. 275). Thus, Wesson's study identified that there are specific dispositions

in action that teachers must possess to enable teachers to be effective in the classroom

with regard to classroom management, instruction, and assessment of student learning.

Difficulty with Defining Dispositions

One may encounter a number of obstacles when defining the dispositions required

to be an effective classroom teacher. The difficulty of defining the construct of

dispositions in an effective teacher and the methods of assessing or evaluating the

importance of one's disposition in teaching are complex and difficult tasks. Duplass and

Cruz (2010) noted in their study on professional dispositions that "the literature in

education and psychology uses the word disposition in so many contexts that finding a

working definition has proved problematic (Borko, Liston, & Whitcomb, 2007; Diez &

Rath, 2007; Raths, 2001)" (p. 141). Shiveley and Misco (2010) echoed that same

sentiment and supported the call for clearer definitions. The researchers noted that

> some conceive of dispositions as certain temperaments, beliefs and attitudes,
> personality traits, or ideas inferred from observable behavior (Burant, Chubbuck,
> and Whipp, 2007; Freeman, 2007), while others call for a more behaviorist
> approach in an effort to avoid fuzziness and subjectivity of the attributes (Damon,
> 2007). (cited in Shiveley & Misco, 2010, p. 10)

The researcher in this study on the collective learning culture of a southeastern middle school chose to investigate and explore a number of models that are found throughout dispositional studies in regards to education. The researcher organized this section of the literature review to focus on four different dispositional models or concepts that influence and control the collective learning culture of an organization. The first approach or model that is discussed focuses on the standards-based language model of dispositions in education. The second model focuses on the concept of dispositions in regards to the concepts of ethics, virtues, and morals. The third approach deals with the concept of disposition as a behavior. The fourth and final dispositional concept or model in this section of the literature review focuses on the dispositional concept or model of self-reflection. Each model has a significant role in the development of the individual and collective learning culture of an organization. All four models or concepts are equally important in developing an understanding of the importance of an individual or a collective group of individuals in the sustainability and effectiveness of an organization.

Standards-Based Approach to Defining Dispositions

The teaching and learning standards movement of the 21st century originated in the middle of the 1980s when the American educational system was criticized and a call for change was made. There was a "widespread public perception that something [was]

seriously remiss in our educational system in the late 1970s and early 1980s" (Gardner, Larsen, & Baker, 1983, p. 1). The *Nation at Risk* report, released by the National Commission of Excellence in Education, proposed high and rigorous standards for teachers and students (Gardner et al., 1983). It also advocated for change in the America educational system so it would produce students who were ready to compete in a global market. *Nation at Risk* contained "summaries of the papers and hearings; a list of findings in context, expectations, time, and teaching; a set of recommendations; and aspects of implementation related to content, standards, and the expectations of time, teaching, leadership, and fiscal support" (p. 1).

An immediate byproduct or result of the *Nation at Risk* (Gardner et al., 1983) report can be seen directly in the development of numerous educational reform agencies created to address the findings, recommendations, and future responsibilities for educating children in America. Professional teaching standards were introduced as a reform at this time to "offer guidance for teachers and teacher educators by identifying the required knowledge, skills, and dispositions of a well-qualified teacher" (Stookesberry et al., 2009, p. 1). The standards were designed to help all educators meet common higher standards. Thornton (2006) noted that

> although there is no consensus about a definition of teacher dispositions, there are
> several models in use regarding how dispositions are being addressed. Most
> prevalent in terms of assessing dispositions are the standards of professional
> organizations such as the National Council for Accreditation for Teacher
> Education (NCATE), and the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards
> (NBPTS) Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium
> (INTASC). (p. 53)

INTASC, NCATE, and NBPTS were created and further developed to ensure a more in-depth focus on the teaching profession. The INTASC, NCATE, and NBPTS reform agencies all address the required knowledge and skills needed to be an effective teacher as well as the dispositional requirements of teacher candidates, practicing teachers, and accomplished teachers via the standards set forth by these three reform movements. Helm (2006) noted that the standards movements "are now the driving force behind virtually every reform movement and accreditation agency in the country" (p. 117).

Standards-Based Approach to Dispositions

According to NCATE (2000), dispositions are the "values, commitments, and professional ethics that influence behaviors towards students, colleagues, and communities and effect student learning, motivation, and learning" (cited in Wesson, 2008, p. 30). Wesson (2008) also described that "the inclusion of dispositions into the NCATE (2000) performance standards stresses the importance of the beliefs and values of quality teachers and the standards themselves reiterate that dispositions towards students, shape teaching behavior in the classroom" (p. 13). In response to the call for change, the standards provide a framework to evaluate effective teaching across the nation. Like other concepts, the notion of effective teaching and dispositions should evolve to meet the needs of the changing society. That said, the focus, according to NCATE (2006), should always be on fairness and the belief that all students can learn.

Dispositions as Ethics, Virtues, and Morals

Collinson (1996) noted that "since teaching depends to a large degree on how a person sees, acts, and lives (teaching by modeling), one could argue that the development of dispositions and ethics is very important in teacher education" (p. 7). Table 1 summarizes intrapersonal knowledge that an exemplary teacher should aim to model in

their classroom (Collinson).

Table 1

Ethics and Dispositions: Teaching for Life Beyond the Classroom

Ethics	Dispositions
An ethic of care	A disposition toward continuous learning
Caring/Compassion	Curiosity/creativity
Respect for self and others	Risk taking
Understanding self and others	Problem finding and solving
Giving to and receiving from others	Responsibility
Courage	Flexibility
A work ethic	
Work ethic/pride of effort	
Dedication/perseverance	
Doing one's best	

(Collinson, 1996, p. 7).

Sockett (2009) authored a study to "conceptualize the desirable dispositions of the teachers as a virtue is illuminated through distinguishing dispositions-as-virtues for other dispositions and from personality traits" (p. 291). Sockett was fearful that early teacher education programs have developed dispositional assessments that deal more specifically with personality traits rather than dispositions of good character to meet the requirements of NCATE guidelines. NCATE accreditation guidelines call for teacher education programs to assess the dispositional qualities and attributes that may ensure a teacher candidate's future ability to be an effective teacher in the classroom. Thus, in his article, Sockett explained desirable dispositions and recommended teacher education practices. In in the first part of Sockett's study, he

seeks to clear the decks by characterizing personality traits as relevant to a

description of human behavior, action, temperament, or disposition. But dispositions are not so broadly conceived. Rather, dispositions are the property of the agent, manifest only in intentional action, and they function as predictions of human actions. (p. 292)

In the second part of Sockett's (2009) study, he described dispositions in teaching as virtues. Sockett "suggests that virtues are refinements of the concept of dispositions: For while remaining dispositions, virtues attained are the result of an individual's initiative, formed against obstacles and intrinsically motivated" (p. 292). In the third and final part of Sockett's study, he "suggests that the complexity can be approached by setting out questions in each disposition-as-virtue, questions that will enable teacher-educators to focus on what they are assessing" (p. 292).

In Sockett's (2009) study, he chose to use three main categories to describe the dispositions-as-virtues that are most prevalent in the teaching profession. Sockett noted,

that the categories overlap, and the following list is intended as indicative not definitive:

Virtues of *character* include self-knowledge, sincerity, integrity, trustworthiness, and endeavor as including virtues of the will, such as persistence, perseverance, and heed (see Sockett, 1988).

Virtues of *intellect* include truthfulness, accuracy, consistency (e.g., in the application of rules), fairness and impartiality, especially in making judgments, clarity, thoughtfulness, and open-mindedness.

Virtues of *care* include tolerance, tact, discretion, civility, receptivity, relatedness, and responsiveness notably in becoming trustworthy and compassionate. (p. 296)

An element in the typology of Sockett's categorical system of dispositions-as-virtues is

the understanding that these categories of character, intellect, and care are relevant to the

teaching profession. "*Character* describes the kind of person the teacher is. *Intellect* is

the teacher's stock-in-trade, however the curriculum is construed. Teachers have

children placed in their *care*. Moreover, these virtues are profession specific" (Sockett,

p. 296). Sockett concluded his argument for viewing and assessing dispositions-as-

virtues by noting that the dispositions of character, intellect, and care are required

commitments by effective teachers. Sockett stated that

> dispositions on this argument are thus seen as the professional virtues, qualities,
>
> and habitats of minds and behavior held and developed by teachers on the basis of
>
> their knowledge, understanding, values, and commitments to students, families,
>
> their colleagues, and communities. Such dispositions-of character, intellect, and
>
> care-will be manifest in practice, will require sophisticated judgment in
>
> application, and will underpin teachers fundamental commitments to education in
>
> a democratic society, such as the responsibility to set high standards for all
>
> children, a profound concern for each individual child and for a classroom and
>
> school environment of high intellectual and moral quality. (p. 301)

Wilkerson and Lang (2007) stated in their publication that there is a significant

need for morals and ethics to be integrated into the use of dispositions as a method of

measuring teacher effectiveness in the classroom. They noted that teachers must know

the difference between right and wrong and act accordingly to ensure that children are not

harmed. Wilkerson and Lang added that prevention methods must be in place to ensure

that teachers who may harm children do not enter or remain in the profession. Wilkerson

and Lang also stated that basing a system of evaluation on dispositions as a method to

evaluate and measure teachers has three problems. First, it is difficult to detect gaps in

morals and ethics. Second, standards of morality differ depending on the environment.

Wilkerson and Lang provide this example: Some religions are adamantly opposed to

homosexuality and various sexual practices whether they practiced privately or not.

Others would believe such practices, practiced at home and behind closed doors, are not

related to teacher effectiveness. Third, educators should be focused on skill-based

standards and the development of knowledge, skills, and dispositions. The researchers

concluded that using an evaluation system that measures a teacher's effectiveness based

on a dispositional model that encompasses morals, ethics, and attitudes, a number of

problems may exist. Wilkerson and Lang concluded that the biggest challenge is "how

we identify, diagnose, and even dismiss a teacher whose values are clearly violations of

standard-based dispositions" (pp. 13-14).

Burant, Chubbuck, and Whipp (2007) discussed the current problems, concerns,

arguments, debates, and systems associated with evaluating teacher effectiveness based

on using a dispositional model in teacher education programs. The authors noted that

while experts may differ on definitions and assessments of dispositions, there is a

renewed, collective commitment to holding teachers to higher standards. For example,

Burant et al. cited the development of a code of ethics. The researchers went on to note

the controversies associated with the terms disposition and moral. Burant et al. stated,

the term disposition is clumsily and inaccurately barrowed from the behavioral

sciences, rendering it ineffectual; furthermore, given the amount of inflammatory

baggage recently attached to it, the term's removal might circumvent continued

controversy, even if only for a time. Sadly, the word moral, often brings to mind

images of a type of morality associated with strict prescriptions for individual

thought and behavior, trepidation about wandering into religious territory, or fear

of lawsuits. Yet the moral dimension in teacher education- not to be conflated

with this narrow notion of morality- involve viewing the moral in teaching as a

"orientation towards practice, a way of perceiving the work and its significance"

that manifests itself in "countless forms of human interaction" (Hansen, 2001b, p.

827) in the classroom and in schools. (pp. 12-13)

Burant et al. suggested that there are two ways that morals be understood and

implemented in teacher education. "The first relies on Hansen's (2001a) notion of 'moral

sensibility,' and the second involves a code of ethics for the profession" (p. 13).

According to Hansen (2001a), a moral sensibility, reflected in both thought and

emotion and apparent in the "way in which a teacher thinks and acts" (p. 33;

emphasis in original), connects both who a teacher is as well as his or her conduct

"underlying a unifying outlook of orientation." (cited in Burant et al., p. 39)

In other words, a moral sensibility is an orientation toward the student and the profession

that serves as the foundation of teacher thought and action. Thus, a moral sensibility (or

its lack thereof) produces, underlies, shapes, and sustains what the teacher knows, how

the teacher makes sense of that knowledge, and the ways in which the teacher chooses to

act in response to knowledge and circumstances.

Dispositions as a Behavior

Many experts have developed a vast variety of definitions of disposition as a

behavior. In Katz's (1993) article on dispositions as educational goals, she supplied the

reader with a tentative definition of the term. Katz's study described disposition as "a

tendency to exhibit frequently, consciously, and voluntarily a pattern of behavior that is

directed to a broad goal" (p. 2). In Wilkerson and Lang's (2007) study, the authors also

stated that dispositions are "a pattern of behavior that is exhibited frequently in the

absence of coercion and constituting a habit of mind under some conscious and voluntary control, and that is intentional and orientated to broad goals" (p. 9). Based on the consistency of definitions, one can see that dispositions are defined by how someone voluntarily behaves in similar situations.

Experts also believe that dispositions include a person's characteristics. In Wesson's (2008) study, he stated that "dispositions have also been defined as the characteristics that individuals possess" (p. 11). Buss and Craik (1983) said, "dispositions are viewed as summaries of act frequencies that, in themselves, possess no explanatory status" (p. 105). In Damon's (2007) article, he took a more scientific approach in defining dispositions, stating, "a disposition is a trait or characteristic that is embedded in temperament and disposes a person toward certain choices and experiences that can shape his or her future" (p. 367). He went on to note that disposition is deep-rooted in an individual's personality and highly influential in his/her identity. Phelps (2006) asserted that "challenging both to influence and to measure, dispositions are tendencies or inclinations to behave in certain ways" (p. 174).

Based on the slight variations in definitions of dispositions, one can see how it would be difficult to construct criteria to teach and evaluate exemplary teaching dispositions. Stookesberry et al. (2009) stated that

> there is a lack of consensus on defining and developing dispositions. . . . Often the definition is merely implied. Being explicit about how one defines the term is imperative, as different definitions alter if and how the development of dispositions occur. (p. 721)

On the other hand, Stookesberry et al. warned us not to define dispositions solely in a behavioral perspective due to the fact that an individual's disposition is derived

internally. Schussler (2006) supported Stookesberry et al.'s warning by also suggesting

that "dispositions involve awareness, inclination, and reflection on behaviors and

thinking- not just the behaviors of the thinking themselves" (p. 257). Therefore, an

effective teacher must possess not only a behavioral perspective but also may include a

moral and ethical perspective to the list of types of dispositions needed to be an effective

teacher.

Self-Reflective Approach to Dispositions

The necessity to possess the disposition of self-reflection is a crucial cornerstone

of the foundation of an effective teacher and organization. In 1881, Calderwood

discussed the importance of a teacher's disposition towards self-reflection in his/her

teaching instructions and practices. Calderwood noted the following:

> but the learning to which I refer is something very different for the continued
>
> study of books. Such study will secure a fuller knowledge and a higher culture,
>
> the learning which is even more needful for the teacher is to be gathered by
>
> practice of teaching under carefully maintained self-observation. He who would
>
> succeed as a teacher must be a censor over his own practice. He must be
>
> thoroughly interested and observant as to his own success. (p. 3)

Calderwood (1881) noted that the ability to censor one's own practice and to learn

from one's own self-reflection is a dispositional element that is crucial to the

effectiveness of an educator. A second leading advocate for introducing the self-

reflective approach to dispositions in teaching is John Dewey. According to Giovannelli

(2003), "Dewey (1933) laid the foundations for reflective practice with his concept of

reflective action" (p. 294). Dewey (1933) stated the following:

> to reflect, means to hunt for additional evidence, for new data, that will develop

the suggestion, and will either, as we say, bear it out or else make obvious its absurdity or irrelevance. Reflective thinking is always more or less troublesome because it involves overcoming the inertia that inclines one to accept suggestions at face value; it involves willingness to endure a condition of mental unrest and disturbance. Reflective thinking, in short means judgment suspended during further inquiry; and suspense is likely to be somewhat painful. (p. 13)

Baldacchino (2008) reviewed the theoretical ideals and concepts of John Dewey and then discussed the necessity of developing one disposition. Baldacchino "reintroduces Dewey's notion of plasticity to the idea of education as growth" (2008, p. 150). According to Baldacchino, Dewey (1966) defined plasticity as

the ability to learn from experience, the power to retain from one experience something which is avail in coping with the difficulties of a later situation. This means the power to modify actions on the basis of the results of prior experiences, the power to *develop dispositions.* (p. 44, cited in Baldacchino, p. 150)

With Dewey, Baldacchino believed people can learn from previous actions and develop coping mechanisms based on those experiences to help them be more successful in the future.

Giovannelli (2003) authored a study "to determine if a relationship exists between teacher candidates' reflective disposition toward teaching and the extent to which they exhibited effective teacher behaviors in the classroom" (p. 293). The theoretical framework of her study was based upon the work of Schon's (1983, 1987) concept of reflective practice. Schon (1987) developed the concept of reflective practice as the "dialogue of thinking and doing through which I become more skillful" (p. 31). Schon further developed the concept by expanding reflective practice into the theories of

reflection in action and reflection on action. Reflection in action, according to Schon, is "the process of criticizing one's initial understanding of a phenomenon, constructing a new description of item, and testing the new description by an on-the-spot experiment" (cited in Giovannelli, p. 294). Giovannelli also noted Schon's concept of reflection in action is an immediate action. The individual will not reflect on the event, action, or decision to make an informed decision at a later date or time. The individual will make a quick decision without reflecting on what took place to determine a future course of action.

Giovannelli (2003) described Schon's concept of reflection on action in her study as an individual playing a baseball game. "When the practitioner has left the playing field and mentally reconstructs that playing field to analyze actions and events, reflection on action takes place" (Giovannelli, p. 294). An effective teacher would ultimately possess the disposition to use both reflection in action and reflection on action on a continual basis to ensure student learning. Helm (2006) supported the findings of Giovannelli, by noting that

> Giovannelli (2003) demonstrated the relationship between having a reflective disposition toward teaching and effective teaching. She contends that a teacher candidate's reflective dispositions towards teaching and the extent to which he or she exhibits effective teaching behaviors in the classroom are inextricably linked. Therefore, if those reflective dispositions could be identified early in the candidate's teacher education program, more effective teaching behaviors could be demonstrated in the classroom. (p. 238)

In Giovannelli's (2003) study, the sampling of participants of the study was comprised of elementary undergraduate students in their first semester of the teacher educational

program at a major urban public midwestern university. A total of 35 undergraduate participants took part in the 2-year study. Giovannelli collected data on the reflective dispositions of elementary teacher candidates by the administration of the Teacher Candidate Survey. The "Teacher Candidate Survey asks questions on demographics, previous working experience with elementary school-aged children and questions on reflective dispositions toward teaching" (Giovannelli, p. 297). Giovannelli also employed a set of five questions built around the work of LaBoskey (1994). The following are the five questions Giovannelli used to measure the reflective disposition toward teaching of the participants:

1. What should teachers know and be able to do?

2. Define teaching.

3. Define learning.

4. What do you think is the relationship between teaching and learning?

5. Describe what it will be like to be a teacher in a classroom. (p. 141)

The results of Giovannelli's (2003) study on the relationship of a reflective disposition toward teaching and effective teaching "supports the continued inclusion of a standard for teaching quality pertaining to a reflective disposition toward teaching in statements written by teacher education professional organizations" (p. 307). Overall, the study illustrates that reflective dispositions toward teaching are essential to having high teaching standards. A second study also supported the fundamental idea that a reflective disposition in the teaching profession is crucial for the individual to be an effective teacher in the classroom. Singh and Stoloff's (2008) study supported the belief that an effective teacher must possess the attributes of having a reflective disposition towards teaching. The conceptual framework for the study was built around Arthur Comb's early

work in the 1960s and early 1970s on "the principles that govern the nature and effective practice of helping professions, Comb and colleagues mentioned that teachers are required to use 'self' as an instrument in doing their job" (Singh & Stoloff, p. 4). Taylor and Wasicsko (2000) noted in their presentation that Combs (1974) researched the notion that the effective teacher is a "unique human being who has learned to use him/herself effectively and efficiently to carry out his/her own and society's purpose in the education of others" (p. 4). Singh and Stoloff stated in their literature review that

> Comb, Soper, Goodling, Benton, Dickman, & Usher (1969) used the terms *dispositions* and *perceptions* interchangeably. They believed that people who have learned to use themselves as effective instruments in the production of helping relationships can be distinguished from those who are ineffective on the basis of their characteristic perceptual organizations. Combs et al. (1969) ascertained that perceptions exist on a continuum and they can be sorted into five categories. These categories are (1) Perceptions about self, (2) Perceptions about other people, (3) Perceptions about subject field, (4) Perceptions about the purpose of education and process of education, and (5) General frame of reference perceptions. (p. 5)

Singh and Stoloff's (2008) study "tried to look at what kind of dispositions our teacher candidates have towards self, towards other people, towards their subject field, towards the purpose and process of education, and general frame of reference" (pp. 6-7). The study was carried out at a state university in Connecticut with a sample size of 86 participants who were actively involved in a certification program in the undergraduate teacher education program for elementary education, secondary education, physical education, or early childhood/special education certification (Singh & Stoloff). The

authors of the study noted that there was not an instrument available to measure the different variables for the dispositional study. Thus, Singh and Stoloff "developed a dispositions instrument, Eastern Teacher Disposition Index (ESTDI)" (p. 7). The authors of the study noted that the "construction of the ESTDI study is based upon existing definitions of educator dispositions, existing indices of dispositions (e.g., Combs, 1969; Koeppen & Davidson-Jenkins, 2004; Thompson, Randsell, & Rousseau, 2004; Wasicsko, 2002) as well as on INTASC 2001 principles" (Singh & Stoloff, p. 7). In the discussion on the findings of the study, the authors noted that the participants'

> perceptions towards self, perceptions about other people, perceptions about their subject field, perceptions of education purpose and process of learning as well as general frame reference are positive. However, there is room for improvement in their dispositions that include collaboration and trust in the abilities and problem solving skills of others. They also need to reshape their dispositions about using research based instructional strategies. (Singh & Stoloff, p. 17)

In Ritchhart's (2001) study, he examined an alternative view of the traditional psychometric views of intelligence by viewing intelligence as a "collection of cognitive dispositions that capture one's tendency to engage in certain patterns of thinking" (p. 1). Ritchhart noted that the traditional view of one's intelligence has been based upon an abilities-centric perspective with a set of qualities and attributes that make up one's own intelligence.

> Chief among these qualities tends to be one's knowledge and skill level. Within a school context, grades often are used as a proxy of those qualities. Secondly, the ease with which one acquires new skills and knowledge, what Aristole termed quick with, is considered a key factor in determining intelligence. (Ritchhart, p.

2)

The goal of Ritchhart's (2001) study was to explore the concept of intellectual character

rather than using intellectual quality. According to Ritchhart, "intellectual character is an

overarching termed describing a set of dispositions-such as curiosity, skepticism, or

open-mindness–that not only shape but also motivate intellectual behavior" (p. 2). The

term intellectual character in Ritchhart's study was used as a broad term used to describe

"dispositions associated with good and productive thinking" (p. 4). Yet, because

Ritchhart associates intellect with character, one can also see that he advocates a focus on

"characterological aspects of intelligence," including "attitudes, beliefs, habitats,

sensitivities, inclinations, and dispositions" (p. 4). Overall, Ritchhart believed that

character is an "animator of actions" (p. 4).

Thornton's (2006) study built upon Ritchhart's views of thinking of dispositions

as an active process. "The study described in this paper conceptualizes 'dispositions in

action' that move beyond reflection, self-assessment and perceptions to examine how

dispositions are manifested within the classroom and how they impact pedagogy and

ultimately the learning process" (Thornton, p. 2). Thornton's study focused on 16

middle-level teachers and 120 middle-level students in an urban, at-risk school system

over a 3-year period. Thornton's study was an action research study that "occurred

within a best case scenario, where the typical constraints of schooling would not prohibit

teachers and students from reaping the full benefits of a high-quality experience" (p. 3).

Thornton's research questions in her dispositional study were

> 1. Within a "best case scenario" where constraints are removed so that quality
>
>   teachers are empowered to employ best practices, what can we learn about teacher
>
>   dispositions?

2. Given a common curriculum, assessment, teaching strategies and teaching teams, would differences in the learning experiences of the middle school students occur?

3. Were any differences attributable to teacher dispositions?

4. In what ways can these dispositions be identified and evidenced?

5. Do specific dispositions align with learning experiences identified as more positive by participants and observers. (p. 58)

Thornton employed quantitative methods to obtain data for the analysis of her study. She employed a variety of quantitative methods, including teacher interviews, participant interviews, small group interviews, and student interviews at the end of each summer session over a 2-year period. Thornton noted in her study that the feedback that was collected was later analyzed by a 3-person research team. The information obtained by the research team was coded and a number of themes were discovered from the analysis of the collected data. Thornton's study noted that "differences that emerged among the cadre of teachers during the early stages of analysis fell in three overarching themes: *relationships, support, expectations*" (p. 58). Thornton employed the discourse analysis method in her study to focus

on the interactions between students and teachers represented in dialogue that occurred in the classroom. By examining the interactional detail of how regular classroom lessons were assembled by teachers and student alike, we gained insight into their construction (MacBeth, 2003) and the dispositions upon which they are built. (p. 60)

In the study, Thornton was able to "study differences among the practices of teachers in the study that may be attributable to teacher dispositions" and "specific dispositions, such

as those identified as responsive, were aligned with learning experiences identified as more positive by participants and observers" (p. 62).

From Thornton's (2006) study, she constructed the following definition of dispositions in action that are used in this study as the definition for the first domain in the EVAEM in this mixed-methods case study on the collective learning culture of a middle school organization. According to Thornton,

> Dispositions are habitats of mind including both cognitive and affective attributes that filter one's knowledge, skills, and beliefs and impact the action one takes in the classroom of professional setting. They (dispositions) are manifested within relationships as meaning-making occurs with others and they are evidenced through interactions in the form of discourse. (p. 62)

Professional Experiences Domain of the EVAEM

The second domain of EVAEM focuses on the importance of the individual and collective professional experiences of the organization's members. According to Balls et al. (2011), individual professional experiences

> can be defined as the past personal experiences of each community member as a learner, teacher, team members, and leader. Collective professional experiences of an organization as a unit can be defined as the past experiences of the organization as a whole unit. (p. 73)

Ball (1996) "notes that scholars currently believe that teachers' prior experience, knowledge, and beliefs factor in to teacher learning" (as cited in Wilson & Berne, 1999, p. 175). Ball stated that "what teachers bring to the process of learning to teach affects what they learn. Increasingly, teachers' own personal and professional histories are thought to play an important role in determining what they learn from professional

development opportunities" (p. 501).

In the professional experience domain of the EVAEM, the researcher selected to investigate and provide current research information on the following concepts within the professional domain. The researcher chose to investigate the concepts of professional learning, teacher learning, intellectual capital, human capital, and the importance of individual and collective capacity. The researcher in this study on the collective learning culture of a middle school organization did not limit the number of concepts that can be linked to the domain of professional experiences in the EVAEM. However, the researcher believed that these five concepts of professional experiences are crucial elements in the theoretical construct of the domain of professional experiences as a means to measure the collective learning culture of a school organization.

Professional Learning

Balls et al. (2011) noted that professional development opportunity for individual teachers and also to the collective groups of teachers can be considered as a method of providing professional experiences to the members of the school organization. Individual members of the organization inherently bring external professional experiences that affect and influence their knowledge, skills, and dispositions in the organization. Individual members of an organization, such as teachers in a school, bring to the organization a multiple number of experiences, customs, beliefs, and skills. Individual members and the collective group of members, such as a group of teachers or staff members in a school organization, also obtain professional experiences from within (internally) the organization. The ability to obtain professional experiences via professional development should be viewed as an internal mechanism to increase the intellectual capital, the individual and organizational capacity, and the development of a strong

learning culture (teacher learning) of an organization.

Aud et al. (2012) summarized in their report on the conditions of education in America that "in the school year 2010-11, some 49.5 million students were enrolled in public elementary and secondary schools" throughout the United States (p. 20). Aud et al. also noted the total number of students in American public elementary and secondary schools will increase by 7% to make the total enrollment of students in public schools to be projected to 53.1 million students by 2021-2022. If this projected increase in the number of students is correct, a need for more effective elementary and secondary teachers in public schools will inevitably be increased to meet the needs of the student population in America. Aud et al. used data of the total number of teachers in education from the 2007-2008 school year and the 2003-2004 school year to clearly outline the continued growth in teachers throughout the United States. "In the 2007-08 school year, there were 3.5 million full-time teachers, up from 3.3 million in 2003-04" (Aud et al., p. 50).

The number of years of teaching experience of the 3.5 million teachers in the 2007-2008 school year is important in defining and stratifying the total number of years of experience as teachers in our schools. Aud et al. (2012) noted that

> in 2007-08 teachers averaged 14 years of experience, about the same as 2003-04. Nationally, about 17 percent of the teachers had 3 or fewer years of experience, 28 percent had 4-9 years of experience, 27 percent had 10-19 years of experience, and 27 percent of had 20 or more years of experience. (p. 50)

The information and data provided in the Aud et al. (2012) report to the United States Department of Education clearly demonstrated that there is a similar spread of distribution in the years of experience that teachers in America possess. The smallest

percentage group of teachers for the 2007-2008 school year was those teachers who

possessed 3 or fewer years of experience. On the other hand, the vast majority of the

other three groups of teachers were proportional in the amount of teaching years of

experience. In a professional development opportunity or activity, all four of these

groups of teachers must be identified by the organization and used to enhance the

professional development of the organization as a whole. Organizations must make the

continual effort to ensure that every member of the organization is targeted specifically to

enhance the collective learning culture of the organization.

The vast spreads in the number of years of teaching experience in our school

organizations create a problem in the development and creation of teaching learning

opportunities and activities. Wilson and Berne (1999) noted that

> beginning teachers *(0-3 years of teaching experience)* take methods and
>
> foundation courses in education departments and subject matter courses in
>
> discipline departments. Sometimes they work in the field, sometimes in a
>
> university. And every school experience, whether it be elementary or middle or
>
> high school, in a college or university, has the potential for teaching them lessons
>
> about what is, what teachers do, and how people learn. (p. 173)

In Timperley, Wilson, Barrar, and Fung's (2007) study, the researchers noted that

"professional learning for experienced teachers is very different from professional

learning for pre-service teachers because the former group bring with them a wealth of

knowledge and well-formed positions on all manner of matters related to teaching" (p.

13). Brophy (2008) noted in the preface for Timperley's (2008) educational practices

series-18 publication that the Best Evidence Synthesis Iteration (BES) "is an analysis of

97 studies of professional development that led to improved outcomes for the students of

participating teachers. Most of these studies came from the United States, New Zealand, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Canada, and Israel" (Brophy, as cited in the preface for Timperley, p. 3). Timperley et al. (2007) noted in their study on teaching professional learning and development that

> while all professional learners have had the experience of being taught and bring with them a set of beliefs and understandings about teachings and learning, the more extensive repertoire of experienced teachers means they have a greater wealth of ideas on which to draw. These ideas may be an asset in terms of acquiring and integrating new knowledge following relatively brief engagement with professional learning opportunities, but this is likely to be the case only when the new information is consistent with current values, beliefs, and practices. (p. 13)

Timperley et al.'s (2007) synthesis study on the professional learning and development of teachers at the international level and in the country of New Zealand was researched to consolidate the information on how professional learning and development of teachers could impact the outcomes of students in the classrooms. The researchers developed a theoretical framework for their study based upon "theoretical and empirical literature on professional learning and development" (Timperley et al., p. 24). According to Timperley et al., the framework for the study

> was intended that the elements of the framework should be "neutral" and subject to testing against the qualities associated with substantive outcomes for students, as documented in the studies. The initial framework was presented to and critiqued by a "think tank" of national researchers, union officials, and professional development providers and approved in principle as appropriate for

mapping the studies. . . . In all, 56 characteristics of the professional learning

environment and teachers' learning process were identified, together with the

range of student outcomes. (p. 24)

The findings of the synthesis study on teacher professional learning and

development noted that "opportunities for teachers to engage in professional learning and

development can have a substantial impact on student learning" (Timperley et al., 2007,

p. xxv). A second finding of the synthesis study by Timperley et al. (2007) is a common

problem with teacher learning and staff development in school organizations. "What is

known to be effective, however, is not always what is practiced" (Timperley et al., p.

xxv). The following scenario was given by Timperley et al. in the synthesis study to

explain how traditional professional development is not an effective means to increase

teacher learning.

It is generally accepted that listening to inspiring speakers or attending one-off

workshops rarely changes teacher practice sufficiently to impact student

outcomes. Yet at least in the United States, this type of activity is the

predominant model of professional development (National Staff Development

Council, 2001). The popularity of conferences and one-day workshops in New

Zealand indicates that this not too different in this country (Timperley et al., p.

xxv).

Timperley et al. also stated in the findings of their synthesis study that "extended

opportunities to learn, however, are not necessarily more effective than their one-off

counterparts" for teacher learning and student outcomes (p. xxv). The researchers also

noted that

two extremes that are sometimes portrayed as effective have little evidence to

support them. The first is that teachers should be treated as self-regulating

professionals who, if given sufficient time and resources, are able to construct

their own learning experiences and develop a more effective reality for their

students through their collective expertise (Lipman, 1997; Saxe, Gearhart &

Nasir, 2001; Timperley & Parr, 2006). (Timperley et al., p. xxv)

In the findings of the synthesis study on teacher learning and professional development,

the researchers found little to no evidence to demonstrate that the ability to give teachers

time and resources to be self-regulating professionals has impact on student outcomes.

Wilson and Berne (1999) supported the finding of the Timperley et al. by stating in their

study that

teachers participate in mandatory part-day or day-long workshops sponsored by

their school district. They pursue individual learning opportunities; they enroll in

master's courses, signing up for summer and weekend workshops, joining

professional organizations. Some learning, no doubt, goes on in the interstices of

the workday, in conversations with colleagues, passing glimpses of another

teacher's classroom on the way to the photocopying machine, tips swapped in the

coffee lounge, not to mention the daily experience of the classroom. (p. 174)

Teacher Learning (as a Culture of Learning)

Cibulka and Nakayama's (2000) paper on the purpose for school learning

communities discussed the idea that "until recently, we have not thought of schools as

places where teachers learn" (p. 12). Elmore (2000) supplied the reader of his paper a

strong message that supports the idea that schools should be a place for teachers to learn

individually but also collectively as a group. Elmore, in his paper that describes the five

principles that are required to lay the foundation for distributed leadership to enable large

scale instructional improvements in schools, is rooted in its inability to allow the institutional structure of the organization to allow collective learning to take place among its teachers. Elmore's second principle of distributed leadership for large scale instructional improvement of schools deals directly with the idea that instructional improvement requires continuous learning. Elmore noted that

> learning is both an individual and a social activity. Therefore, collective learning demands an environment that guides and directs the acquisition of new knowledge about instruction. The existing instructional structure of public education does one thing very well; It creates a normative environment that values idiosyncratic, isolated, and individualistic learning at the expense of collective learning. (p. 20)

Elmore's underlying theme in the second principle of distributed leadership for large scale improvement was his belief that "privacy of practice produces isolation; isolation is the enemy of improvement" (p. 20). Elmore noted that

> this phenomenon holds at all three levels: individual teachers invent their own practice in isolated classrooms; small knots of like-minded practitioners operate in isolation from their colleagues within a given school, or schools operate as exclusive enclaves of practice in isolation from other schools. (p. 20)

In Cibulka's and Nakayama's study for the National Partnership for Excellence and Accountability in Teaching, the authors discussed four different approaches to introducing the concept of teacher learning as a foundation for creating learning communities in an organization. The following approaches were identified by Cibulka and Nakayama in their study on teacher learning to take place in the context of a school organization:

1. Developmental considerations for teacher learning:

Teacher's personal growth and development is a key component for understanding how teachers learn. The research stresses that teachers' motivation to learn or change their behavior is deeply affected by the individual's life stage and experience. Accordingly, professional development must take into consideration individual learner's developmental and career stages, as we as their needs, interests, and experiences. The developmental view of teacher learning suggests a diversified approach to professional development based on teachers identified needs and guided by clearly defined school objectives. (p. 12-13)

2. Socially constructed teacher learning:

Evolving conceptions of teacher learning suggest that teacher knowledge is socially constructed and recognizes that individuals' context inform their learning. It is the teacher's social context that facilitates learning through repeated interaction, feedback, guidance, encouragement, explanations, suggestions, and reflections. Teacher learning occurs when teachers have the possibility to share, discuss, and elaborate on their thoughts, experiences, and learning. (p. 13)

3. Structural conditions for teacher learning:

The structural view of teacher learning asserts that there are certain conditions within schools' larger context that can be changed to enhance or inhibit opportunities for teachers to be involved in meaning learning activities. Researchers in the field are concerned with the relationship between teacher learning and whole school change processes and, as such, spend considerable time identifying structural conditions associated with teacher learning. Structures that afford time for planning, learning, and collaborating around activities related to

school goals are deemed essential. This requires attention to scheduling and time constraints. (p. 14)

4. Teacher learning focused on the whole system:

Researchers who consider teacher learning from a whole systems view believe that to best be able to meet the needs of learners, teachers need to have knowledge of what is going on both inside and outside of their classroom and schools. Teacher learning includes the ability to make informed decisions about appropriate approaches to instruction, student learning, and school change based on accurate and in-depth understandings about the political and organizational contexts in which these activities occur. (p. 15)

Intellectual Capital

According to Luthy (1998), "intellectual capital is becoming the preeminent resource for creating economic wealth" (p. 1). In the relative past, not to many years ago, the wealth of a company, business, or organization was based around tangible assets. Buildings, machinery, equipment, and resources were all examples of assets or capital that allowed the company, business, or organization to provide goods and services to customers and consumers in our society. Luthy noted that "their relative importance has decreased through time as the importance of intangible, knowledge-based assets has increased" (p. 2). The underlying theme in Luthy's paper on intellectual capital is that "the coming preeminence of intellectual capital as a value-adding element in modern organizations requires this attention" (p. 2). In Stewart's (2012) executive summary, he proposed that intellectual capital

1. is knowledge that transforms raw materials and makes them more valuable.

2. Conventional accounting fails to measure the value of intellectual capital, but

markets clearly reward it.

3. Intellectual capital includes the talent of staff, the value of proprietary knowledge and processes, and the value of relationships of customers and suppliers. (p. 1)

Luthy also noted in his definition of intellectual capital that "various other definitions use concepts such as ability, skill, expertise, and other forms of knowledge that are useful in organizations" (p. 3). Edvinsson and Malone (1997) and Brooking (1996) investigated and researched the importance of intellectual capital from two different perspectives but are complimentary of each other (Luthy, p. 3). According to Luthy, "Edvinsson and Malone objective was to explain the importance of human capital in organizations including key features, measures, and management approaches. They view management of intellectual capital as a vital step of building a wealth-enhancing and value-sustaining organization" (p. 3). On the other hand, Luthy also noted in his paper on intellectual capital that Brooking

views the components of intellectual capital for audit purposes. Brooking emphasizes the process of identifying, documenting, and measuring intellectual capital. She describes an audit methodology if helping organizations achieve their goals through proper management of intellectual assets. (p. 3)

Stewart (2012) noted that there are three forms of intellectual capital that are prevalent in all organizations and companies. Human capital, structural capital, and customer capital are manifestations of intellectual capital that can be found in all organizations. Stewart noted that "every organization possesses intellectual capital in all three manifestations, but with varying emphasis depending on its history and strategy" (p. 3). Stewart, Luthy (1998), and Edvinsson and Malone (1997) all support the idea of

intellectual capital as a three-fold concept. Luthy stated that

> Human capital includes knowledge, skills, and abilities of employees. Human
>
> capital is an organization's combined human capability for solving business
>
> problems. Human capital is inherent in people and cannot be owned by
>
> organizations. Therefore, human capital can leave an organization when people
>
> leave. Human capital also encompasses how effectively an organization uses its
>
> people resources as measured by creativity and innovation. (pp. 2-3)

Stewart (2012) supported Luthy's concept of human capital by stating in his paper that

> human capital consists of the skills competencies, and the abilities of individuals
>
> and groups. These range from specific technical skills to softer skills, like
>
> salesmanship or the ability to work in a team. An individual's human capital
>
> cannot, in a legal sense, be owned by a corporation; the term thus refers not only
>
> to individual talent but also to the collective skills and aptitudes of the workforce.
>
> (p. 2)

In a school organization, the human capital belongs to the individuals or collective

members of the school organization. The skills, knowledge, competencies, abilities of

the members of the school organization are intangible assets that cannot be owned by the

organization. Luthy noted that intangible assets of an organization "are all of the other

talents and theory by which an organization is run" (p. 3). In the case of a school

organization, a teacher or staff member may choose to leave the school organization and

the human capital that is possessed or associated with the individual is forever gone. A

school organization must protect and further develop and increase the human capital of

its members. The learning culture of the school, the sustainability of the organization,

and the overall effectiveness of the school organization is significantly influenced and

supported by the intangible assets of the organization's human capital.

The second concept of intellectual capital focuses on the development and creation of structural capital of an organization. Luthy (1998) noted that structural capital

is everything in an organization that supports employees (human capital) in their work. Structural capital is the supportive infrastructure that enables human capital to function. Structural capital is owned by an organization and remains with an organization even when people leave. Structural capital includes such traditional things as buildings, hardware, software, processes, patents, and trademarks. In addition, structural capital includes such things as the organization's image, organization information system, and proprietary databases. (p. 3)

Stewart (2012) further supported and supplied a complimentary definition of structural capital to that of Luthy's. Stewart noted that

structural capital comprises of knowledge assets that are indeed company property; intellectual property such as patents, copyrights, and trademarks; processes, methodologies, models; documents and other knowledge artifacts; computer networks and software; administrative resources; and so forth. (p. 2)

In a school organization, the structural capital of the school would be the tangible assets of the school, such as the buildings, classroom furniture, equipment, computers, software, textbooks, and the organizational configuration of the school. The tangible assets of structural capital belong to and are owned by the organization. Structural capital is not owned by an individual teacher, administrator, or staff member. Structural capital also cannot be owned by the collective members of the organization. The structural capital of the school organization is an intangible asset that continues to belong to the school even

if a member of the organization transfers, resigns, or leaves the school organization.

The third and final concept of intellectual capital is customer capital. Luthy (1998) noted that customer capital of an organization is the strength of the relationship between the customer and service provider; the loyalty to the organization, customer satisfaction of the product, and the trust in the product of the provider are all important intangible assets of intellectual capital. Stewart supported Luthy's conceptual definition of customer capital by stating that

> customer capital is the value of relationships with suppliers, allies, and customers. Two common forms are brand equity and customer loyalty. The former is a promise of quality (or some other attribute) for which a customer agrees to pay a premium price; the value of brands is measurable in financial terms. The loyalty of a base of customers is also measurable, using discounted cash flow analysis. Both are frequently calculated when companies are bought and sold. In a sense, all customer capital should eventually reflect itself either in a premium price of a sticky buyer-seller relationship. (pp. 2-3)

The intangible assets of the customer capital in a school organization may not be measured with financial terms such as discounted cash flow analysis, the worth of the company, or the customer's agreement to pay premium price for the service (Luthy, 1998). However, customer capital of a school organization can be measured by investigating and analyzing the relationships of the organization to the stakeholders (consumers of the organization). The customer capital of a school organization is important to the sustainability and overall reason for the organization to remain in existence. If the relationships between the organization (school) and the stakeholders (parents, students, community members, etc.) are not at a high level of trust, loyalty, and

involvement in meaningful and productive relationship building with one another, the sustainability and value of the organization is severely limited. Thus, all three forms of intellectual capital are significantly important to the overall sustainability and value of the organization.

Capacity (Individual and Collective)

Newmann, King, and Youngs (2000) discussed the importance of building capacity in a school organization via the use of professional development opportunities for teacher learning. According to Newmann et al., "professional development is more likely to advance achievement of all students in a school if it addresses not only the learning of individual teachers but also other dimensions of the organizational capacity of the school" (p. 260). Newmann et al. noted that "capacity often refers to the potential of material, a product, person, or group to fulfill a function if it is used in a particular way" (p. 261). The authors noted the first step in measuring the individual or collective capacity of a group is to understand their intended functions. In a school organization, the intended function of individual teachers and the collective group of teachers inevitably is to increase student achievement for every student of the school organization. Newmann et al. noted that

> individual teacher competence is the foundation for improved classroom practice, but to improve achievement of all students in a school from one academic year to the next, teachers must exercise their individual knowledge, skills, and dispositions in an integrated way to advance the collective work of the school under a set of unique conditions. The collective power of the full staff to improve student achievement school-wide can be summarized as school capacity. (p. 261)
> In the literature review of the study, Newmann et al. (2000) supplied a number of

different conceptual definitions of school capacity with regard to school reform and organizational change in a school organization. The following conceptual definitions for school capacity were found in the literature review of their study on professional development that addresses school capacity:

1. School capacity includes the knowledge, skills, and dispositions of individual staff members. Staff must be professionally competent in instruction and assessment centered on curriculum appropriate for their particular students, and they must hold high expectations for all students' learning. The contribution of these individual human resources to student achievement is well recognized in research on teacher education and in programs of professional development.

2. Individual teaching competence must be put to use in an organized, collective enterprise. This element of capacity calls attention to the educative importance of social resources in the school, which we summarize as school wide professional community. A strong professional community consists of (a) the staff sharing clear goals for student learning, (b) collaboration and collective responsibility among staff members to achieve the goals, (c) professional inquiry by the staff to address the challenges they face, and (d) opportunities for staff to influence the school's activities and policies. Definitions of professional community vary slightly in the literature, but studies have shown higher student achievement (Louis, Kruse, & Marks, 1996; Lee & Smith, 1996; Louis & Marks, 1998).

3. A third dimension of school capacity is "program coherence," which we define as the extent to which the school's programs for student and staff learning are coordinated, focused on clear learning goals, and sustained over periods of time. (Newmann et al., 2000, p. 263)

Newmann et al. (2000) presented a study on school organizational capacity and professional development to investigate the aspects of capacity of the collective members of the organization rather than the competence of individual teachers. According to Newmann et al.,

> the purpose of the empirical research is not to compute the actual transition costs of schools moving from low to high capacity but to examine the extent to which professional development addresses key aspects of schools' capacity to offer instruction that boosts achievement and to explain why some schools have more success that others in doing so. (p. 263)

The researchers in this study focused on exploring the school organizational capacity by selecting nine urban elementary schools throughout the United States. The researchers used five criteria to select schools serving large proportions of low-income families to participate in their study on school organizational capacity and the use of professional development to strengthen the capacity of the school organization. According to Newmann et al., the following criteria were used to select the school organizations to participate in the research study:

1. had histories of low achievement,

2. had shown progress in student achievement over three to five years prior to participation in the study,

3. attributed their progress to school wide, and sustained professional development,

4. participated in site-based management, and

5. had receives significant professional experience development assistance from one or more external agencies. (pp. 266-267)

The researchers in this study also noted that in addition to the five criteria, the urban elementary schools that participated in this study also received different forms of assistance of support and also different forms of professional development (Newmann et al., 2000, p. 266). Thus, each of the nine urban elementary schools chosen for this research study met the initial criteria to participate in the study but covered a wide spectrum of assistance by district, state, and federal agencies and the methods of providing professional development activities to the teachers in the selected research sites. The collection of data by the researchers took place in nine urban middle schools in the spring and fall of 1997. Newmann et al. noted that the visits to the nine urban elementary schools in this study took place on the scheduled days of major professional development opportunities scheduled with the teachers.

Newmann et al. (2000) noted that the "researchers interviewed school staff (10 to 12) and representatives from external providers of professional development; observed professional development activities and classes; and collected pertinent documents as well as achievement, demographic, and fiscal information" (p. 295). In the second phase of the study on school capacity, Newmann et al. chose to follow up with seven of the original nine participating urban middle schools in the study. The reasoning behind the 1997 follow-up sessions was in part due to the fact that these seven schools "planned to sustain professional development aimed at key aspects of capacity and that represented different district and state policy contexts" (Newmann et al., p. 265). Newmann et al. also noted that a third phase of data was obtained with three urban elementary schools that were visited a third and final time.

The results of their study indicated "that policy support does matter, but in order to know what kind of support will most serve comprehensive professional development,

one must first understand the school context" (Newman et al., 2000, p. 293). The ability

to focus on the necessary needs and requirements of each individual school organization

is important rather than making an all-encompassing professional development plan at

the district, state, and federal levels. Newmann et al. noted in their findings that

> in some schools it might be most productive to initially invest professional
> development resources on teacher's knowledge and skills in a particular
> instructional area, but in another school, perhaps the highest immediate priority
> would be program coherence of professional community . . . . A more customized
> approach could result in differential emphases on different dimensions of
> capacity, depending on local needs at given points in a school's development. (p.
> 293)

Structure Domain of the EVAEM

The third domain of the EVAEM is based upon the physical and organizational

structure of the organization. In the case of a school organization, the physical structure

of a school can be described in a number of different methods. The simplest method to

describe the physical characteristics of a school structure is by creating an inventory of

the number of classrooms, bathrooms, offices, storage rooms, air condition units,

stairwells, and so forth. However, the organizational structure of a school organization

describes the human element of the community. In a school organization, the human

element is composed of the students, teachers, administrative staff members, support staff

members, etc. The third domain of organizational structure focuses on the human

element of the organization in the theoretical model of the EVAEM. According to Balls

et al. (2011), "structures guide a school through day-to-day operations. Structures can

include how students and teachers are grouped, teacher leadership, and student

relationships" (p. 53). This domain "would examine the organizational structure that each individual and collective group experience on a routine basis" in the day-to-day processes of the school (Balls et al., p. 26). Overall, the third domain of the EVAEM analyzes the human experiences that the members of an organization live through each and every day.

The researcher in this research study on the collective learning culture of a school organization focused this section of the literature review on the organizational structures that are prevalent in most middle school organizations. The first element of the structure domain focuses on the grade-level arrangements of middle grade students and teachers. The transitioning period from the junior high concept to the middle school concept is explored and investigated in this section of the literature review. The significant change in the arrangement of sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade levels from the junior high concept to the middle school concept sheds light on the role that organizational structure has had in the collective learning culture of a school organization. The concept of the organizational structure domain of the EVAEM focuses on the teaming of students and teachers in a middle school environment. The researcher in this study sampled a number of different educational research-based studies that support and further develop the organizational structure concepts of grade arrangement, the use of teaming practices of students and teachers in a school environment, and the use of PLCs. The literature provided in this section of the literature review supports the third domain of the EVAEM as a tool to measure the impact of the organizational structure of a school on the collective learning culture of the organization.

Grade Configurations for 10-14 Year Old Adolescents

The National Forum to Accelerate Middle-Grades Reform (2008) issued a *Policy*

Statement on Grade Configuration in July 2008 that noted that the organization "supports all bona fide efforts to improve schooling for young adolescents (ages 10-14), recommends that such efforts be grounded in evidence-based research" (p. 1). The question of whether a (K-8) configuration of educating early adolescent children compared to the traditional middle school (6-8) grade configuration of early adolescent students must be further researched to discover the positive outcomes of both organizational grade configurations at this age. The National Forum stated, "whether they are K-8 schools, or 6-8 schools, or some other grade configurations, high performing schools that serve middle-grades students share three essential elements: academic excellence, responsiveness to the unique needs of young adolescents, and social equity" (p. 1).

Wyant and Mathis (2007) conducted a study "to examine the variance in student performance on the 6th grade level and determine if this variance is influenced by the grade configuration of the school" (p. 1). The researchers in this local educational agency (LEA) case study in North Carolina investigated whether or not there was a stronger correlation of student achievement in sixth-grade students who were in a middle school configuration of 6-8 or in a K-8 school configuration. Wyant and Mathis noted in their report on the study that

> in North Carolina the dominant grade configuration for middle grades is 6-8 middle schools. The junior high model has been almost completely replaced by the more traditional 6-8 middle school, but other middle grade configurations in the state include 5-8, K-8, 6-9, and 7-12. (p. 2)

According to Wyant and Mathis, the breakdown of the current number of schools in each grade configuration in North Carolina can be viewed in Table 2.

Table 2

Current Number of Schools in Each Grade Configuration in North Carolina 2007 (Total 589)

Grade Configuration	Number of Schools (%)
K-6	51 (8.66%)
K-8	83 (14.10%)
5-8	28 (4.75%)
6-8	387 (65.70%)
6-9	3 (0.51%)
7-9	8 (1.36%)
7-12	5 (0.85%)
Other	24 (4.07%)

(Wyant & Mathis, 2007, p. 2).

Wyant and Mathis (2007) used sixth-grade student accountability and summary data for the 2005-2006 school year for students who were enrolled in North Carolina public schools. Wyant and Mathis did not use student data sets in math and reading from charter schools or alternative school settings in their study due to fact that these "schools have alternative structures and programs that cannot adequately be controlled in a statistical model" (p. 2). The researchers were able to use 74,643 observations for math and 75,003 observations for reading to analyze student growth from the 2005-2006 school year in those content areas between fifth and sixth grades. Wyant and Mathis described their study as follows:

> We examined the differences in the average student growth based on the average grade configurations of the schools. For the purposes of this analysis we grouped schools into two types. Type A school were schools where the lowest grade in the schools was 6th grade (mostly 6-8 schools). Type B schools were schools that

contained both grades 5 and 6 (like K-6 and K-8 schools.) We then created a

linear model to explain the variance in student growth. (p. 2)

Wyant and Mathis noted in their findings on grade configurations in the state of North

Carolina that

In the 2005-2006 school year, average student growth between 5th and 6th grade

in mathematics was negative, indicating that a drop in student performance.

Average student growth between 5th and 6th grade in reading was positive but

very small. When we looked at the difference in growth in the two types of

schools, we found that the average student growth in math in Type A schools

were slightly negative, while the average student growth in math in Type B

schools was slightly positive. While average student growth in reading for both

types of schools was positive, average student growth was slightly higher in Type

B schools. (p. 3)

Wyant and Mathis concluded in their research case study on middle school grade

configurations and student growth that some of the variables that they studied impacted

student growth. Wyant and Mathis noted, "while changing the grade configuration may

not be the solution, our findings indicate that the variance should be further examined to

determine the best way to address the differences" (p. 3). Wyant and Mathis's research

study on middle grade configuration and student growth did not provide a definite

solution; it did, however, reveal that there is a need for a solution to improve middle

school grade configurations and student growth in the State of North Carolina.

Organizational Structure

What is structure?

In the most generic sense, structure may be defined as the way an entity is

patterned or arranged. More specifically, it is a building defined by the individual

components used in its construction and by the relationships shared between these

components as configured in the construction process. (Johnson, 1998, p. 10)

The physical structure of the organization is the buildings, facilities, etc. On the other

hand, from Johnson's simple definition of structure, a second element of organizational

structure deals with the shared relationships of the organization. An etymological

analysis of the term *structure* is not a priority for the researcher in this section of the

literature review. However, the ability to discuss the number of different definitions or

points of view with regard to the definition of the term structure will allow the researcher

to focus on the human element of organizational structure. Johnson continued to define

structure

of a given entity, that which identifies it as unique, is defined by two aspects of

the entity itself: (1) the individual elements of which it consists and (2) the way in

which these elements are patterned and configured that is, how they relate to each

other. (p. 10)

Mintzberg (1979) defined structure as "the sum total of ways in which organizational

leaders divide the labor of organizational participants into distinct tasks, and then achieve

coordination among these tasks" (cited in Johnson, 1998, p. 11). Johnson (1998) also

noted that

Mintzberg definition implies the existence of individual components and of

patterns and relationships among these components. Implied is the assignment of

sets of work-tasks to individuals, roles, or groups and the relating and

coordinating of these work-tasks toward some larger end. (p. 11)

Overall, the organizational structure can be defined in this research study on the

collective learning culture of organization in the same retrospect as Johnson's humanistic definition of structure.

> Hamburg, in his foreword section of the Carnegie Corporation's report, stated that *Turning Points 2000* places strong emphasis on curriculum, student assessment, and instruction. It shows how changes in school organizational structure (schools-within-schools, teams, and so on) . . . are necessary but not sufficient for major improvement in academic achievement. These substantial changes must be accompanied by substantial improvement in teaching and learning" (Jackson, Davis, Abeel, & Bordonaro, 2000, p. xii).

Bagwell (2009) noted in her presentation that

> schools currently remain relatively unsure of exactly how to reach the goals endorsed as well as ways to connect explicit goals and practices. As a result, there remains a relative mismatch between the structure and curriculum of middle-graders education and the social, emotional, physical, and academic needs of early adolescents. (Carnegie, 1989, cited in Bagwell, 2009, p. 13)

Overall, experts agree that American public schools need to change, but there is no consensus on how they need to change.

> Balls et al. (2011) also discussed the importance of organizational structure and the increasing need to focus on student achievement as a means to reform the middle grades in American education. Balls et al. noted that the

> structures guide a school through day-to-day operations. Structures can include how students and teachers are grouped, teacher leadership, and student relationships. Regardless of what the structure is, all educators must see students as individuals and work to improve individual achievement in the classroom. (p.

53)

Jackson et al. (2000) stated in *Turning Points 2000* that "research indicates that the

adoption of middle grades structures has improved relationships within schools and that

students are experiencing a greater sense of emotional well-being" (cited in Midgley &

Edelin, 1998, p. 195). Jackson et al. went on to note, however, that "observations suggest

that relatively little has changed at the core of most students' school experience:

curriculum, assessment, and instruction" (p. 5). The process of reforming middle grade

level organizations in American schools must focus on the organizational structure of the

school; however, the focus must be on the elements of student achievement, instruction,

and learning. Williamson and Johnston (1999) asserted that

> reforming middle grades programs must be driven by student achievement. While
>
> changing and modifying organizational patterns and refining and strengthening
>
> curriculum and assessment are essential, they are not sufficient. Such changes
>
> take place because they contribute to greater student achievement and success. (p.
>
> 15)

Thus, any changes made in American public schools must positively impact student

achievement.

Hackmann et al. (2002) noted in their study that "one characteristic has emerged

as a defining feature of the exemplary middle level school: interdisciplinary teaming" (p.

34). In their research, Hackmann et al. noted that teaming is an organizational

framework that helps educators deliver effective learning more efficiently and more

effectively to students in the classroom (p. 34). Hackmann et al. noted that this national

study was based on the work of Valentine, Clark, Hackmann, and Petzko (2002) and

presented the findings and discussed implications of the practice of teaming throughout

the middle grade levels in American schools. According to data from Valentine et al.'s study, "nearly 80% of schools that currently implement teaming, the authors challenge principals and teachers to move beyond the simple formation of teams to the creation of an infrastructure that supports high-performing teams and thereby promotes improved student achievement" (p. 33). The researchers in this national study recommended five different implications for the use of team teaching in middle level education in our American schools. Hackmann et al. recommend the following implications:

1. Both team and individual planning time must be provided for team teachers.

2. Team sizes should be smaller

3. Teams must be characterized by heterogeneous student placements.

4. Team teachers must carefully examine their classroom practices, ensuring that the curriculum and instructional methods promote student learning.

5. The school's scheduling model should empower the team. (pp. 42-44)

Rationale for Teaming

The National Middle School Association and the Carnegie Corporation of New York both recognize and support the use of the team approach to reform middle grades education in America. These two leading associations of educational researchers and supporters of the middle school concept strongly support the use of teaming as a strategy and reform effort to increase academic achievement, create and foster relationships between students and teachers, and as a method to create middle grades learning communities. Kasak (2001), a contributing author to a National Middle School Association publication, stated that

the hallmark of an effective middle level school rests in its capacity to create dynamic learning teams within the school. Schools are organized into learning

communities where close relationships between students and adults can be
established and where more individualized attention can be given to all learners.
Team organizational structure alters and personalizes the working relationships
between students and teachers, therefore, enhancing the context wherein good
instruction can survive. (p. 90)

Erb and Doda (1989), two leading educational researchers on public school
reform in the United States, summarized in their publication for the National Education
Association, that "teaming has emerged as one of the few substantial reform concepts and
practices with the capacity to transform the way schools operate for teachers and
students" (p. 1). Erb and Doda went on to explain that teaming "facilitates
communication and collaboration, teaming is an enabling reform that fosters collegiality
and interpersonal affiliation. In this way team organization is far more than an
instructional innovation. It changes the professional and interpersonal dynamics of
schools for everyone involved" (p. 13). Teaming is most often associated with middle
grades education, but, like anything, it must be done well to be successful. In fact, Warga
(1997) stated that "teaming is the hallmark of genuine middle school education" (p. 332).
Dickinson and Erb (1997) believed that

successful teaming is defined by far more that the mechanics of organizational
features and procedures. Successful teaming is defined by the culture of
schooling that it creates and sustains. Understanding culture is a more complex
task than mastering the mechanics. (p. 1)

Therefore, teaming becomes more than simply the organizational structure; it also
embodies the cultural context of the community. Boyer and Bishop (2004) introduced
the idea of how powerful a team can be in an organization. Boyer and Bishop touted the

benefits of educational teams by relating them to other societal teams and noted that

> the team is a powerful organization for performance, change, and learning in
>
> today's dynamic and highly complex world (Katzenbach & Smith, 1999). Sports
>
> teams, leadership teams, school teams, quality teams, and design teams each have
>
> their own distinct patterns of coordination, collaboration, and interdependence;
>
> each has its own social architecture (Bolman & Deal, 1997). When teams work
>
> well, major gains in quality, productivity, and performance occur (Senge,
>
> Kliener, Roberts, Ross, & Smith, 1994). (p. 1)

Thus, what is teaming? Katzenbach and Smith (1993) classified "a team is a small number of people with complementary skills who are committed to a common purpose, performance goals, and approach for which they hold themselves mutually accountable" (cited in Dickinson & Erb, 1997, p. 7). Kowzlowski and Ilgen (2006) defined the term *team* from a psychological view point. According to Kowzlowski and Illgen's psychological point of view,

> a team is defined as (a) two or more individuals who (b) socially interact (face-to-
>
> face or, increasingly, virtually); (c) possess one or more common goals; (d) are
>
> brought together to perform organizationally relevant tasks; (e) exhibit
>
> interdependencies with respect to workflow, goals, and outcomes; (f) have
>
> different roles and responsibilities; and (g) are together embedded in an
>
> encompassing organizational system with boundaries and linkages to the
>
> broader system context and task environment (Alderfer, 1997; Argote &
>
> McGarth, 1993; Hackman, 1992; Hollenback, Ilgen, Sego, Hedlund, Major, &
>
> Phillips, 1995; Kozlowski & Bell, 2003; Kozlowski, Gully, McHugh, Salas, &
>
> Cannon-Bowers, 1996; Kozlowski, Gully, Nason, & Smith, 1999; Salas,

Dickinson, Converse, & Tannenbaum, 1992). (p. 11)

In middle grades education, teachers often say that they engage in team teaching, but the truth may not be correct. According to George (1984), the term team teaching is

often used to describe a situation in which two or more teachers on the same

grade level share students and common planning time. In middle school

education such teaching teams are referred to as grade-level teams,

academic teams, multidisciplinary teams, and even interdisciplinary teams.

(cited in Dickinson & Erb, 1997, p. 326)

According to Warga (1997), team teaching is a method used to organize teachers and students. Warga went on to explain that this organizational method helps

monitor and improve student work habitats and discipline, confer with parents,

consult with support staff, coordinate assignments and instruction, plan large

events and effectively complete other tasks that benefit from communication and

coordination not afforded when teachers are isolated in their respective

classrooms. (p. 326)

Overall, team teaching provides a collaborative learning organization for middle school teachers and students that aims to increase student understanding.

The researcher was able to discover three leading experts that offer various advice and recommendations on creating great teams as an organizational element in a middle school organization. Burkhardt (1997) described eight essential truths about teaming. Burkhardt noted that

1. A team functions best when its members agree on a shared set of common

expectations.

2. A significant whole team experience early in the school years pays great

dividends later on.

3. Successful teams need regular activities to keep the spirit alive during the year.

4. Academic projects link team members together.

5. Young adolescents need to belong, and teams address that need.

6. Two (or more) heads are better than one.

7. Teachers are exemplars for students when they model cooperation, caring, and common sense.

8. Adult team members need to build for the long term results, not the scramble for short term gains. (pp. 169-174)

Erb and Stevenson (1999a) noted in their research that there are five principles for organizing effective teams.

1. Keep teams small in terms of number of teachers and students.

2. Provide sufficient individual and team planning for teachers.

3. Allow teams to design their students' daily schedule.

4. Assign teams to the own area of the building.

5. Allow teams to work together for multiple years. (cited in Mertens & Flowers, 2004, p. 1)

The number of teachers and students who are assigned to the various types of team configurations can be different based on the purpose of the specific team. Mertens and Flowers (2004) noted that "schools structure and organize teams in different ways- there isn't just one acceptable model" (p. 2). George and Alexander (2003) noted that "teams can include small partner (two-teacher) teams, three-teacher teams, four-teacher-teams, or grade-wide teams" (cited in Mertens & Flowers, 2004, p. 1). The number of students assigned to a team of teachers is also determined by the number of teachers who work

together as a team.

That being said, there are some best practices that can be used to organize teams. The Carnegie Corporation of New York suggested in *Turning Points 2000* "that no team should be larger than 125 students and 5 teachers" (Jackson et al., 2000, p. 129). Erb and Stevenson (1999b) noted that

> research indicates that teams of 120 or fewer students, with a ratio of no more
> than 25 students to one teacher, engage in the kind of instructional practices that
> are linked to positive student outcomes more often than larger teams or teams
> with higher student-teacher ratios. (pp. 48-49, cited in Jackson et al., p. 129)

Therefore, teams should be small enough to be able to offer students a nurturing learning community.

Interdisciplinary Teaming

Middle schools are typically organized with interdisciplinary teams. Dickinson and Erb (1997) noted that "interdisciplinary teaming is the hallmark of reformed middle schools. It is an organizational structure of enormous power for student learning" (p. 525). According to Erb and Doda (1989), "teaming or more formally, interdisciplinary team organization is a way of organizing teachers and students into small communities for teaching and learning" (p. 7). Mertens and Flowers's (2004) NMSA Research Summary #21 defined an interdisciplinary team as "two or more teachers from different subject areas and the group of students they commonly instruct. Team teachers plan, coordinate and evaluate curriculum and instruction across academic areas" (p. 1). Washington's (2000) study on *The Effects of Interdisciplinary Teaming on Middle School Climate and Student Achievement* conceptually defined interdisciplinary teaming by using Ritzenthaler's (1993) multiple definitions of interdisciplinary teaming.

1. An interdisciplinary team consists of two or more teachers who work together to plan and deliver instruction to the same group of students.

2. Team teachers who are assigned to a common group of students use a common planning time to coordinate curriculum, plan instructional activities, and discuss needs of students.

3. Teachers who are assigned to a common group of students coordinate activities and instruction with non-team members such as special education, music, art, physical education, industrial arts, and so forth.

4. Teachers who are assigned to a common group of students change the schedule periodically (daily, weekly, monthly, etc.) to fit instructional goals and objectives.

5. Block scheduling is used by teachers to allow for alternatives to daily periods of equal length.

6. Teachers assigned to a common group of students use themes to integrate instruction.

7. Teachers assigned to a common group of students plan activities to build team identity.

8. Classroom of teachers assigned to a common group of students are located in close proximity to one another. (Ritzenthaler, 1993, cited in Washington, 2000, pp. 10-12)

Flowers, Mertens, and Mulhall's (1999) article described five empirically-based outcomes from the use of interdisciplinary teaching in a middle level school. Flowers et al.'s five empirically-based findings for the use of interdisciplinary teaching were

1. Common planning time makes a big difference. (p. 2)

2. Teaming improves work climate. (p. 3)

3. Teaming increase parental contact. (p. 3)

4. Teaming increases job satisfaction. (p. 4)

5. Teaming is associated with higher student achievement. (pp. 4-5).

The five research-based outcomes on the impact of interdisciplinary teaming were derived from the School Improvement Self-Study. The Self-Study is a data collection instrument devised by the Center for Prevention Research and Development at the University of Illinois.

> The Self-Study provides schools with quantitative data to document and track the changes in their school. It also provides schools with a way to establish dialogue about school improvement, setting priorities, determining goals, and most importantly, assessing and measuring the outcomes of new programs and practices. (Flowers et al., p. 1)

Overall, the instrument is used to show the positive impact of teaming on a diverse group of schools including 155 middle schools in Michigan. According to Flowers et al., most research in regards to learning communities has been focused on how to organize and implement teams rather than on the actual impact of those teams. They added, though, that

> many educators report anecdotal evidence of the benefits of teams. That is, it is easy to feel and observe the impact of learning if you are in the school and experience the changes firsthand. . . . It is harder for people outside of the school to see the impact of teams without the direct experience, and they only often want positive outcomes that can be measured. (Flowers et al., p. 1)

Therefore, while teams are seen as beneficial in schools, their impact needs to be

measured and analyzed more in the future.

Common Planning Time

According to Flowers et al.'s (1999) study, the five empirically research-based outcomes of interdisciplinary teaming focus on common planning time (CPT), improving work climate, increasing parental contact, increasing job satisfaction, and increasing student achievement. The authors noted that

> common planning time is a critical component of interdisciplinary teaming, which
>
> is defined as group of teachers with different subject areas who plan and work
>
> together and who share the same students for a significant portion of the school
>
> day. (Flowers et al., p. 2)

The researchers of the study noted that empirical evidence from the Michigan Self-Start study indicate that organizations that team and have high levels of CPT are the most effective. In addition, the researchers noted that these high-functioning school organizations "have smaller teams of student, are more likely to have a teacher-led advisory program, and have the largest gains in student achievement scores" (Flowers et al., p. 2). Therefore, efficient and effective schools team and have levels of CPT.

In Warren and Payne's (2001) study, the researchers "deemed common planning time critical to the success of an interdisciplinary team because it provides teachers with an opportunity to plan collaboratively" (p. 301). MacIver (1990) noted, "if teachers on an interdisciplinary team are not given sufficient planning time in common they cannot do the collaborative work that makes teams successful" (p. 460). Warren and Payne assumed in their study that the "opportunity for teachers to address their students' needs collaboratively will enhance their belief that they have the ability to affect student performance in the classroom, as well as eliminate isolation many teachers feel" (p. 301).

Warren and Payne noted a number of studies in their literature review in their study.

    1. Holmes Group Report (1986) states that teachers 'still spend all of their professional time alone with students, leaving them no time for work with other adult professionals to improve their knowledge and skills (cited in Warren & Payne, 2001, p. 7).

    2. Goodlad (1984) found that teachers rarely join other teachers for any type of professional interaction, much less collaborative planning. Goodlad states that there is no infrastructure designed to encourage or support either communication among teachers in improving their teaching or collaboration in attacking school work problems (Goodlad, p. 188, cited in Warren & Payne, 2001).

    3. Harris & Associates (1986) in their survey study of middle grade teachers noted that "the majority of respondents indicated that they would like to have the opportunity to meet formally with colleagues. The teachers believed that a designated time to meet with colleagues would provide them with the opportunities to exchange ideas, help each other with individual student needs, and support each other. (cited in Warren and Payne, p. 302)

Warren and Payne's (2001) study was conducted in 12 middle schools in the States of North Carolina and Georgia with eighth-grade teachers as participants in the study. Warren and Payne noted that

    of the 12 schools, 4 had interdisciplinary teams that were provided with common planning time, 4 had interdisciplinary teams that were not provided with common planning time, and 4 had traditional departmental organizations. Also in order to study schools with as much similarity as possible, we selected rural and industrial towns rather that suburban or urban cities. (pp. 302-303)

Warren and Payne (2001) used two instruments in their study to examine the impact of middle grades' organization on teacher efficacy and environmental perceptions. "The Teacher Efficacy Scale (Gibson & Dembo, 1984) was used to access teachers' efficacy and the Teacher Opinion Questionnaire (Rosenholtz, Hoover-Dempsey, & Bassler, 1985) was used to assess teachers' perceptions of their working environment" (Warren & Payne, p. 304). The researchers of the study noted that the findings of their study "support the belief that common planning time can make a middle grades school a better and more beneficial place for teachers" (Warren & Payne, p. 307). Warren and Payne's findings and outcome-based conclusions in their study of the impact of middle grades' organization on teacher efficacy and environmental perceptions, they noted a positive correlation between school organizational structures that incorporate common planning time and a high level of teacher efficacy. "The results of this study support the notion that teachers on teams with common planning time have significantly higher personally teacher efficacy that teachers on interdisciplinary teams without common planning time of teachers organized departmentally" (Warren & Payne, p. 307). Warren and Payne were also able to obtain empirical evidence to demonstrate the direct correlation between common planning time and their perceptions of the working environment.

> The results of the study indicate that teachers on interdisciplinary teams with common planning time had significantly more positive perceptions of their working environment on each of the 10 subscales of the Teacher Opinion Questionnaire than teachers who are organized departmentally. (Warren & Payne, p. 307).

If a school organization can increase the teachers' perceived self-efficacy and also

positively influence their attitudes toward the working environment by using common a

period of planning time then positive outcomes will begin to take place. The ability to

change the structure of the daily schedule to include a common planning team that

focuses on interdisciplinary teaming is a positive and worthwhile endeavor to change in

the structure.

A study that supports Warren and Payne's (2001) findings that there is a direct

correlation between the use of common planning time and a higher level of teacher

perceived self-efficacy can be found in Cook and Faulkner's (2010) study. Cook and

Faulkner noted in their study that

> Interdisciplinary teaming with common planning time provides an opportunity for
>
> teachers to collaborate and learn from one another's experiences. By sharing
>
> ideas, knowledge, and personal challenges and successes in the classroom,
>
> offering specific feedback on instruction, and working to understand the needs
>
> and experiences of students, teachers can maximize their talents and establish an
>
> individualized and appropriate learning environment in which young adolescents
>
> are challenged academically and can achieve success. (p. 2)

The primary research that supported Cook and Faulkner's study covered a 25-year period

of investigation on interdisciplinary team organizational structure with common planning

time. Cook and Faulkner touted the benefits of common planning time in their literature

review. They listed the following benefits experienced because of teachers having

common planning times:

1. Provided a greater opportunity for students to be better known by their

    teachers (Lipsitz, 1984).

2. Led to higher overall self-concepts, increased self-esteem, and more positive

perceptions of school climate (Mertens, Flowers, & Mulhall, 1998; Warren & Muth, 1995).

3. Produced lower levels of depression and fewer behavioral problems (Mertens et al., 1998).

4. Led to higher levels of student achievement (Flowers et al., 1999; Mertens & Flowers, 2003; Mertens & Flowers, 2006; Mertens et al., 1998).

5. Reported higher levels of job satisfaction (Flowers et al., 1999).

6. Experienced more positive interaction and heightened collegiality with their teammates (Flowers, Mertens, & Mulhall, 2000; Lipsitz, 1984; Warren & Payne, 1997).

7. Incorporated higher levels of interdisciplinary team and classroom instructional practices (Felner, Jackson, Kasak, Mulhall, Brand, & Flowers, 1997). (cited in Cook & Faulkner, p. 2)

The researchers noted in their case study that the two middle schools chosen to participate in the study were school organizations that made the Kentucky Schools to Watch list in 2006 and 2007.

> Within these two schools, based upon recommendations from the perspective school principals; one team from each grade level (grades 6-8) was selected for inclusion in this study. Each of the six teams consisted of either four or five teachers, for a total of 25 teachers in the study. (Cook & Faulkner, p. 4).

The researchers collected qualitative data for their study "through interviewing, using structured observations of team meetings, and demographic and contextual information collected as a national study of the use of common planning time using the protocols developed by the Middle Level Education Research Interest Group" (Mertens, Roney,

Anfara, & Caskey, 2007, cited in Cook & Faulkner, p. 5). Cook and Faulkner concluded

that there are specific characteristics of effective use of common planning time. Insights

from the research of Cook and Faulkner in the effective use of common planning time in

a school organization are listed below:

1. Commitment and Support at All Levels:

First and foremost, for common planning time to be effective, there must be a

commitment to its success at all levels of the school organization-teachers,

building level administrators, and central office personnel (p. 9). Building level

administrators also embraced common planning time and saw it as an essential

component of the school's mission (p. 9). Building level administrators also

demonstrated their support of common planning time by establishing a school

climate that allowed the common planning time to flourish (p. 9). The teachers

also supported the use of common planning time. They saw the value in meeting

regularly to discuss curriculum, assessment, student behavior, and team-building

activities (p. 9).

2. Defined Purpose and Expectations:

In addition to support by administrators and teachers, to be effective, common

planning time should have a clearly defined purpose and expectations for how the

time will be used (p. 9). Two common causes for how the ineffective use of

teaming planning time are (1) the lack of a clearly defined purpose or agenda, and

(2) an effort to accomplish too many varied tasks within the scope of the allotted

time (p. 9).

3. Focus on the Needs of Students:

Finally, for common planning time to be effective, it should focus on the

academic and relationship needs of the students (p. 10). When interviewed, a

familiar theme was heard loudly and clearly–the primary focus of common

planning time, whether grade level, interdisciplinary, or a professional learning

community, is on the academic and relationship needs of the students (p. 10).

Smitt's (2006) study investigated the impact and the effect of a common planning

period for teachers on middle school students' achievements on standardized test scores.

The study took place at two central North Texas middle schools. These two middle

schools were selected by Smitt in her dissertational study due to the fact that both schools

are in the same campus group on the Texas Education Agency's (TEA) Academic

Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) report. According to Smitt, "the two schools used in

this study are located in communities that are experiencing rapid growth: therefore, at

least one new campus is being added to the district each year" (p. 47). The methodology

used in Smitt's study was

> an analysis of variance (ANOVA) 2 *4 as analysis of variance (ANOVA) utilized
>
> to measure the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) math and
>
> reading scores for 7th grade students from the test administered in spring 2005.
>
> The measuring tool utilized in this study determined the ratio of the amount of
>
> variance of the scores for individuals of between-groups as opposed to the amount
>
> of variance of with-in groups, indicating if there is a statistically significant
>
> difference on the scores in any one particular variable compared to the variances
>
> of scores for the other variables in this study. (p. i)

According to the statistical results of Smitt's study,

> there were no statistical significant differences in the scores of students attending
>
> a middle school where the teachers received a common planning time. However,

there was a noted difference in the percentage ratings on the Academic Excellence

Indicator System (AEIS) report published by the TEA for the African American

students who attend the school with the common planning time, These students

had higher scores on the TAKS reading test. The TAKS math scores did not

indicate a notable difference. (p. i)

A more recent study by Flax (2011) also measured the positive outcomes of

instituting common planning time into the daily schedule and structure of the

organization. Flax's research study measured the outcomes of common planning time at

the middle school level. Flax's qualitative case study "investigated what occurs during

common planning time for middle school level teams of teachers in an effort to better

understand the connections between what occurs during common planning time and

student achievement" (pp. iii-iv). The background for Flax's study was based on three

major notions. First, the fact that those middle schools with common planning times had

higher confidence levels (Warren & Muth, 1995), higher rates of teacher satisfaction

(Flowers et al., 1999), and higher student achievement (Flowers et al., 1999; Mertens &

Flowers, 2003; Mertens et al., 1998).

Flax (2011) was able to use qualitative methods of inquiry to investigate and

obtain data from one 4-person teacher team at the sixth-grade level and one 4-person

teacher team at the seventh-grade level. "Multiple data sources in study include

observations of common plan time, individual interviews of the interdisciplinary team of

teachers, and document analysis of lesson plans" (Flax, p. iv). Flax noted that six of the

eight teachers in this qualitative study commented that a major accomplishment of the

use of common planning time throughout the year was tied directly to student success.

Flax's study on the common planning time in middle school level highlighted a number

of perceived benefits and perceived barriers of the common planning time. The

following are the benefits of common planning time found in Flax's research study:

1. Whole group:

Common perception of unity, support, and consistency that benefits the teacher,

students, team, and whole school. Being able to assist students so that each

individual can be successful. It was clear that the teachers, students, team, and

school as a whole benefitted, but the constant theme was for the betterment of the

students, the student-centered focus. (pp. 119-120)

2. Teacher perceived benefit:

The general feeling was that of having support of the other teachers when

addressing your own classroom challenges. The comforting feeling that you are

not all by yourself with all the kids was reassuring. With the common planning

time, teachers know that they had time to confide with the team for support and

suggestions with strategies to effectively address student behaviors and academic

concerns is a huge benefit. (p. 120)

3. Student achievement:

By having the common planning time, teachers were able to make the day and

activities seamless for the students. The planning and preparation in advance

allowed the teachers to be prepared for what events might occur for the day,

creating a sense of unity and organizational for the students. Teachers were able

to be unified and consistent in their expectations and organization for the students.

The team was able to maintain a student-centered focus and strong commitment to

academic achievement. (p. 120)

The following information was provided as barriers to the effective use of common

planning time that were found in Flax's research study:

1. Personalities can be a barrier for teachers–seven of the eight participants

stated that personalities can be a barrier of common planning time. As it was

simply stated in word for word fashion by two participants, personalities can be

difficult. Personalities can be a barrier for students–if a staff member brings in

personal baggage into the classroom, it could negatively affect the students. (p.

121)

2. Adhering to building norms and expectations:

It was reported that some team members had difficulty sticking to the agenda. It

was reported that on occasion, team members would deviate from the agenda

bringing personal experiences to the meetings. This can shorten the amount of

time dedicated to addressing student needs, but to develop camaraderie, sharing

personal stories is important. (p. 122)

3. Adhering to a set agenda:

Each day had its set agenda, but in some cases, there was unfinished business

from the previous day. The team was unsure if or when they should address the

unfinished business, at the start of the next day's common planning time or was it

acceptable to try to fit it in at the end of the meeting? On the positive side of this

barrier, it was reported that this mostly was a result of team member efforts to

address student needs. (p. 120)

Teaming Improves Work Climate/Collegiality

In Flowers, Mertens, and Mulhall's (1999) study on the impact of teaming, they

noted that

the general atmosphere of a school is a reflection of the policies, practices, and

expectations that are in place. If teachers are more satisfied with their work, they

are more likely to reflect the attitude to others which creates a more positive

learning environment. (p. 57)

The data obtained from the Michigan Middle Self-Start Survey found that "teachers at

schools that are teaming (101 schools) view their school as a more positive, rewarding,

and satisfying place to work than teachers that are either not teaming (34 schools) or have

implemented only pilot teams (15 schools)" (Flowers et al., p. 57). Therefore, schools

that are teaming create a more positive learning environment and are more likely to foster

student success. The following information from the Flowers et al. study provides the

perceived outcomes of the impact of teaming with regard to the organizational concept of

teaming on improving the work climate of the organization.

1. Teachers from teaming schools believe they receive recognition for their

accomplishments more often, believe the staff are more committed to their work,

and have a more refined sense of what is expected of them in the school.

2. On average, teachers from teaming schools indicate the areas of work climate

(i.e., staff recognition, staff commitment, and clarity of expectations) occur on

average *most of the time* on a scale that includes *never, hardly ever, sometimes,

most of the time,* and *always*.

3. Teachers from schools that are not teaming or have pilot teams report that staff

recognition, staff commitment, and clarity of expectations happens at least

sometimes, but less than *most of the time*.

4. Teachers in schools engaged in teaming feel a stronger affiliation and support

network with their fellow team members and thus are more satisfied with their

working climate. (Flowers et al., p. 57)

Washington (2000) noted that "supportive, personal and sustained connections between students and adults facilitate the sharing of knowledge about students which may promote an environment that impacts the engagement and achievement of early adolescent learners" (p. 3).

The purpose for the Washington's (2000) study was "to determine the effects of interdisciplinary teaming on middle school climate and student achievement as a result of the district-wide development program known as 'Project Teams'" (p. 6). In Washington's mixed-methods study on *The Effects of Interdisciplinary Teaming in Middle School Climate and Student Achievement,* three research questions were developed and investigated.

1. To what extent do teachers implement interdisciplinary teaming as a result of participating in a district-wide staff development program?

2. To what extent is there a relationship between the levels of implementation of interdisciplinary teaming and school climate as a result of participating in a district-wide staff development program?

3. To what extent is there a relationship between interdisciplinary teaming and student achievement as a result in participating in a district-wide staff development program? (Washington, p. 7)

The participants in Washington's (2000) study were from five middle schools in a suburban middle school district near St. Louis County, Missouri. A sample size of the study was based on 139 team teachers who were involved in interdisciplinary teaming in the core subject areas of the middle school level. Math, language arts, science, and social studies were the core subject areas that made up the interdisciplinary teams of Washington's study. Washington stated that "this study assessed differences between

teachers who participated in the first two years of Project Teams and those teachers who participated in the third year, or never participated" (p. 7). According to Washington, Project Teams was a district-wide staff development program in the school district near St. Louis County, Missouri.

In Washington's (2000) study, the results indicate that staff development training and implementation of interdisciplinary teaming have a positive impact on student achievement. The study also noted that were large differences in school climate and student achievement between schools in which teachers had been trained and those who had not. Washington stated in her research study that

> another finding that deserves consideration is that teachers who engaged in a
>
> higher level of teaming practices perceived a greater level of collegiality among
>
> their peers. She went on to consider that teacher-teacher relationships directly
>
> affect teacher-student relationships. . . . In other words, it may be that students
>
> benefit naturally from the environment in which teachers care, listen to their
>
> problems, and value their input in the classroom. (p. 64)

Washington also recommended that "teachers and principals participate in staff development training focusing on interdisciplinary teaming practices" (pp. 72-73). Overall, teachers who work collaboratively with their peers may also have a greater relationship with their students. These elements may combine to increase student achievement.

Professional Learning Communities

Senge's (1990) best-selling organizational management publication had a whirlwind effect on the organizational beliefs and human resource management ideals in the American business sector. "Senge suggested that performing for someone else's

approval–rather than learning to become more adaptable and to generate creative solutions to problems–creates the very conditions that ensure mediocre performance" (Hord, 2004, p. 6). Senge acknowledged that the traditional management system of an organization may not be the best method to ensure creative solutions to problems within the organization. Instead, he advocated that organizations should be focused on learning. According to Hord, Senge noted,

> control mechanisms paralyze both employees and leaders, allowing them to only maintain their organizations as machines. Rather than reflecting trust in those across the organization to use creativity in order to find localized solutions to problems–solutions that are consistent with the purpose and values of the overall organization–solutions are mandated that are poorly suited to the real problem at hand. Senge advocated, instead, a different organizational structure, better suited to our complex, interdependent, and fast-changing society. Such an organization is orientated towards learning rather than controlling mechanisms. (cited in Hord, p. 6)

Senge's new idea of learning organizations was "where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns if thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning how to learn together" (p. 3). Senge also noted that "organizations learn only through individuals who learn" (p. 139). "The organizations that will truly excel in the future will be the organizations that discover how to tap people's commitment and capacity to learn at all levels in an organization" (Senge, p. 4). Senge believed all individuals in an organization must learn from each other and learn together to create a great organization. Hord noted that Senge's paradigm of a learning

organization quickly entered into the educational realm as learning communities.

McLaughlin (1995), in her speech at annual conference of the National Staff Development Council, stated that "we are closer to the truth about school improvement than ever before. The most promising strategy for sustained, substantive school improvement is developing the capacity of school personnel to function as a professional learning community" (cited in Allthingsplc, 2014, p. 1). DuFour and Eaker (1998) responded with "what is the truth? It is simply this:

> if schools are to be significantly more effective, they must break from the industrial model upon which they were created and embrace a new model that enables them to functions as learning organizations. We prefer characterizing learning organizations as "professional learning communities" for several vital reasons. While the term "organization" suggests a partnership enhanced by efficiency, and mutual interests, "community" places greater emphasis relationships, shared ideals, and a strong culture- all factors that are critical to school improvement. The challenge for educators is to create a community of commitment–a professional learning community. (p. 15)

Hord (2007) cited the work of Astuto et al.'s (1993) description of a professional learning community (PCL). Astuto et al. described a

> professional community of learners in which the teachers in a school and its administrators continually seek and share learning and then act on what they learn. The goal of these actions is to enhance the teachers' and administrators' effectiveness as professionals so that students benefit. (as cited in Hord, pp. 1-2)

The ability and necessity to transform public education in America by instituting the PLC concept into the arena of educational reform may be the truth that educators are searching

for.

While it can be difficult for educators to step outside their own traditions, PLCs provide an organization structure to help teachers be better at their jobs (DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, & Many, 2006, p. 8). DuFour et al. (2006) noted,

> the very essence of a *learning* community is a focus on and a commitment to the learning of each student. When a school or district functions as a PLC, educators within the organization embrace high levels of learning for all students as both the reason for the organization to exist and the fundamental responsibility of those who work within it. (p. 3)

At the end of the day, if teachers are organized according to and actively participate in PLCs, then student understanding will increase.

Williams (2010), a leading presenter and advocate for the implementation of the PLC model in American public schools, noted that there are three big ideas of being a PLC. Williams noted that the first idea is that a school or an organization must focus on learning. Williams noted in his presentation that "we accept high to levels of learning for all students as the fundamental purpose of our school and therefore are willing to examine all practices in light of their impact on learning" (p. 4). The second big idea that Williams presented in his presentation was that a school or an organization must have a collaborative culture. Williams noted that "we can achieve our fundamental purpose of high levels of learning for all students only if we work together. We cultivate a collaborative culture through the development of high performing teams" (p. 4). The third and final big idea is that a PLC must focus on results. Williams noted that "we assess our effectiveness of achieving high levels of learning for all on the basis of results rather than intentions. Individuals, teams, schools, and districts seek relevant data and

information and use that information to promote continuous improvement" (p. 4). If a

PLC has these three elements, then it is poised to increase student learning in our school

organizations. DuFour and Eaker (1998) provided six characteristics of a PLC:

1. **Shared mission, vision, and values**. The *sine qua non* of a learning

community is shared understandings and common values. What separates a

learning community from an ordinary school is the collective commitment to

guiding principles that articulate what the people in the school believe and what

they seek to create. Furthermore, these guiding principles are not just articulated

by those positions of leadership; even more important, they are embedded in the

hearts and minds of people throughout the school.

2. **Collective inquiry.** The engine of improvement, growth, and renewal in a

professional learning community is collective inquiry. People in such a

community are relentless in questioning the status quo, seeking new methods,

testing those methods, and then reflecting on those results. Not only do they have

an acute sense of curiosity and openness to new possibilities, they also recognize

that the process of searching for answers is more important than having the

answer. Furthermore, their search is a collective one.

3**. Collaborative teams.** The basic structure of a professional learning

community is a group of collaborative teams that share a common purpose.

Some organizations base their improvement strategies on efforts to enhance the

knowledge and skills of individuals. Although individual growth is essential for

organizational growth to occur, it does not guarantee organizational growth.

Thus, building a school's capacity to learn is a *collaborative* rather than

individual task. People who engage in collaborative team learning are able to

learn from one another, thus creating momentum to fuel continued improvement.

4. **Action orientation and experimentation.** Professional Learning Communities are action orientated. Members of such organizations turn aspirations into action and visions into reality. Not only do they act; they are unwilling to tolerate inaction. They recognize that learning occurs in a context of taking action, and they believe engagement and experience are the most effective teachers. Even seemingly chaotic activity is preferred to orderly, passive action.

5. **Continuous improvement.** A persistent discomfort with the status quo and constant search for a better way characterize the heart of a professional learning community. Continuous improvement requires that each member of the organization is engaged in considering several key questions:

    A   What is our fundamental purpose?

    B   What do we hope to achieve?

    C   What are our strategies for becoming better?

    D   What criteria will we use to assess our improvement?

6. **Results orientation.** Finally, finally a professional learning community realizes that its efforts to develop a shared mission, vision, and values; engage in collective inquiry; build collaborative teams; take action; and focus on continuous improvement must be assessed on the basis of *results* rather than *intentions*. Unless initiatives are subject to ongoing assessment on the basis of tangible results, they represent random groping in the dark rather than purposeful improvement. (pp. 27-29)

The Southwest Educational Development Laboratory undertook the development of the Creating Communities of Continuous Learning and Inquiry and Improvement

(CCCII) project as a way of spreading the ideals of a learning community into schools across a region, including Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas from 1995 to 1997. Hord (2007) acknowledged that the CCCII project organized the characteristics of professional learning characteristics into five different themes of dimensions:

CCCII Five Themes of Professional Learning Communities

1. *Supportive and shared leadership* requires the collegial and facilitative participation of the principal who shares leadership-and thus, power and authority-by inviting staff input and action in decision-making.

2. *Shared values and vision* include an unwavering commitment to student learning that is consistently articulated and referenced in staff's work.

3. *Collective learning and application of learning* requires that school staff at all levels are engaged in the processes that collectively seek new knowledge among staff and application of learning to solutions that address student's needs.

4. *Supportive conditions* include physical conditions and human capacities that encourage and sustain a collegial atmosphere and collective learning.

5. *Shared practice* involves the review of a teacher's behavior by colleagues and includes feedback and assistance activity to support individual and community improvement. (pp. 14-23).

Gajda and Koliba's (2008) study "presents the Teacher Collaboration Improvement Framework (TCIF) as a blueprint for supervising, assessing, and improving the quality of teacher collaboration within a professional learning community" (p. 134). The framework was built based on research completed during a 5-year time period and through input from educators at various levels, including in schools, at the district level

and at the state level (Gajda & Koliba). Gadja and Koliba noted that "teacher

collaboration is one of the most essential, if not the most important, requisite for

achieving substantive school improvement and critical student learning outcomes" (p.

134). Gajda and Koliba added, "It is when communities of practice collectively engage

in high-quality dialogue, decision making, action, and evaluation around a shared

purpose, that schools increase their capacity to achieve unprecedented improvements in

student learning" (p. 149). To assist organizations in collaboration, Gajda and Koliba

provided numerous recommendations, including

> (a) increasing collaboration literacy, (b) identifying and inventory teacher teams,
>
> (c) reconfiguring team membership purposefully and equitably, (d) assessing the
>
> quality of teacher collaboration using a rubric such as the TCAR, (e) making
>
> corrections and providing support, and (f), celebrating the achievements of their
>
> collaborative efforts. (p. 150)

These recommendations will help educators work more effectively and, therefore, help

students learn more efficiently.

In Voelkel's (2011) study, the researcher used a mixed-methods case to examine

and investigate the relationships between collective efficacy, PLCs, and transformational

leadership. The methodology was employed using surveys, one-on-one interviews, and

on-site documentation to triangulate the data for a school district in Central California

that had successfully implemented the PLC model (Voelkel, p. xiv). Voelkel's study

involved both a qualitative and a quantitative phase. In the qualitative phase, 297

participants took part in a survey that explored the characteristics of the PLCs and

collective efficacy (Voelkel). Voelkel noted that his "findings suggest that there is a

positive relationship between PLCs and collective efficacy as reported by descriptive,

correlation, multiple aggression, and structural equation modeling test" (p. xiv). "The data indicated that transformational leadership is essential in building and sustaining the PLC process. Findings also provided evidence that the more effective PLC teams had higher levels of perceived collective efficacy" (Voelkel, p. xiv). Overall, the research highlighted the influence of effective PLCs on an organization's efficacy.

In Williams's (2011) study, she "explored the organizational antecedents of collective teacher efficacy, specifically, how professional learning communities influenced teachers perceptions and interpretations of the sources of efficacy" (cited in Williams Abstract, 2011, p. 1). The conceptual framework for Williams's study was based on Bandura's (1997) Social Cognitive Theory of Self-Efficacy, and the five dimensions of PLCs: shared vision, collective learning, shared personal practice, shared and supportive leadership, and supportive conditions. According to Williams (2011),

> the study found that the PLC conditions shared vision, collective learning, and shared and supportive leadership had the most significant impact on teachers' collective efficacy beliefs. In addition, to student demographics; predominantly minority, low-income students, influenced how teachers conceptualized the teaching the teaching task and how they assessed the competence of their colleagues. Individual-level attributes such as years of teaching experience also accounted to differences in teachers' perceptions and interpretations of efficacy sources. (cited in abstract, pp. 1-2)

Therefore, the ability to institute the PLC model into a school organization will have a significant impact on the efficacy of the teachers, students, and administrators. Thus, the learning culture of the school organization will increase substantially due to the overall effectiveness and efficiency of the PLC concept.

In Robertson's (2011) study, the researcher aimed "to describe the relationship of collective teacher efficacy to the phases of professional learning communities in a rural school district" (p. 7). The conceptual framework of her study was derived from the Professional Learning Community Organizer (PLCO) by Huffman and Hipp (2003). Robertson's study had two research questions:

1. What is the relationship between the five dimensions of a professional learning community, as measured by the PLCA, and collective teacher efficacy, as measured by the CTE, at the elementary, middle, and high school levels?

2. How do relationships between the degree of implementation and collective teacher efficacy differ among the elementary, middle, and high school levels? (p. 8)

Robertson's study on collective teacher efficacy and the perceptions of PLCs involved obtaining survey data from certified teachers in 26 different schools in the same school district in the southern piedmont region of North Carolina. Robertson noted that a total of 1,310 participants in the 26 schools selected were offered the opportunity to participate in the study with a predicted rate of 70% participation in the study. Two separate instruments were used to obtain data to answer Robertson's research questions on the perceptions of collective efficacy and the five dimensions of a PLC. The Professional Learning Community Assessment (PLCA) designed by Huffman and Hipp (2003) was "designed to assess the perceptions about the school's principals, staff, and stakeholders (parents and community members) based upon the five dimensions of a PLC and the critical attributes" (p. 39). The five dimensions of a PLC according to Huffman and Hipp are (1) supportive and shared leadership, (2) shared values and vision, (3) collective learning and applications, (4) shared personal practice, and (5) supportive conditions

(Robertson). The 45-item Likert scale survey was used by Robertson as a descriptive

tool to discover the dimensions within each individual school and as a whole

organization. The second data collection tool used by Robertson was the Collective

Teacher Efficacy Instrument (CTE) which consisted of 12 items based on the use of a 6-

point Likert scale.

Robertson's (2011) study on the collective teacher efficacy and perceptions of

PLCs noted that results of the study "demonstrate that four of the dimensions of the

PLCA were identified at the institutionalization phase of development" at all school

levels (p. 101). Huffman and Hipp (2003) noted that "the institutionalization phase is

where the change initiative becomes embedded into the culture of the school" (p. 24,

cited in Robertson). A frequency and percentage summary of the positive responses by

dimensions for all schools in Robertson's study can be located in Appendix D.

Robertson noted that "the data illustrated that were no correlational between collective

teacher efficacy (CTE) and the stages of development at the non-demonstration and

implementation stages" (p. 99). Robertson also noted in her findings that there was a

> significant positive correlation at the initiation level between domain 2, shared
>
> values and vision, and CTE. There was also a significant negative correlation
>
> between domain 4, shared personal practice, and CTE. The correlations at the
>
> institutionalization level were weak, but positive and significant. Based on
>
> evidences presented throughout the study, teachers within the school district
>
> perceived their schools as functioning at the institutionalization degree of
>
> development for most dimensions of the PLCA. (p. 99)

Roberston's (2011), Voelkel's (2011), and Williams's (2011) studies clearly demonstrate

that there is a direct correlation in using a PLC organizational model to an increase in

teacher collaboration, collective teacher efficacy, and student growth. Therefore, the ability of a school to institute and develop the PLC model as a means of restructuring the organizational structure of the organization will enhance the collective learning culture of the school organization.

Shared Decision-Making Domain of the EVAEM

The fourth domain of the EVAEM deals with the concepts of shared decision making and the empowerment of the stakeholders in the organization. Balls et al. (2011) noted that the EVAEM "would measure the degree of shared decision-making opportunities to contribute to the development of productive interactions, routines, and common language of learning" (p. 26). The concepts and practices of shared decision making in the EVAEM are derived from the overarching theme of empowering the members, stakeholders, and employees of the organization. Rinehart and Short (1994) discussed in their article that "empowerment is a dominant theme in all types of organizations including businesses, industries, and service institutions" (p. 570). In the industrial, manufacturing, and customer service industries, the concept of empowerment often is translated into shared decision making; the delegation of authority to members of the organization, the sustained teamwork, and the use of site-based management are effective methods in empowering the members of the organization (Hoy & Miskel, 1996; Sweetland & Hoy, 2000).

In 1994, Short defined the term empowerment with regard to the everyday work life of a teacher in a school organization. Short described how empowerment has been defined in the past for individual teachers and the entire school organization. Short noted that

empowerment has been defined as a process whereby school participants develop

the competence to take charge of their growth and resolve their own problems.

Empowered individuals believe they have the skills and knowledge to act on a

situation and improve it. Empowered schools are organizations that create

opportunities for competence to be developed and displayed. (p. 1)

Short also noted that

the literature of teacher work life identifies three significant problems with

teachers who work in traditional American schools: teachers are isolated from

colleagues in most of their work; and teachers have not be significantly involved

in many of the decisions that affect the nature of their work, particularly in

decisions made outside of the classroom or school. (p. 1)

Bomotti, Gingsberg, and Cobb (1999) gave support of Short's (1994) definition of

empowerment by defining empowerment in their article as "teacher participation in all

decision making directed towards carrying out the school's instructional mission, both in

the classroom and throughout the school" (pp. 5-6). Imig, Ndoye, and Parker (2008)

noted that "empowerment stems for teachers feeling engaged in school-wide decision

making in areas such as hiring, budgeting, textbook selection, scheduling, and

professional development" (p. 20).

Therefore, what is empowerment in respect to a teacher in a school organization?

According to the vast wealth of research literature on the concepts of teacher

empowerment and shared decision-making practices within a school organization, a vast

array of organizational variables can be identified. In the past, a number of prominent

research studies have focused on empowerment and how it affects the organizational

variables of a school organization. A number of research studies have focused on

empowerment and teacher job satisfaction (Pearson & Moomaw, 2005; Rinehart & Short,

1994; White, 1992; Wu, 1994; Wu & Short, 1996), empowerment of teachers and organizational climate (Bredeson, 1992; Moore & Esselamn, 1992; Short & Rinehart, 1994), empowerment and teacher autonomy (Pearson & Moomaw, 2005; White, 1992), empowerment and organizational conflict (Johnson & Short, 1998; Rinehart, Short, & Johnson, 1997; Short, 1994; Short & Johnson, 1994), empowerment and teacher commitment (Bogler & Somech, 2004; Short, Greer, & Michael, 1991; Wu, 1994), empowerment and teacher efficacy (Hemric, 2008; Hemric, Eury, & Shellman, 2010), empowerment and student achievement and instructional improvement (Bryk, Lee, & Holland, 1993; Marks & Louis, 1997, 1999; Moore & Esselman, 1992; Smylie, 1994; Sweetland & Hoy, 2000), and empowerment of teachers with regard to the organizational vision and professional collaboration in the school organization (Kruse, Louis, & Byrk, 1994; Newmann, 1993).

In 1992, Short and Rinehart completed a research study on assessing the level of teacher empowerment within a school environment. Short and Rinehart surveyed a total of 211 teachers in a public school setting. The researchers asked the teachers to rate a total of 68 beliefs about what made them feel empowered within the school setting. Rinehart and Short (1994) used factor analysis to identify the six most empirically derived dimensions of teacher empowerment. According to the results of the Rinehart and Short (1994) research study, the

> factor analysis revealed six dimensions of empowerment. The labels of the six
> dimensions along with the corresponding percentages of total variance accounted
> for by each of the six dimensions were (a) Decision Making (19.6%), (b)
> Professional Growth (4.7%), (c) Status (3.0%), (d) Self-Efficacy (2.8%), (e)
> Autonomy (2.2%), and (f) Impact (2.0%). (p. 956)

Thus, a major discover of their study on teacher empowerment was the widespread importance of shared decision making on the participants of the research study.

Marks and Louis (1999) also developed a study on teacher empowerment in shared decision making at the school organizational level to investigate whether these concepts can enhance or influence teacher commitment, instructional knowledge, pedagogical skills, and student achievement. Marks and Louis noted in the beginning of their study that "teacher empowerment has been the subject of considerable research in recent years, but the capacity of schools for organizational learning has received limited empirical attention" (p. 708). The goal of the research study was to measure the intersection of teacher empowerment and the capacity of organizational learning as a means to positively support educational reform in the organization (Marks & Louis). Marks and Louis's argument in their research study on the intersection of teacher empowerment and organizational learning was that "for school capacity for organizational learning to be strong, teachers need to participate in and influence school decision making" (p. 709). The researchers noted that teachers can exercise their empowerment only if the school's capacity for organizational learning is at a level to adequately allow the teachers to participate in and influence shared decision making in the organizational setting (Marks & Louis).

Marks and Louis (1999) used a total of 24 site-managed public schools to measure the intersection of teacher empowerment and organizational learning. Eight elementary, middle, and high schools were chosen by the researchers due to the fact that the 24 participating schools were involved in significant restructuring activities (Marks & Louis). The researchers used a method of inquiry to measure the intersection of teacher empowerment and organizational learning at each individual school and the 24 schools

collectively to supply empirical data information in their research findings. "Data for this study include survey reports from 910 teachers, school demographic profiles, and coding reports from 24 teams of field researchers on key dimensions of the schools' restructuring" (Marks & Louis, p. 708). The researchers noted that the return rate of the 910 teacher participants in this research study on teacher empowerment and organizational learning was at a 95% return rate. The return rate in the number of participants highlights the credibility of the results from this research study.

Marks and Louis (1999) summarized their "perspectives on creating school capacity for organizational learning in the form of five constituent dimensions: structure, shared commitment and collaborative activity, knowledge and skills, leadership, and feedback and accountability" (p. 712). The five constituent dimensions of organizational learning were used as major dependent variables by the researchers in this study. The following information is a short summary of the five constituent dimensions of the capacity for organizational learning according to Marks and Louis:

1. *School Structure*

Includes three components constructed, respectively, from school profile, coding, and teacher survey data: (a) school size (reversed), (b) extent of decentralized governance, and (c) the amount of time teachers spend meeting with colleagues.

2. *Shared commitment and collaborative activity*

Constructed from teacher survey and coding data, represents the extent to which a common direction of effort unites the faculty. Its five components include (a) an index of professional community constructed from teachers'self-reports (Louis et al., 1996); (b) a composite score of professional community from the coding data; (c) a measure of goal consensus (Kendall's W) from the teachers' survey data; (d)

responsibility for student learning, constructed as a factor, from the teachers' survey data; and (e) the extent to which the staff is regarded as competent to analyze problems and solve them.

3. The index of *knowledge and skills* comprises three measures: (a) an index of school-orientated staff development taken from the coding, (b) a factor of constructed from the teachers' survey data tapping the openness of the school and its staff to innovation, and (c) pedagogical content knowledge and ongoing opportunities for curricular and instructional improvement.

4. The *leadership* construct is broad based, comprising cognitive, affective, and behavioral elements. Its three components derive from survey and coding data; (a) Intellectual leadership taps the extent to which new information reaches the school from either outside sources (e.g., a structural arrangement with a college or university, or the significant input of a district office or external professional network) or internal sources (e.g., significant input from the principal, another administrator, a teacher or a group of teachers); (b) supportive leadership reflects how much the principal or administrator supports and encourages teachers, welcomes their ideas, and has positively influenced restructuring; and (c) facilitative leadership measures and administrative style enabling shared power relations among faculty and administrators.

5. The *feedback and accountability* construct includes (a) information on performance provided to groups outside the school, (b) rewards or sanctions from constituent groups based on students' performance, (c) the influence of students' parents on school restructuring, and (d) the extent to which teacher feel respected by stakeholders both internal and external to the school. (pp. 717-718)

Marks and Louis (1999) also used four major independent variables in their research study on teacher empowerment and the capacity for organizational learning in a school organization: "Teacher empowerment is operationalized as influence or control in four separate domains–school policy, teacher work life, student experiences, and classroom control–and as an index comprising all the domains (Marks & Louis, 1997; Marks & Park, 1995)" (p. 718). The results of Marks and Louis's in-depth research study on the intersection of teacher empowerment and the capacity for organizational learning has added significant empirical data to support the role of teacher empowerment on the construct of creating capacity in organizational learning in reforming education. Marks and Louis's notes in their results from the study can be seen in Appendix E.

Marks and Louis (1999) noted from the information in Appendix E that elementary schools tend to rank higher than middle and high schools based upon the positive organizational structures that facilitate organizational learning at the elementary level. From the results of the study, Marks and Louis also noted that there is a consistent trend with regard to the results of the data collection on the five constituents of capacity for organizational learning. Marks and Louis found from the data obtained from the quantitative and qualitative instruments in this study that "most of the dimensions of the capacity for organizational learning also prove more favorable in elementary schools" (p. 720). In the four empowerment domains used as independent variables in this research study on the intersection of teacher empowerment and the capacity for organization learning, the researchers noted some differences in the three different school levels used in their study. Marks and Louis noted that

comparing the distribution of teacher empowerment by grade level, we found elementary school teachers experiencing high levels of teacher empowerment in

the "middle range," that is, over teacher work life and student experiences, whereas middle school teachers were somewhat more likely to be empowered by school policy and classroom instruction. (p. 721)

Marks and Louis concluded by making a significant statement and providing direction on the role of teacher empowerment and the capacity for organizational learning. The researchers stated that

if building capacity for organizational learning is to become a real strategy for school improvement, several developments need to take place:

1. The specific characteristics of schools indicate capacity for learning need to be refined so that that teachers and administrators will be able to assess whether schools have them.

2. More work needs to be done to create images of organizational learning and the capacity needed to directly achieve it that have direct appeal and salience to practicing educators in schools.

3. In addition, organizational learning needs to be rescued from the distinct possibility that it will be the latest theoretical fad.

4. The critical ideas underlying organizational learning need to be grounded in the evolution of thinking about how schools change, and how their structure, culture, and leadership need to be organized to facilitate the best synthesis and application of professional knowledge. (p. 732)

Assessment and Reflective Skills Domain of the EVAEM

The daily regimen of a classroom teacher is affected by a number of routines, processes, activities, and schedules that control and determine their decision making throughout the day. Teachers regularly are engaged in meeting the special needs of their

students and designing instructional activities that will enhance the learning process in

the classroom. Teachers are required to facilitate the learning of a large number of

students in a set period of time. They do this with multiple sessions of students

throughout the day and differentiate academic instruction to a number of students based

on their level of cognitive abilities. Teachers perform all of these duties in isolation from

their professional peers in the school organization. Sellars (2012) noted that

> teachers must now be prepared to engage with the entirety of the holy trinity for
>
> teachers: know your content and how to teach it, know your students and how
>
> they learn, and know yourself, your values and your capacity for reflection
>
> and ethical decision making. (p. 462)

Sellars also discussed the individual responsibility, accountability, and liability of a

teacher based upon the same responsibilities of professionals in other professions. "One

result of this is that there now is a legal commitment to supporting scholarly success for

all students, despite the cognitive complexity that is required in terms of educational

expectations and societal demands" in the country of Australia (Sellars, p. 460). Sellars

continued to describe the ever-changing responsibilities of a classroom teacher by stating,

> professional obligations challenge teachers to reflect on how best to present
>
> content, select pedagogical strategies, understand student differences and the
>
> accompanying parental and community demands and expectations, redefine what
>
> is to be a teacher in the modern world and even to reconsider the notions of basic
>
> constructs such as the nature of intelligence. While standards, government
>
> policies and proclamations, curriculum boards and national requirements are
>
> developed and teachers are expected to use these guidelines in their everyday
>
> professional practice, the reality remains that teacher practice is the closed

environment of their own classroom relies almost totally on the individual's

capacity to interpret, understand and perform the role of a teacher as mandated by

these documents, whilst simultaneously making spontaneous decisions, and

attending to the inevitable classroom actions that cannot be planned for. (p. 462)

The question that arises is how does a teacher in an isolated classroom meet these

overwhelming demands set upon them by the nature of their position as a teacher?

The fifth and final domain of the EVAEM focuses on the construct of assessing

one's course of action as a reflective teacher in the classroom. Balls et al. (2011) noted

that "assessment skills are relevant to the learning culture of the teacher and leader" as an

individual and collectively as an organization (p. 101). Taggart and Wilson (1998)

defined the ability of a teacher to employ reflective thinking in the classroom as "the

process of making informed and logical decisions on educational matters, then assessing

the consequences of those decisions" (p. 2). Zeichner and Liston (1996) asserted in their

book on the concept of reflection teaching the following:

If a teacher never questions the goals and the values that guide his or her work,

the context in which he or she teaches, nor never examines his or her assumptions,

then it is our belief that this individual is not engaged in reflective teaching. (p. 1)

Minott (2011) further supported Zeichner and Liston's (1996) statement on

reflective teaching by stating in his article that he defines reflective teaching "as

involving a questioning disposition and critical thinking or 'reflectivity thinking' (Norris

& Ennis, 1989), about one's teaching techniques personal goals, values, beliefs,

assumptions about teaching, and the context" (p. 133). Minott also noted that "reflective

thinking is also concerned with making changes to a schools' culture; that is, the schools'

environment, mission, socialization, leadership, and strategy or decision making

processes" (p. 133). The ability of a classroom teacher to assess and reflect on the daily activities, lessons, experiences, issues, or problems associated with the profession of teaching is a valued and important aspect of being an empowered teacher in an organization. Fosnot (1989) noted that "an empowered teacher is a reflective decision maker who finds joy in learning and in investigating the teaching/learning process–one who views learning as construction and teaching as a facilitating process to enhance and enrich development" (p. xi). Thus, a reflective teacher is an empowered teacher according to Minott and Fosnot. The ability of a teacher to become a reflective practitioner is extremely important in the development of the collective learning culture of an organization.

In Choy and Oo's (2012) study on reflective thinking and teaching practices, the researchers sought to investigate the reflective practices of teachers when planning instructional lessons, the perceptions of themselves, the students in their classrooms, and their work. Choy and Oo sought to answer two questions in their research study: "(1) Are teachers practicing reflective teaching, and (2) how do teachers think of themselves and their teaching practices" (p. 170). The researchers noted that both quantitative and qualitative research methods were employed in their study on reflective teaching from institutions of higher learning in the country of Malaysia. Choy and Oo employed a 33-question questionnaire with a Likert scale to generate data in the quantitative phase of their research study. Choy and Oo noted in their questionnaire that "the topics of the questionnaire were created based on the research by Hamilton (2005) on the development of reflective thinking" (p. 173).

Choy and Oo (2012) used the three major developments of reflective thinking from Hamilton (2005) to obtain data from the participants in their quantitative phase of

their research study on reflective thinking and teaching in an organization. "The statements cover three major areas of development; ability to self-express, awareness of how one learns and developing lifelong learning skills" (Choy & Oo, p. 173). The researchers chose to add a fourth development to Hamilton's research on reflective thinking. The researchers "decided to add another area perceived as important, influence or belief about self and self-efficacy" (Choy & Oo, p. 173). Thus, the four following statements of developments were used by Choy and Oo to obtain data from the 60 participants in their study on reflective thinking and teaching practices.

1. Teacher reflection as retrospective analysis (ability to self-assess)

2. Teacher reflection as a problem solving process (awareness of how one learns)

3. Critical reflection of self (developing continuous self-improvement)

4. Reflection on beliefs about the self and self-efficacy. (Choy & Oo, p. 169)

The researchers were able to access the participants in the quantitative phase of this study via regular scheduled teacher development opportunities and also communicating through the use of email to obtain data for their study.

The results of the quantitative phase of the study indicated "that a majority of the teachers willingly self-assess only to ensure that they were doing their jobs properly" (Choy & Oo, 2012, p. 176). The researchers also noted that the participants in the study did not use self-assessment or reflection as a means of improving student learning from the data obtained from the study. Choy and Oo (2012) also found from the results of their quantitative phase of their research study that "the results indicated only a few teachers were interested in continued assessment of their discipline" (p. 177). The researchers in this study noted that this was a troubling discovery. The participants in the quantitative phase of the study

seemed ambiguous about using feedback from students to improve their lessons. They knew the importance of getting feedback but at the same time felt that they could not trust the feedback given which could provide valuable insights for them to learn about themselves. (Choy & Oo, p. 177)

In the qualitative phase of their study, the results obtained from the questionnaire in the ability to self-assess section were analyzed by identifying the patterns of analysis. Choy and Oo (2012) noted that their analysis of the patterns did identify that the participants (teachers) in this study valued feedback from their students. However, Choy and Oo identified in their analysis that the teachers did not connect the idea that the strategies they are choosing to use in their classrooms could influence student learning in their classroom. Choy and Oo concluded in their research study that teachers "were more interested in how they were assessed by their students and superiors although there was ambiguity towards the value of feedback from students" (p. 180). Overall, Choy and Oo identified that teachers are not only reflective when it comes to feedback from students and superiors but tend not to reflect daily on the feedback from student learning in the classroom.

In the awareness of how learners learn section of the questionnaire, the data identified that "about 40% of teachers identified that they are willing to learn from their mistakes . . . however, they did not seem intrinsically motivated to improve as they perceived they needed feedback from supervisors" (Choy & Oo, 2012, p. 177). The awareness of how learners learn section of the research questionnaire, according to Choy and Oo (2012), identified that these teachers are not reflecting on their own practices in the classroom. Choy and Oo noted that external support and direction is further needed for these participants to help teachers make the connection between classroom practice

and self-reflection for improvement. Thus, organizations or institutions of higher learning will need to provide support and opportunities for these participants and other teachers to obtain the necessary processes and skills to institute reflective teaching into their classroom.

Copeland, Birmingham, De La Cruz, and Lewin (1993) wrote a scholarly paper to develop an image of "what reflective practice in teaching would 'look like'" (p. 1). Copeland et al. "identified 12 critical attributes that would indicate a teacher's stance toward reflection, accompanied by four assumptions on which the attributes are based" (p. 1). Copeland et al. offered four assumptions on the attributes of being a reflective teacher in an organization. Copeland et al. noted these four assumptions are the author's operational definition of being a reflective teacher in the teaching profession. The four assumptions are:

1. Engaging in reflective practice involves as a process of solving problems.

2. Reflective practice in teaching is manifested as a stance toward inquiry.

3. The demonstration of reflective practice is seen to exist along a continuum.

4. Reflective practice occurs within a social context. (Copeland et al., pp. 348-349)

According to Copeland et al., "engaging in reflective practice involves as a process of solving problems" (p. 348). The authors noted that this assumption is the most central assumption in their operational definition of reflection. The first assumption is the inherent belief that the ability of a teacher to be reflective is a process. The authors stated that "identifying and particular characteristics of personality, values, or intellectual styles that might describe them" would allow an individual to identify someone as a reflective teacher (Copeland et al., p. 348). In the author's first assumption, they described how

problem solving is an integral aspect of a teacher being a reflective practitioner. Copeland et al. (1993) used Schon's (1990) definition of problem solving to further acknowledge the role problem solving has in the concept of a teacher being a reflective practitioner. Copeland et al. noted that they see problem solving

> as a healthy, normal, and creative process in which capable practitioners attempt to make sense of puzzling or challenging phenomena, identify areas of practice that bear scrutiny, define particular goals for improvement, and pursue actions explicitly intended to accomplish them. (p. 348)

The second assumption by Copeland et al. (1993) was that "reflective practice in teaching is manifested as a stance toward inquiry" (p. 349). The rationale behind this assumption is the belief that a reflective practitioner must take an active position towards the process of learning. Copeland et al. noted that "assuming a stance toward reflection includes identifying whether engagement in the reflective process is appropriate for a particular situation" (p. 349). Teachers have the ability and opportunity to use self-reflection on a daily basis. The authors noted that it is almost impossible to require teachers to reflect on every aspect of their daily regimen of classes, activities, and experiences.

The third assumption of what a reflective teacher should look like deals with "the demonstration of reflective practice is seen to exist along a continuum" (Copeland et al., 1993, p. 349). The researchers raised the question of the thoroughness of the teachers' reflections on their practices and experiences during the day. The opportunity, ability, and perseverance to be able to reflect on every aspect or multiple experiences in the classroom would not be obtainable. Therefore, Copeland et al. (1993) noted that "rather than identify a teacher as reflective or not reflective, we assume that any definition of

reflection in teaching should allow for discerning a spectrum of reflection in teachers" (p. 349). This means that teachers must first determine if an action requires reflection and, if so, what level of reflection.

The fourth and final assumption of what a reflective teacher would look like deals with the social context of reflection (Copeland et al., 1993). The authors of this scholarly article on the attributes of what a reflective teacher looks like noted that teaching and educating individuals is a social activity. The classroom, teaching lounge, cafeteria, and offices are social locations that connect teachers, students, parents, support staff, and other individuals in an organization. Copeland et al. (1993) described this interconnectedness of individuals as weaving something together to form something new. "Weaving together suggests the processes of entwining separate entities to produce a newly constructed single entity. Thus, the context refers to the construction or 'weaving' of students, teachers, and the setting into a teaching situation" (Copeland et al., p. 349). All of the mentioned sites can be intersections of individual and group reflection.

The second half of the scholarly article deals with the 12 identified attributes that Copeland et al. (1993) believed should be present in a teacher who is a reflective teacher. The 12 attributes of reflective practice according to Copeland et al. are

Four Attributes Related to Problem Identification

1. A problem is identified.

2. The problem derives from a concrete situation in practice.

3. The problem, by whomever it is identified, has meaning for the practitioner

4. The problem can be said to be one of import for successful teaching/learning in the context in which it is identified.

Four Attributes Related to Generating Solutions

5. Possible solutions to the problems are generated.

6. Solutions are generated from or are grounded in theories, assumptions, or research findings which are explicitly held and understood by the practitioner.

7. The generation of solutions engages the teacher in critical examination of his or her own professional actions and its link to target actions in others.

8. The solutions sought are expected to have positive consequences in terms of student learning.

Three Attributes Related to Testing Solutions

9. A solution to the problem is selected.

10. The chosen solution is implemented.

11. The solution is weighed as to its effect on the target actions and the consequences of these effects in terms of student outcomes

An Attribute Related to Learning from Reflective Practice

12. The reflective process leads to an enhancement of the teacher's understanding used to give meaning to the professional context in which the problem was identified. (pp. 350-354)

Conclusion

The second chapter of this case study on the collective learning culture of a school organization focused on the scope of three theoretical constructs: culture, learning, and efficacy in the literature review of this study. The researcher noted in the literature review in Chapter 2 of this study the importance culture, learning, and efficacy have in the basic foundations of the EVAEM. The researcher has presented the five domains of the EVAEM with a literature review for each domain to identify the constructs, investigate current scholarly literature, and summarize current research. In Chapter 3 of

this research study on the collective learning culture of a school organization, the researcher presents and describes the methodology used in this study to measure the impact of the five domains of the EVAEM on the collective learning culture of the research site.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Problem

Public school reform will continue to face an extraordinary number of changes in the 21st century. The challenges that our school organizations face currently and will continue to face in the future are rooted in the economic, social, and political trends and events that have taken place in the United States during the last 10 years and subsequently changed our way of life. The recent economic downturn and recessions; the rapid development of a globally competitive economic environment; and the fiscal instability of our local, state, and federal governments have a direct impact on the effectiveness and stability of public education as an organization in America. Balls et al. (2011) noted that

> much has been written about the inevitable decline of our public education system in the United States. From devastatingly high dropout rates to widening student achievement gaps the concerns are real. In light of budget constraints and larger class sizes coupled with the flurry of new initiatives focused on the issue of the moment or quick fixes the way forward appears murky at best. Despite voluminous studies on causes, effective and potential solutions little achievement has been achieved. (p. x)

They suggested that our education system is insufficient and ineffective compared to other countries, despite efforts to improve our public education system in the United States.

There is substantial evidence in other professions that the development of a learning organization and the creation of a strong learning culture within an organization are imperative for organizations "to begin to realize their potential for increasing

organizational performance, competiveness, and success" (Marquardt, 2011, p. x). In

Marquardt's publication, he noted that in the last 20 years, organizations such as

"General Electric, Johnsonville Foods, Quad Graphics, and Pacific Bell in the United

States; Sheerness Steel, Nokia, Sun Alliance, and ABB in Europe; and Honda and

Samsung are among the early pioneers" in the transformative powers of creating a

learning organization and a learning culture in their organization (Marquardt et al., p. x).

The creation and development of a learning culture in the business and corporate world

has been successful; thus, the creation of a learning organization in a school organization

could be an effective and efficient transformational endeavor. Gill (2009) supported the

concept of developing a learning culture in a nonprofit organization as a means to

transform the organization to be of high performance and also a sustainable organization.

According to Gill, "organizational learning means knowing how to know; knowing what

you know; and knowing how to apply that knowledge to individual, team, organization,

and community improvement" (p. xi). In a school organization, the members of the

school should have the ability to obtain knowledge and information from the

organization. The members should also be able to obtain information and knowledge

from the leadership of the organization. The members of the school organization should

also be able to apply and develop actions, activities, and policies from the information

knowledge of the organization. In Zuboff's (1988) publication, she noted that

> organizations have little choice to become a learning institution, since one of its
>
> principal purposes will have to be the expansion of knowledge–not knowledge for
>
> its own sake (as in academic pursuit), but knowledge that comes to reside at the
>
> core of what it means to be productive. Learning is no longer a separate activity
>
> that occurs either before one enters the workplace or in a remote classroom

setting. Nor is it an activity reserved for a managerial group. The behaviors that define learning and the behaviors that define being productive are one in the same. Learning is the heart of productive activity. To put it simply, learning is the new form of labor. (p. 395)

In the business and corporate world, organizations must adapt to how they operate to increase efficiency and profit. Schools must change how they operate to increase productivity and understanding. Schools will need to follow the proven business and corporate model of learning and adapting on the job to be the most efficient.

The intent of the researcher in this exploratory mixed-methods study was to investigate the application of the EVAEM on the collective learning culture of a middle school organization in a suburban middle school in North Carolina. This study's goal was to use the "implementation of a model that facilitates the evolvement of a learning culture through research-based experiences supported by various theories of change and sustained learning" (Balls et al., 2011, p. 1). Thus, the ability to transform the individual and collective learning culture of an organization is imperative to enhance the performance, sustainability, and longevity of the organization. Balls et al. (2011) also noted of "this transformational opportunity, it is anticipated that multiple student outcomes will be impacted; graduation rates, student promotional rate, student proficiency rate, and postsecondary indicators" (p. 25). The belief is that the EVAEM will transform the schools collective learning culture into one that positively impacts student achievement.

Research Site and Participants

The doors of the research site opened in the fall of 1971, as a junior high school in a rural/suburban area of western North Carolina. The research site in the initial creation

of the structure was filled with students in Grades 7-9. Today, the research site has

transformed to a school filled with middle school students in Grades 6-8. The change in

organizational structure and name took place in 1996, with the transition from a junior

high school to that of a middle school model. Presently, the research site has 237

students enrolled in sixth grade, 225 students enrolled in seventh grade, and 205 students

enrolled in eighth grade. Thus, a combined student population of 667 students is

currently enrolled at the research site.

The middle school research site has three different grade levels that are divided

into interdisciplinary teams. The eighth grade has two 4-person interdisciplinary teams.

The seventh grade is comprised of two interdisciplinary teams with four teachers

appointed to each team. The sixth-grade interdisciplinary team configurations are

comprised of two 4-person interdisciplinary teams. The research site has a total of six

interdisciplinary teams. The fine arts, physical education, and exceptional needs teachers

are actively involved in the six different interdisciplinary teams at the research site.

The 2010-2011 student enrollment of the research site was 644 students. The

research site's current ethnic and racial breakdown of the student population is as

follows: African American, 107 (16.8%); Caucasian, 470 (73.8%); Hispanic, 41 (6%);

and other (3.4%). Over the past 4 years, the racial and ethnic composition of the student

body has remained consistent with the exception of an increase in the Hispanic

population. The school attendance rates during the 3-year period were 2009-2010, 95%;

2008-2009, 95%; and 2007-2008, 95%. In 2010-2011, 89 of the 644 (13.9%) students

enrolled at the research site were identified as exceptional students.

According to the requirements and standards of No Child Left Behind legislation,

100% of the 37 classified teaching staff members met the highly qualified standards for

middle grades. In the year 2009-2010, 23% of the staff at the research site had advanced

degrees. In the 2011-2012 school year, there was one teacher, one administrator, and one

counselor who were National Board Certified at the research site. At the same time, a

number of teachers were enrolled in advanced degree courses and additional licensures at

local universities. There are presently 56 total staff members at the research site. The

number of classified staff members as teachers is 37 individuals or (66%) of the staff,

while 14 individuals (25%) of the total staff members are considered unclassified staff

members. The remaining four staff members at the research site make up the

administrative team and the counseling team with two members on each team. The seven

male classified staff members comprise of 22% of the staff population at the research

site. The female members of the staff represent 78.3% of the total number of classified

staff members at the research site. The present racial and ethnic background of the

school faculty is as follows: African American, 8 (14.2%); Caucasian, 47 (83.9%); and

Hispanic, 1 (1%).

Inquiry Method and Rationale

The researcher integrated the EVAEM with five supportive theoretical constructs

or domains to "suggest new ways of gaining insight into teachers' practices, new ways of

examining their strengths and weaknesses, and new ways of developing teacher capacity

in individual and collective considerations" (Balls et al., 2011, p. 2). The five supportive

theoretical constructs or domains of the EVAEM are (1) dispositions, (2) professional

experiences, (3) structure, (4) shared decision making, and (5) assessment and reflection

skills. These domains were used by the researcher to measure the collective learning

culture of the classified staff members of the organization. The researcher then used

positive responses from the participants to examine the significance of each domain of

the model with regard to the collective index of the organization. In the second phase of

model application, the collective index will allow the organization to identify and focus

on key aspects of the learning culture of the organization. Three methods can be used in

the second phase of the EVAEM to facilitate learning experiences within the

organization. The organization would focus on the creation and development of

individual staff member growth plans and also a collective growth plan for the

organization. These plans could be used as action plans for individual improvement and

collectively as a school improvement plan for action. The organization may also

implement action research strategies at the individual and collective level. According to

Balls et al., the "second experience would involve staff in multiple action research

projects that target the identified needs in the previous assessments" (p. 27). The

organization may also use empowerment and efficacy training to create a new measure of

the individual and collective learning culture of the organization in the second phase of

the study. After working through the experiential phase, new indices were calculated to

determine the impact of the activities, as Balls et al. suggested. Balls et al. went on to

state that "the new indexes will then be subject to correlational calculations with indexes

relating to climate survey data, student proficiency levels, and student perceptions of

learning culture" (p. 27).

The researcher in this study only focused on the initial phase of the EVAEM. The

researcher focused on the five domains set forth by the model in this research study. The

second phase of the EVAEM may be further developed by another researcher using the

same approach and methodology as the researcher in this study.

The general research design for this study was based on the design of the EVAEM

as the conceptual model to facilitate the evolvement of individual and collective learning

cultures in a school organization. The researcher chose the research strategy of a mixed-methods case study to measure the evolvement of the collective learning culture. Gall et al. (2007) noted that there are specific characteristics of case studies: "We define case study research as (a) the in-depth study of (b) one or more instances of a phenomenon (c) in its real-life context that (d) reflects the perspective of the participants involved in the phenomenon" (p. 447). The phenomenon researched in this case study was the individual and collective learning culture of the classified staff at a southeastern middle school. A phenomenon is "a process event, person or other item of interest to the researcher" (Gall et al., p. 648). The case for this study was to investigate and measure the collective learning culture of the classified teaching staff of the research site. The unit of analysis for this case study was a suburban middle school in the southeastern region of the United States of America.

The focus of this case study was on the collective learning culture of a suburban middle school based upon the five domains of the EVAEM. The five domains are (1) dispositions, (2) professional experience, (3) structure, (4) shared decision making, and (5) assessment and refection skills.

> The focus is the aspect, or aspects, of the case study on which data collection and analysis will concentrate. Selection of the focus depends on the audience that the case study will address and the message that the researcher wants to convey. (Gall et al., 2007, p. 460).

According to Yin (1994), "case studies are the preferred strategy when 'how' or 'why' questions are being posed, when the investigator has little control over events, and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context" (p. 1). It should be noted, however, that case studies offer both advantages and disadvantages in

research. In Murray's (2003) publication, he noted that "the greatest advantage of a case study is that it permits a researcher to reveal the way a multiplicity of factor have interacted to produce the unique character of the entity that is the subject of the research" (p. 35). In other words, it can account for nuances in thought and behavioral patterns that cannot be quantified in a questionnaire with a set of questions. On the other hand, "an important limitation of the case study approach his that generalizations or principles drawn from one case can be applied to other cases only at a considerable risk of error" (Murray, p. 35). In other words, case studies present information that may or may not hold true in other situations, therefore creating false assumptions that can taint recommendations and future research.

Procedures of Inquiry

A sample size of 37 classified teachers from a Grade 6-8 middle school in the southeastern United States was used to explore the research questions in this study. The research site was not randomly selected for the purpose of delimiting the study. The quantitative data collected from the use of the Eury Value-Added Experience Model Survey Instrument (EVAEMSI), the Gill (2009) Organizational Learning Culture Assessment Survey (GOLCAS), the Five Domains of the Eury Value-Added Experience Model Questionnaire Instrument (EVAEMQI), and the two focus group sessions were analyzed by the researcher with quantitative and qualitative methods of inquiry to address the following research questions.

1. What is the impact of the classified staff members' (teachers') dispositions on the collective learning culture of the organization?

2. What is the impact of professional experiences of the classified staff members (teachers) on the collective learning culture of the organization?

3. What is the impact of the physical and organizational structure of the school on the classified staff members' (teachers') collective learning culture of the organization?

4. What is the impact of the shared decision-making process of the classified staff members (teachers) on the collective learning culture of the organization?

5. What is the impact of the assessment and reflections skills of the classified staff members (teachers) on the collective learning culture of the organization?

A field test was used by the researcher to address the validity and fidelity of the initial EVAEMSI and the GOLCAS. The field test of the initial survey instrument took place in March 2012. The researcher was able to locate a middle school that had many of the same variables as the research site. The researcher field tested the initial survey instrument with a Grade 6-8 middle school in the piedmont region of North Carolina that had a similar social makeup, demographics, and number of classified teachers in the school organization that mirrored the research site in this study. The assistant superintendent of the local education agency (LEA) and the principal of the middle school field test site graciously gave the researcher the opportunity to use this field location to test the validity and fidelity of the initial survey instrument. Thirty-two classified teachers initially participated in the field test survey; however, only 26 of the participants at the field test site completed all 52 questions of the survey. A participation rate of 81.2% was calculated with regard to the number of classified teachers at the field test location who finished the entire survey instrument.

The researcher was able obtain advisement and support in the redesign of the Field Test: EVAEMSI (Appendix F) from a highly regarded educational leader in public education in the State of North Carolina. This educational leader serves a diverse range

of administrative roles in a separate and distant LEA from the research site chosen for this study on the collective learning culture of a school organization. The knowledge and expertise obtained from a professional peer greatly influenced the researcher to redesign and reform the initial field test survey instrument. The survey instrument was modified and redeveloped from the initial 52 questions in the field test survey instrument to the 43-question survey instrument that was used in the quantitative phase of this research study.

Quantitative Instrumentation

The classified teachers in this study completed a combined survey instrument in the quantitative phase of the study: the EVAEMSI and the GOLCAS (Appendix G). The EVAEMSI used a 23-item questionnaire arranged on a 5-point Likert scale. The first four questions of the EVAEMSI were developed to give the researcher categorical information from the respondents who participated in the survey phase of the research study. The categorical data may be used to differentiate the participants based upon the number of years of experience, gender, advance degrees obtained, and areas of licensure. The remaining 19 questions of the EVAEMSI were a series of close-ended questions with ordered response choices based on the five domains of the EVAEM. The response choice ranged from (1) "Strongly Agree" to (5) "Strongly Disagree." The 19 questions were designed to provide information and empirical data related to the collective learning culture of a school organization.

The second survey instrument used by the researcher in the quantitative phase of the research study was the GOLCAS. The GOLCAS was developed by Gill (2009) and was founded upon the principles of the Urban Institute's (2001) *Model for Nonprofit Capacity Building*. The GOLCAS (Appendix C) is a 20-item questionnaire arranged on a 5-point Likert scale. The response choice ranged from (1) "Strongly Agree" to (5)

"Strongly Disagree." The 20-item survey had closed-ended questions with ordered

response choices that were also linked to the five domains of the EVAEM. The

EVAEMSI can be found in Appendix G of this research study. A formal consent letter

used by the researcher in this research study can be reviewed in Appendix H.

Qualitative Instrumentation

In the qualitative phase of the research study, the researcher used a questionnaire

and two focus group sessions to obtain the qualitative data necessary to create a narrative

analysis of the five domains of the EVAEM. The five domains of the EVAEMQI

(Appendix I) were emailed by the researcher to the original 37 participants in the

quantitative phase of this research study. A total of 12 classified teachers at the research

site actively participated in the questionnaire phase of this research site. The

participation rate of the classified teachers who participated in the questionnaire phase of

this study was 32%. The questionnaire was based on the five domains of the EVAEM.

Each question on the questionnaire was directly connected to a specific domain of the

EVAEM.

Question 1	Disposition Domain
Question 2	Professional Experiences Domain
Question 3	Structure Domain
Question 4	Shared Decision-Making Domain
Question 5	Assessment Domain

The researcher used the results from the descriptive analysis of the data obtained

from the EVAEMSI and from the EVAEMQI to assist in the development of a series of

focus group questions. The goal of the two qualitative focus group sessions was to

acquire a detailed narrative from the participants with regard to the results of the survey

and the information provided in the questionnaire. The ability of the participants to

provide a narrative to the data from the survey instrument and from the questionnaire

allowed the researcher to formulate and reveal a comprehensive picture of the collective

learning culture at the research site.

The participants in the focus group were randomly selected by the researcher to

participate in the qualitative phase of the research study. The researcher provided a letter

of invitation that was sent via email to each member of the research site. The researcher

formally invited 16 participants who participated in the quantitative phase of the research

study to participate in the qualitative phase of this research study on the collective

learning culture of an organization. The researcher provided detailed information to the

participants, such as the location, time, and descriptions of their proposed roles in the

focus group sessions. In the first focus group session, there were eight participants

willing to participate in the qualitative phase of this research study. In the second focus

group session, there were four participants willing to participate in the qualitative phase

of this research study. Participation in the focus group sessions was voluntary, and the

participants' identities were protected and remain anonymous in the data analysis and

results. The descriptive narratives of the participants in the focus group sessions were

protected by the researcher to ensure that the individual participant's privacy and safety

are held to the highest standard. The researcher in this study was the only individual with

the ability to identify the focus group participants' answers to the questions created in this

quantitative phase of the research study on the collective learning culture of a school

organization.

Quantitative and Qualitative Data Gathering Procedures

The researcher in this collective learning culture study used a web-based provider

to assist in the distribution of the EVAEMSI to the 37 classified teachers (participants) at the research site. The researcher was given permission by the principal to use the research site's computer lab to administer the EVAEMSI. Each classified teacher at the research site was emailed the link via their school district email address and invited to complete the survey individually in the computer lab at the research site. The 37 classified staff members were divided into four sessions based on their regularly scheduled professional development time in the computer lab.

Written permission was granted by the principal of the research site to use the computer lab and to use in-house staff development time to complete the combined 44-item survey in the quantitative phase of this research study. The LEA accountability officer was also notified of the intent of the study on the collective learning culture of a school organization. Permission was granted to the researcher by the accountability officer of the LEA with approval from the Institutional Research Board (IRB). The researcher also had verbal and written permission from the superintendent of the LEA to use the classified staff members as participants in both the quantitative and qualitative phase of the data gathering for this research study.

The researcher of the study met with the classified staff members prior to the day of the survey. In the staff meeting, the researcher was introduced by the principal to the staff at the research site. The researcher discussed the proposed study on the collective learning culture at the research site. A formal letter of consent was also provided to the classified teachers explaining the collective learning culture study's objectives (Appendix H). The letter also informed the 37 classified staff participants of the nature of the study and ensured the participants of their confidentiality and anonymity when the findings of the research study are published.

Each of the 37 participants in this study was given access to a computer in the computer lab at the research site. The participants were able to log into their regular school email to obtain the direct link to the EVAEMSI. The 23-question EVAEMSI and the 20-question GOLCAS surveys were combined to create a 43-item collective learning survey. The researcher emailed a link to the web-based survey to each participant. The participants were able to open a direct link to the survey instrument. The identity of the participants and their anonymity from the researcher and also their fellow colleagues in the computer lab were protected via the use of the web-based survey. The researcher in this collective learning culture study was unable to track or distinguish the identity of the survey participants throughout the quantitative phase of this research study.

In the second phase of the data collection for this research study on the collective learning culture of an organization, the researcher elected to use two qualitative instruments to measure the impact of the collective learning culture of the school organization. The first qualitative instrument used in the second phase of this research study was a questionnaire. The EVAEMQI was designed by the researcher to obtain the descriptive narratives of the classified staff members' perceptions of the collective learning culture at the research site. The questionnaire is an electronically based instrument that allows the participants to answer in real time and allows the researcher to organize the participants' responses to the five questions of the questionnaire in a logical manner. The researcher was able to email the participants a google form with information and procedures on how to participate on the questionnaire for the qualitative phase of this research study (Appendix I). The responses from the participants on the EVAEMQI were organized electronically to create a spreadsheet of responses for each domain of the EVAEM separately. This allowed the researcher to access and analyze the

qualitative data more efficiently and effectively. A copy of the EVAEMQI can be located in the Appendix I of this research study for further inquiry if needed.

The second instrument used in this research study to obtain the qualitative data necessary to measure the collective learning culture of the school organization was the use of two focus group sessions. The researcher used the quantitative data from the 43-item survey (EVAEMSI) in the first phase of the study to help in the design of the focus group questions. The researcher also used the coded data obtained from the EVAEMQI to assist in the development of the focus group questions used in the two focus group sessions. The researcher invited 10-16 participants from the 33 participants who participated in the first phase of this research study. The researcher was given permission by the principal at the research site to use the media center after hours to conduct the focus group sessions. A formal letter of consent to participate in the focus group sessions was emailed to the participants who were selected to participate in the two focus group sessions (Appendix J).

The focus group sessions were electronically videotaped and the sound was recorded electronically to ensure that the researcher was able to transcribe a detailed narrative of participants' comments, attitudes, beliefs, and remarks towards the questions in the focus group sessions. A template of the questions asked by the researcher in the two focus group sessions are located in Appendix K. The detailed narratives produced by the 12 participants in the focus group sessions were coded by the researcher to identify the five domains of the EVAEM. The narrative provided by the focus group participants was used by the researcher in Chapters 4 and 5 of this research study. The researcher presents the results of the qualitative and quantitative data in Chapter 4 of this research study on the collective learning culture of a southeastern middle school organization.

Procedures for the Quantitative Data Analysis

The reliability of the EVAEMSI used in this research study was obtained from using the combined survey in a field test survey to test the reliability of the designed instrument. The GOLCAS section of the survey instrument was obtained from the original author of the instrument and reveals strong internal consistency. Thus, combining EVAEMS and GOLCAS surveys into a 43-item questionnaire enabled the researcher of this research study to obtain data based upon the five domains of the EVAEM. The researcher was able to obtain permission from Dr. Stephen J. Gill in the spring of 2012 to use his GOLCAS instrument in unison with the EVAEMS to create a survey instrument specific to this research study on the collective learning culture of a school organization. Dr. Stephen J. Gill requested that the information and data obtained from this research study to be shared with him for future considerations in the advancement of scholarly knowledge on the learning cultures of organizations.

The Likert responses from the EVAEMSI were used by the researcher to obtain continuous scores, and standard score analyses were performed to observe measures of descriptive statistics. Gay et al. (2006) noted that "descriptive statistics are data analysis techniques that enable a researcher to meaningfully describe many pieces of data with a small number of indices" (p. 304). The researcher decided to use a Likert scale to ask each participant to respond to a series of questions on the survey instrument. Brown (2005) noted that "the Likert Scale is a measure of attitudes, preferences, and subjective reactions by eliciting a response along the lines of strength of agreement with scale items" (p. 1).

The participants in this quantitative phase of the research study were asked to express their strength of agreement to each question on the survey instrument. The

research participants were able to indicate their level of agreement by selecting strongly

agree (SA), agree (A), neutrality/undecided (U), disagree (D), and strongly disagree (SD).

The following positive point value was given by the researcher for each individual

ordered response from the EVAEMSI: SA=5, A=4, U=3, D=2, and SD=1. Therefore,

each survey question yielded a numerical score based upon the impact that question had

on the collective learning culture of the school organization. For example, if a participant

selected the response of strongly agree on a survey question, a numerical point yield of

five was given to the response in the survey. If a participant selected the option to agree

with the question on the survey, a numerical point yield of four was given to the response

in the survey. The researcher only targeted the positive yield of strongly agree and agree

of the classified staff members' responses on the survey instrument. The responses of

neutrality and disagreement were obtained from the survey instrument; however, the

researcher decided not to focus on these numerical yields.

In the EVAEMSI, the researcher was able to use a team of newly rewarded

doctorate recipients from a local university to assist in the categorizing and alignment of

the question to the specific domain of the EVAEM. The knowledge and guidance

provided by this team of fellow educational leaders allowed the researcher to create a

formal organizational breakdown of what series of questions would be identified under

the five domains of the EVAEM. The EVAEMSI questions that pertain to the disposition

domain of the survey instrument are

> Question #5: My teaching goals and instructional methods address a variety of
> learning styles in my classroom
>
> Question #13: I set my own personal goals for my own professional growth as a
> teacher and as a teacher leader in my learning organization.
>
> Question #14: I am committed to critical self-reflections and evaluation of my

own instructional practices as a teacher.

Question #26: This organization is committed to continuous improvement.

Question #24: This organization has a clear vision for the future.

Question #25: Employees and volunteers are committed to the mission of this organization.

Question #12: I seek out opportunities to share my knowledge and also serve as a teacher leader in my school organization.

Question #43: Learning and improving permeates everything we do.

Question #29: We would change this organization if it would help us better to meet our mission.

Question #40: This organization is committed to building capacity to be effective over the long term.

Question #35: Employees and volunteers are clear about the link between what they are doing and strategic goals of the organization.

The EVAEMSI questions that pertain to the professional experience domain of the survey

instrument are

Question #5: My teaching goals and instructional methods address a variety of learning styles in my classroom.

Question #13: I set my own personal goals for my own professional growth as a teacher leader in my learning organization.

Question #21: This organizational structure of the school allows me as a teacher to share my beliefs, issues, and concerns in the governance of the organization.

Question #7: I feel comfortable with the implementation of the Common Core and Essential Standards curriculum into my classroom instruction.

The EVAEMSI questions that pertain to the structure domain of the survey instrument

are

Question #6: I currently participate with my colleagues to improve student learning in my classroom and throughout the entire school organization.

Question #10: I take advantage of the professional learning opportunities provided by the school organization.

Question #9: I effectively and efficiently use my non-instructional time for instructional planning.

Question #8: I provide support and assistance to my colleagues both vertically and horizontally in my organizations structure.

Question #15: I have confidence within my colleagues to develop formative assessments in a collaborative environment to guide my daily instruction.

Question #29: We would change this organization if it would help us to better meet our mission.

Question #34: Employees and volunteers receive appropriate orientation and training.

Question #32: Evaluation is part of every program and operation of this organization.

Question #36: Individual employees and volunteers are engaged in action learning.

Question #27: Leaders are continually being developed for future roles in the organization.

Question #28: Organization is always looking for ways to use resources more effectively and efficiently.

Question #37: Work teams are engaged in action learning.

Question #22: Processes are in place within the organization to effectively protect the collaborative time for planning with my fellow colleagues within the organization.

Question #41: Organization's products and services match what the clients/customers want.

Question #30: Board pays attention to enhancing the overall performance of the organization.

Question #39: Organization works with community for mutual learning.

Question #42: Resources (people, money, facilities, and equipment, etc.) are aligned with intended outcomes of the organization.

The EVAEMSI questions that pertain to the shared decision-making domain are

Question #26: This organization is committed to continuous improvement.

Question #11: My professional knowledge and input is valued by my learning organization.

Question #20: I take full advantage of the opportunities to create processes that directly influence student learning in my organization.

Question #12: I seek out opportunities to share my knowledge and also serve as a teacher leader in my school organization.

Question #21: The organizational structure of the school allows me as a teacher to share my beliefs, issues, and concerns in the governance of the organization.

Question #27: Leaders are continually being developed for future roles in this organization.

Question #28: Organization is always looking for ways to use resources more effectively and efficiently.

Question #33: Evaluation results are used in organizational planning.

Question #38: Effective leadership is recognized and rewarded.

Question #23: As a member of the organization, I have the necessary opportunities/avenues to actively participate in the allocation of resources in the organization.

The EVAEMSI questions that pertain to the assessment and reflection domain are

Question #17: I am willing to collaborate, provide feedback, and supply assessment of my own teaching to my fellow colleagues.

Question #14: I am committed to critical self-reflection and evaluation of my own instructional practices as a teacher.

Question #16: I engage in discussions with my colleagues about new and innovative instructional strategies and practices in the teaching profession.

Question #19: I feel confident in my ability to use common formative assessment data to guide my daily instruction.

Question #32: Evaluation is part of every program and operation of this organization.

Question #41: Organization's products and services match what clients/customers want.

Question #42: Resources (people, money, facilities, equipment, etc.) are aligned with intended outcomes of the organization.

The data obtained from the EVAEMSI are presented in Chapter 4. The data from the specific questions of the survey are placed in tabular form to allow the reader of the case study to view and understand the quantitative data in a systematic method of inquiry. The researcher used the positive numerical yields of the survey response by the participants to obtain six different quantitative measurements to measure the positive impact of the collective learning culture of the school organization.

(1) The researcher was able to acquire and create a measurement of positive impact from the strongly agree responses for each question on the survey instrument. A positive numerical yield for each question was obtained to indicate the collective yield of responses of the participants who strongly agreed with the question from the survey instrument.

(2) The researcher was also able to acquire and create a measurement of positive impact from the agree responses for each question on the survey instrument. A positive numerical yield for each question was obtained to indicate the collective yield of responses of the participants who were in agreement with the question from the survey instrument.

(3) The researcher was able to acquire a positive impact score for each question on the survey instrument. The positive impact score is a combined positive yield of the responses from the participants who indicated that they strongly agreed and agreed with the question from the survey. The researcher was able to rank each question in each of

the five domains of the EVAEM to produce a ranking of positive impact score from the highest to the lowest yield within each domain.

(4) The researcher was able to acquire a numerical yield of the strongest possible points from positive responses for each question with the five domains of EVAEM. The numerical yield obtained from this quantitative measurement was used to rank each question within each domain to produce a ranking of highest to lowest. Thus, the ranking of the strongest possible points from the positive responses for each question yielded an order of impact that could be interpreted to measure the collective learning culture of the organization.

(5) The fifth measurement that was derived from the data obtained on the EVAEMSI is the measurement of the greatest possible percentage of possible positive points for each question. The researcher was able to calculate this percentage from the data obtained from the Likert responses of the participants on each question of the survey. The greatest possible percent of the possible positive points provided the researcher a numerical yield that could also be used to rank the impact of the question within each domain of the EVAEM.

(6) The final quantitative measurement that was derived from the Likert responses of the participants on the EVAEMSI was the percent of contribution to the total points of positive responses from each question. The percent of contribution to the total points of positive responses provided an additional measurement to the researcher to rank the strength of positive agreement or impact of the perceptions of the collective learning culture of the school organization.

Procedures for the Qualitative Data Analysis

The researcher in this study elected to use a template for data analysis in

qualitative research from the work of Creswell (2009). Creswell noted that the data analysis in qualitative research

> involves the preparing the data for analysis, conducting different analyses, moving deeper and deeper in understandings the data (some qualitative researchers like to think of this as peeling back the layers of an onion), representing the data, and making the interpretation of the larger meaning of data. (p. 183)

Creswell's visual representation of the organizational template for data analysis in qualitative research that the researcher used for qualitative data analysis in this research study can be located in Appendix L.

The researcher was able to obtain the raw data from the EVAEMQI in the form of a narrative of responses from the electronically based questionnaire instrument. The participants' narrative responses were presented to the researcher in a spreadsheet format via the use of a Google style form created by the researcher. The narrative descriptions for each question of the EVAEMQI were transcribed by the Google form to enable the researcher to begin the process of coding and identifying the major themes and descriptions of the qualitative data produced by the questionnaire instrument.

The raw data of the two focus group sessions were handled by the researcher in the same format as Creswell's (2009) visual representation of the organizational template for data analysis in qualitative research that the researcher used for qualitative data analysis (Appendix L) to create a detailed descriptive analysis of the qualitative data to measure the impact of the collective learning culture of the research site. The researcher was able to organize and prepare the qualitative data from the focus group sessions in a manner to obtain the themes and descriptions that align to the five domains of the

EVAEM. The researcher was able to identify the themes and used this descriptive information in Chapter 4 to present the qualitative data from the two focus group sessions. The researcher was also able to use the qualitative data and the participants' descriptive responses to present the findings of the study on the collective learning culture of the research site in Chapter 5.

Essential Assumptions

In this exploratory mixed-methods case study on the collective learning culture of a school organization, there were three essential assumptions: (1) the participants in this case study would actively participate and answer the qualitative survey instrument in a truthful manner to present an honest description of their attitudes and beliefs towards the questions that were being measured, (2) the participants in the qualitative phase of this case study would participate and respond honestly about their beliefs, attitudes, and concerns on the questionnaire and in the focus group sessions of this study, and (3) a vast majority of the classified teaching staff at the research site would actively participate in this study.

Conclusion

The information provided in Chapter 3 describes the methodology that was used to investigate, measure, and analyze the five research questions proposed in this study. The researcher discussed the problem, the research site and the participants in the study, the inquiry methods and rationale of the study, the procedures set forth for inquiry, the quantitative and qualitative instruments from inquiry, data gathering procedures, data analysis procedures, and the essential assumptions of the study. In Chapter 4, the researcher presents the results of the study on the collective learning culture of a school organization based upon the five domains of the EVAEM.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Findings

Purpose

In the 21st century, public school reform in American public education will continue to face a number of extraordinary challenges and changes that are detrimental to the continued stability of our country. The recent economic downturn and recessions, the rapid development of a global competitive economic environment, and the fiscal instability of our local, state, and federal governments have a direct impact on the effectiveness and stability of our public education system in the United States of America.

> In light of budget constraints and larger class sizes coupled with the flurry of new initiatives focused on issues of the moment or quick fixes the way forward appears murky at best. Despite voluminous studies on causes, effective and potential solutions little achievement has been achieved. (Balls et al., 2011, p. x)

Thus, this research study on the collective learning culture of a school organization is an attempt by the researcher to shed light on the ability to use the EVAEM as a potential resource and method to address a number of issues that are facing public education in America. Marquardt (2011) noted that there is substantial evidence in other professions that the development of a learning organization and the creation of a strong learning culture within an organization are imperative for organizations "to began to realize their potential for increasing organizational performance, competiveness, and success" (p. x).

Analysis Overview

The researcher in this mixed-methods case study developed five research questions that are based on the five domains in the EVAEM theoretical model. The first domain of the EVAEM pertains to the concept of individual and collective dispositions in

a school organization. According to NCATE (2000), dispositions are the "values, commitments, and professional ethics that influence behaviors towards students, colleagues, and communities and effect student learning, motivation, and learning" (Wesson, 2008, p. 31). The researcher in this case study focused his investigation and research on the collective nature of the dispositions domain with regard to a public middle school organization in the southeastern region of the United States. The researcher in this study sought to investigate the impact of the classified staff members' (teachers') dispositions on the collective learning culture of the organization.

The second domain of the EVAEM theoretical model deals with the construct of professional experiences. According to Balls et al. (2011), professional experiences

can be defined as the past personal experiences of each community member as a learner, teacher, team member, and leader. Collective professional experiences of an organization as unit can be defined as the past experiences of the organization as a whole unit. (p. 73)

The researcher in this case study sought to investigate and research the impact of professional experiences of the classified staff members (teachers) on the collective learning culture of the school organization.

In the third domain of the EVAEM, the physical and organizational structures of the school organization focus on the human elements of the organization. Balls et al. (2011) noted that "structures guide a school through day-to-day operations. Structures can include how students and teachers are grouped, teacher leadership, and student relationships" (p. 53). The goal of this mixed-methods case study on the collective learning culture of a school organization is to research and investigate the impact of the physical and organizational structures of the school on the classified staff members'

(teachers') collective learning culture of the organization.

The fourth domain of the EVAEM deals with the concepts of shared decision making and the empowerment of the stakeholders in the organization. In this research study, the researcher focused his investigation and research on the impact of shared decision-making processes of the classified staff members (teachers) on the collective learning culture of the school organization. The shared decision and empowerment domain of the EVAEM would "measure the degree of shared decision-making opportunities to contribute to the development of productive interactions, routines, and common language of learning" (Balls et al., 2011, p. 26).

The fifth and final domain of the EVAEM focuses on the construct of assessing one's course of action as a reflective teacher in the classroom and throughout the school organization. According to Taggart and Wilson (1998), the ability of a teacher to employ reflective thinking in the classroom as "the process of making informed and logical decisions on educational matters, then assessing the consequences of those decisions" is a critical element in the creation of the individual and collective learning culture of a school organization (p. 2). The goal of the researcher with regard to the assessment and reflection domain of the EVAEM was to measure the impact of the assessment and reflective skills of the classified staff members (teachers) on the collective learning culture of the organization.

The organization of Chapter 4 of this research study on the collective learning culture of a middle school organization in the southeastern region of the United States is to focus on each domain separately. All five of the domains in the EVAEM–dispositions, professional experiences, structure, shared decision making, and assessment and reflection–will use the same organizational format to allow the researcher to present both

the quantitative and qualitative data obtained during this research study. The researcher presents and focuses on the data for each domain in the same logical format to ensure that there is uniformity and conformity with the data being presented by the researcher for each domain. The researcher begins each section of Chapter 4 by presenting the quantitative data for each domain that was derived from the participants' responses on the 43-question EVAEMSI. The researcher was able to obtain 33 participants of the classified staff members (teachers) from a total of 37 possible participants at the research site who are classified staff members (teachers). The first four questions of the EVAEMSI are deemed by the researcher as categorical questions. The categorical questions were designed by the researcher to be used to differentiate the responses of the participants based upon the number of years of experience, gender, advance degrees obtained, and areas of licensure. However, upon completion and analysis of the data obtained from the EVAEMSI, the researcher chose not to use the categorical questions as a means to analyze the quantitative survey data in Chapter 4 of this research study.

The quantitative data for each domain are presented in two separate tables for each domain. The quantitative data obtained from the survey instrument yielded a numerical score based on the impact that question has on the collective learning culture of the school organization. The researcher presents in the first table for each domain the specific question from the survey instrument that can be with the domain of the EVAEM. The researcher also includes the positive numerical yields of agree and strongly agree responses for each question of the domain. The researcher also provides the positive impact score for each question with regard to the specific domain. This numerical yield allowed the researcher to rank the positive impact for each question with regard to the importance or impact that each question has on the collective learning culture for each

domain. The ability to obtain a positive impact score for each question allowed the researcher to rank each question within the domain from the strongest positive to weakest positive impact score.

In the second table for each domain is a continuation of the quantitative data for each question of the EVAEMSI. The goal of the second table for each domain was to continue the positive numerical data obtained from the EVAEMSI for each domain of the EVAEM. The second table for each domain of the EVAEM focuses on the strongest possible points from the positive responses for each question, the greatest possible percent of possible positive points, and the percent of contribution to the total point yield of positive responses for each question.

The third and fourth table presented by the researcher in each of the five domains deal with the qualitative instruments designed by the researcher to measure the collective learning culture of a school organization. The third and fourth tables in each domain present and focus on the qualitative responses that were obtained from the participants at the research site by using the five domains of the EVAEMQI and the two focus group sessions. The researcher was able to obtain the qualitative data from the web-based questionnaire for each specific domain of the EVAEM separately and also from the narrative responses obtained by the researcher in the two focus group sessions. The third and fourth tables for each domain focus on the themes obtained from the classified staff members' (teachers') participation in the questionnaire and those who participated in the two focus group sessions. The descriptive narratives obtained from the questionnaire and the focus group sessions were coded by the researcher to develop specific themes that were associated with each domain.

The researcher presents this information for each domain by focusing on the

cumulative distribution frequency of each theme with regard to each specific domain of the EVAEM. The frequency, the percent of impact, and the cumulative percent of impact for each theme within each specific domain is also given a weighed value to provide a positive measurable measure of impact. The ranking of each theme for each domain also yielded to the researcher a weighed order of strongest to weakest impact for each themed response from the participants who took part in both of the qualitative phases of this research study.

Section 1: Quantitative and Qualitative Results for the Disposition Domain

The researcher identified 11 questions from the EVAEMSI that were identified as specific questions that provided a logical and valid measurement of the impact of the collective learning culture within the constructs of the disposition domain. The following 11 questions were identified by the researcher as questions that are logical and valid to obtain a quantitative measurement of the disposition domain of the EVAEM.

Table 3

Positive Agreement and Positive Impact Score Data for the Dispositions Domain: Eury Value-Added Experience Model Survey Instrument

Question	SA(N)	A(N)	PIS(N)
Q_5: My teaching goals and instructional methods address a variety of learning styles in my classroom.	90(18)	56(14)	146(32)
Q_{13}: I set my own personal goals for my own professional growth as a teacher and as a teacher leader in my learning organization.	70(12)	72(18)	142(30)
Q_{14}: I am committed to critical self-reflections and evaluation of my own instructional practices as a teacher.	50(10)	72(18)	130(30)
Q_{26}: This organization is committed to continuous improvement.	75(15)	52(13)	127(28)
Q_{24}: This organization has a clear vision for the future.	50(10)	68(17)	118(27)
Q_{25}: Employees and volunteers are committed to the mission of this organization.	35(7)	76(19)	111(26)
Q_{12}: I seek out opportunities to share my knowledge and also serve as a teacher leader in my school organization.	65(13)	40(10)	105(23)
Q_{43}: Learning and improving permeates everything we do.	45(9)	60(15)	105(24)
Q_{29}: We would change this organization if it would help us better to meet our mission.	30(6)	72(18)	102(24)
Q_{40}: This organization is committed to building capacity to be effective over the long term.	35(7)	64(16)	99(23)
Q_{35}: Employees and volunteers are clear about the link between what they are doing and strategic goals of the organization.	45(9)	52(13)	97(22)

Note: (N)= Number of Positive Participant Responses, SA= Strongly Agree Responses, A= Agree Responses, PIS= Positive Impact Score.

The positive response data from the participants on the EVAEMSI are presented

in Table 3 from the left to the right. The headings of the table deal with the specific

question asked from the EVAEMSI that dealt with the domain of dispositions. The

headings of strongly agree and agree pertain to the number of participants (N) who rated

their response to the question as strongly agree or agree on the survey instrument. The

positive impact score is a combined score of both the strongly agree and the agree responses from the specific question with regard to the collective learning culture of the organization within the disposition domain of the EVAEM.

The classified staff members who participated in the EVAEMSI selected question 5 as having the strongest positive agreement score of the disposition domain of the EVAEM. Question 5 asked the participants to rate the impact of how their teaching goals and instructional methods addressed a variety of learning. The classified staff members of the organization acknowledged that their teaching goals and instructional methods address a variety of learning styles in their classroom and throughout the school organization had the strongest positive impact within the disposition domain of the EVAEM. Eighteen participants responded to the question with strongly agree, while 14 participants responded to the question with agreement to question 5. Thus, question 5 had a positive impact score of 146 from 32 participant responses.

The participants responded to question 25 as the median positive impact score of the 11 questions that dealt with the disposition domain on the EVAEMSI. Question 25 asked the participants to rate the impact of how employees and volunteers are committed to the mission of this organization. The responses provided from question 25 noted that seven participants responded with strongly agree and 19 participants responded with agreement to the question. A positive impact score of 111 from 26 participants ranked this question as having a median positive impact on the collective learning culture of the school organization.

The lowest positive response question from the classified staff members who participated in the EVAEMSI selected question 35 as having the least positive impact score on the collective learning culture of the organization within the disposition domain

of the EVAEM. Question 35 asked the participants in the survey instrument to rate how they perceived the employees and volunteers to be clear about the link between what they are doing and the strategic goals of the organization. A positive impact score of 97 from 35 participants who demonstrated in the survey instrument believed that this question had the lowest positive impact on the collective learning culture of the organization with regard to the disposition domain of the EVAEM.

Table 4

Strongest Possible Points from Positive, Greatest % of Possible Points, and % of Contribution of the Total Positive Points of the Domain for the Dispositions Domain: Eury Value-Added Experience Model Survey Instrument

Question	Total # of Possible	% of Possible	% of Domain
Q_5: My teaching goals and instructional methods address a variety of learning styles in my classroom.	165(33)	88	11.38
Q_{13}: I set my own personal goals for my own professional growth as a teacher and as a teacher leader in my learning organization.	150(30)	95	11.07
Q_{14}: I am committed to critical self-reflections and evaluation of my own instructional practices as a teacher.	150(30)	87	10.14
Q_{26}: This organization is committed to continuous improvement.	140(28)	90.7	9.90
Q_{24}: This organization has a clear vision for the future.	135(27)	87.4	9.20
Q_{25}: Employees and volunteers are committed to the mission of this organization.	130(26)	84.6	8.65
Q_{12}: I seek out opportunities to share my knowledge and also serve as a teacher leader in my school organization.	115(23)	91.3	8.19
Q_{43}: Learning and improving permeates everything we do.	120(24)	87.5	8.19
Q_{29}: We would change this organization if it would help us better to meet our mission.	120(24)	85	7.95
$Q_{40:}$ This organization is committed to building capacity to be effective over the long term.	115(23)	86.1	7.72
$Q_{35:}$ Employees and volunteers are clear about the link between what they are doing and strategic goals of the organization.	110(22)	88.2	7.56

Note: Total # of Possible = Strongest Possible Point From Positive Participant Responses, % of Possible = Greatest Possible % of Possible positive Points, % of Domain = % of Contribution to the Total Points of Positive Participant Responses.

In Table 4, the data obtained from the responses of the classified teaching staff at the research site supply a measurement of the impact of collective learning culture with regard to the disposition domain of the EVAEMS. Each of the 11 questions yielded a measurement of the strongest possible positive points obtainable from the number of participants who answered the question. The responses may be positive or negative; however, the strongest possible positive point total was only presented by the researcher in Table 4. The greatest possible percent of possible points was also calculated by the researcher from the data obtained from the responses to each question. The final set of data presented in Table 4 deal with the percent of contribution to the total points of positive responses for each question with regard to the disposition domain of the EVAEM.

In Table 4, question 5 had the strongest possible point accumulation for the total positive responses with a total of 165 from the 33 participant responses who recorded a response for question 5. Question 5 also had the largest percent of contribution to the total points of positive responses from the classified teaching staff members within the disposition domain of the EVAEMSI. Question 5 had 11.38% of the total points of positive responses within the disposition domain.

Question 5 did not have the greatest possible percent of the possible positive points available from the responses from the participants on the EVAEMSI. The question that had the greatest possible percent of possible positive points from the disposition domain of the EVAEMs was question 13. Question 13 asked the participants, "I set my own personal goals for my own professional growth as a teacher and as a teacher leader in my learning organization." Question 13 earned 95% of the greatest possible percent of the possible positive points. Question 13 was second in both the strongest possible point

from positive participant responses and percent of contribution to the total points of positive responses.

The data obtained from the disposition domain of the EVAEMSI clearly define question 25 as the median response to the 11 questions of the quantitative instrument to measure the impact of the collective learning culture of the research site. Question 25 scored 130 possible points from the positive of 26 positive responses and 8.65% of contribution to the total points of positive responses. On the other hand, question 25 had the lowest possible percent of possible positive points from the response in the disposition domain of the EVAEMSI. Question 25 asked the participants to rate the impact of how they perceived the belief that employees and volunteers are committed to the mission of the organization. The responses from the participants clearly demonstrate that this question had the lowest positive percent of possible positive points from the questions within the disposition domain of the EVAEMSI.

Table 5

Cumulative Frequency Distributions of Responses of the Dispositions Domain: Eury Value-Added Experience Model Questionnaire Instrument

Theme	*f*	*%*	Cumulative %
Student Learning	4	15.4	15.4
Motivation	3	11.5	26.9
Values, Morals, Ethics, and Attitudes	10	38.5	65.4
Achievement and Success	6	23.1	88.5
Effort, Commitment, Expectations, Interest	3	11.5	100

Note: f = Frequency of the Theme, % = Percent of the Domain, Cumulative % = Cumulative Percent of the Domain.

In Table 5, the researcher used the EVAEMQI to acquire qualitative data from the participants in the research study on the collective learning culture of a school

organization. The five main themes identified in Table 5 were obtained by the researcher

for the disposition domain of the EVAEM via the use of the questionnaire instrument.

The researcher was able to identify and code the responses of the participants on the

questionnaire instrument to obtain the frequency (f), the percent of distribution of the

theme (P), and the cumulative percent (Cumulative P) for each domain of the EVAEM.

The theme of values, morals, ethics, and attitudes had the greatest frequency of 10 of 26

responses on the questionnaire instrument used by the researcher to measure the impact

of dispositions on the collective learning culture of the school organization. Thus, this

one specific theme within the disposition domain of the questionnaire had the largest

percent of the total responses with 38.5% of the responses that dealt with the first domain

of the EVAEM. There were two different themes that had the lowest frequency and

percentage of impact from the qualitative data obtained from the responses on the

questionnaire instrument. The theme of motivation had a frequency of three responses

and the theme of effort, commitment, expectation, and interest also had a frequency of

responses. The data provided in Table 5 clearly demonstrate the perceptions of how the

disposition domain impacts the collective learning culture of the school organization.

Table 6

Cumulative Frequency Distributions of Responses from the Disposition Domain: Eury Value-Added Experience Model Focus Group Narratives

Theme	*f*	*%*	Cumulative *%*
Student Learning	32	21.2	21.2
Motivation	10	6.6	27.8
Values, Morals, Ethics, and Attitudes	30	19.9	47.7
Student Needs	5	3.3	51
Achievement, Success	29	19.2	70.2
Effort, Commitment, Expectations	30	19.9	90.1
Relationships	15	9.9	100

Note: f = Frequency of the Theme, % = Percent of the Domain, Cumulative % = Cumulative Percent of the Domain.

In Table 6, the researcher was able to identify seven different themes from the narratives obtained from the participants in the two focus group sessions. The number of themes was increased by the researcher due to the amount of narrative obtained from both focus group sessions. The number of themes in Table 5 identified by the researcher from the responses on the questionnaire instrument was five; however, the number of themes that deal with the disposition domain of the EVAEM was increased to seven in Table 6 from the narratives obtained by the researcher in the focus group sessions.

Student learning was the most identifiable theme from the two focus group sessions that dealt with the disposition domain of the EVAEM. The narrative obtained by the researcher from the two focus group sessions noted that that student learning was mentioned 32 times within the narrative. The theme of student learning had the largest response rate from the narratives of the two focus group sessions by acquiring 21.2% of the total responses. There are two themes that had the second highest frequency rate in the narrative provided by the participants in the two focus group sessions. The theme of

values, morals, ethics, and attitudes had a frequency (*f*) rate of 30 or 19.9% of the

percentage of the total number of responses that dealt with this theme in the disposition

domain of the EVAEM. The theme of effort, commitment, and expectations was also the

second highest theme identified by the researcher from the narrative obtained from the

two focus group sessions with the disposition domain of the EVAEM. The effort,

commitment, and expectations theme in the two focus group sessions also had a

frequency (*f*) rate of 30 or 19.9% of the total number of responses identified by the

researcher with regard to the disposition domain of the two focus group sessions.

The researcher was able to obtain the theme of student needs in Table 6 as having

the lowest frequency (*f*) rate of the seven themes identified in the narratives of the two

focus group sessions. The theme of student needs had a frequency (*f*) rate of five

responses or 3.3% of the total impact of this theme with regard to the disposition domain

of the EVAEM.

Section 2: Quantitative and Qualitative Results for the Professional Experiences Domain

The researcher identified four questions from the EVAEMSI that provided a

logical and valid measure of the collective learning culture of the organization within the

professional experiences domain of the EVAEM. The quantitative data obtained from

the EVAEMSI can be found in Tables 7 and 8.

Table 7

Positive Agreement and Positive Impact Score Data from the Professional Experiences Domain: Eury Value-Added Experience Model Survey Instrument

Question	SA(N)	A(N)	PIS(N)
Q_5: My teaching goals and instructional methods address a variety of learning styles in my classroom.	90(18)	56(14)	146
Q_{13}: I set my own personal goals for my own professional growth as a teacher leader in my learning organization.	60(12)	72(18)	132
Q_{21}: This organizational structure of the school allows me as a teacher to share my beliefs, issues, and concerns in the governance of the organization.	40(8)	68(17)	108
Q_7: I feel comfortable with the implementation of the Common Core and Essential Standards curriculum into my classroom instruction.	35(7)	72(18)	107

Note: (N) = Number of Positive Participant Responses, SA= Strongly Agree Responses, A= Agree Responses, PIS= Positive Impact Score.

The positive response data from the participants on the EVAEMSI are presented in Table 7 from the left to the right. The headings of the table deal with the specific question asked from the EVAEMS instrument that dealt with the domain of dispositions. The headings of strongly agree and agree pertain to the number of participants (N) who rated their response to the question as strongly agree or agree on the survey instrument. The positive impact score is a combined score of both strongly agree and agree responses from the specific question with regard to the collective learning culture of the organization within the disposition domain of the EVAEM.

The classified staff members of the school organization chose question 5 as having the greatest positive impact of the four questions on the EVAEMS with regard to the professional experience domain of the EVAEM. A total positive impact score of 146

was obtained from the strongly agree score of 90 and the score of 56 from those participants who chose to agree to this question. The classified staff members believed that question 5, "My teaching goals and instructional methods address a variety of learning styles in my classroom," was the question in the professional experience domain of the EVAEMS that had the greatest agreement and positive impact score on the collective learning culture of the school organization.

The classified staff members who participated in the EVAEMS chose question 7 as having the lowest positive agreement and impact score on the collective learning culture of the professional experience domain from the survey instrument. Question 7 asked the participants in the EVAEMSI to rate the question of "I feel comfortable with the implementation of the Common Core and Essential Standards curriculum into my classroom instruction." A total of seven classified staff members chose to select strongly agree with a score of 35. A total of 18 classified staff members chose to agree with question 7 with a positive agreement score of 72. Thus, a total positive impact score of 107 is obtained by adding the positive strongly agree total with the positive agree total to produce a positive impact score.

Table 8

Strongest Possible Points from Positive Responses, Greatest % of Possible, % of Contribution of Positive Responses for the Professional Experiences Domain: Eury Value-Added Experience Model Survey Instrument

Question	Total # of Possible	% of Possible	% of Domain
Q_5: My teaching goals and instructional methods address a variety of learning styles in my classroom.	160(32)	91.2	29.6
Q_{13}: I set my own personal goals for my own professional growth as a teacher leader in my learning organization.	150(3)	88	26.8
Q_{21}: This organizational structure of the school allows me as a teacher to share my beliefs, issues, and concerns in the governance of the organization.	125(25)	86.4	21.9
Q_7: I feel comfortable with the Implementation of the Common Core and Essential Standards curriculum into my classroom instruction.	125(25)	85.6	21.7

Note: Total # of Possible = Strongest Possible Point from Positive Participant Responses, % of Possible = Greatest Possible % of Positive Points, % of Domain = % of Contribution to the Total Points of Positive Participant Responses.

The data provided in Table 8 are extensions of the data provided in Table 7. The data provided in Table 8 present the results of the data obtained from the EVAEMSI that deal with the domain of professional experiences in the EVAEM. Table 8 identifies three additional measurements required to measure the impact of professional experiences within the research study on the collective learning culture of a school organization. The strongest possible point from positive (N), the greatest possible percent of possible positive points, and the percent of contribution to the total points of positive responses are presented in the results from the EVAEMSI in Table 8. The participants in the

EVAEMSI identified question 5 as having the strongest possible points from positive with a score of 160 from 32 participants. The data pertaining to question 5 also note that this question had the greatest possible percent of possible points with a score of 91.2%, and 29.6% of the contribution to the total points of positive responses. Thus, the classified staff members at this research site identified this question or statement as having the greatest impact on the collective learning culture of the school organization with regard to the professional experience domain.

The data in Table 8 also reinforce that question 7 in Table 7 had the lowest positive impact on the collective learning culture of the school organization within the professional experience domain of the EVAEM. However, the data from Table 8 show that question 21 was viewed by the participants of the research study on the EVAEMSI as having a similar perception of how this question or statement may affect the collective learning culture of the organization through the professional experience domain of the EVAEM. Question 21 asked the participants in the EVAEMSI to rate their response to the question on how much they perceived the impact of the statement had on the collective learning culture of the organization. The researcher asked the participants to rate their response to the question "the organizational structure of the school allows me as a teacher to share my beliefs, issues, and concerns in the governance of the organization." The data obtained from the EVAEMS for questions 7 and 21 were similar; however, question 21 had a slightly higher positive impact score of 108. The data in Table 8 further demonstrate that both questions had the least positive impact on the collective learning culture of the school organization with regard to the professional experiences domain of the EVAEM. Thus, the greatest possible percent of positive points and the percent of contribution to the total points of positive responses of both questions are

statistically equal in the positive impact that these two questions have on the collective

learning culture of the organization.

Table 9

*Cumulative Frequency Distributions of Professional Experiences Domain: Eury Value-
Added Experience Model Questionnaire Instrument*

Theme	f	*%*	Cumulative *%*
Collaboration	13	44.9	44.9
Instruction	6	20.7	65.6
Student Learning	3	10.3	75.9
Professional Learning Communities	7	24.1	100

Note: f = Frequency of the Theme, % = Percent of the Domain, Cumulative % = Cumulative Percent of the
Domain.

In Table 9, the researcher used the EVAEMQI to acquire categorical (qualitative)

data from the participants in the research study on the collective learning culture of a

school organization. The four main themes identified in Table 9 were obtained by the

researcher for the professional experience domain of the EVAEM via the use of the

questionnaire instrument. The researcher was able to identify and code the responses of

the participants on the questionnaire instrument to obtain the frequency (f), the percent of

distribution of the theme (P), and the cumulative percent (Cumulative P) for each domain

of the EVAEM. The four themes identified by the researcher from the questionnaire

instrument for the professional experience domain of the EVAEM are collaboration,

instruction, student learning, and PLCs. The researcher was able to identify that the

theme of collaboration had the highest frequency of 13 from the data obtained from the

questionnaire instrument with regard to the domain of professional experience. The

theme of collaboration was identified by the researcher from the coded narrative in the

questionnaire instrument as having 44.9% of the total coded responses from the

participants. Therefore, the classified staff members who participated in the EVAEMQI

noted in their written responses to the professional experience question that the idea of

collaboration had the greatest impact on their collective learning culture of the school

organization. The theme of student learning had the lowest frequency (*f*) with a coded

score of three. Thus, the coded theme of student learning had a value of only 10.3%,

making this theme the lowest scoring theme from Table 10 of the professional experience

domain of the EVAEM.

Table 10

*Cumulative Frequency Distributions of the Professional Experiences Domain: Eury
Value-Added Experience Model Focus Group Narratives*

Theme	*f*	*%*	Cumulative *%*
Collaboration	20	29	29
Instruction	18	26.1	55.1
Student Learning	8	11.6	66.7
Professional Learning Communities (PLC)	5	7.2	73.9
Experience, Background Knowledge	18	26.1	10

Note: f = Frequency of the Theme, % = Percent of the Domain, Cumulative % = Cumulative Percent of the
Domain.

In Table 10, the researcher was able to identify five different themes from the

narratives obtained from the participants in the two focus group sessions. The number of

themes was increased by the researcher due to the amount of narrative obtained from both

of the focus group sessions. The number of themes in Table 9 as identified by the

researcher from the responses on the questionnaire instrument was four; however, the

number of themes that dealt with the professional experience domain of the EVAEM was

increased to five in Table 10 from the narratives obtained by the researcher in the focus

group sessions.

The five coded themes that were prevalent in the narrative obtained from the two focus group sessions focused on collaboration, instruction, student learning, PLCs, and experience/background knowledge. The professional experience narratives provided by the participants in the two focus group sessions identified the theme of collaboration as having the strongest positive impact on the collective learning culture of the school organization with the professional experience domain of the EVAEM. The theme of collaboration had a frequency (f) of 20 with 29% of the total number of coded responses that pertained to the domain of professional experiences in the EVAEM. The themes of instruction and experience/background knowledge had a frequency rate of 18 with both themes supplying 26.1% of the total number of coded responses with the narratives of the professional experience domain.

The theme of PLCs had the lowest frequency rate of coded responses in the narratives provided by the focus group sessions on the professional experience domain of the EVAEM. PLCs scored a frequency rate of 5 with only 7.2% of the total number of coded responses from the narrative with regard to the professional experience domain.

Section 3: Quantitative and Qualitative Results for the Structure Domain

The researcher was able to identify 17 questions from the EVAEMSI that provided a valid and logical measurement of the collective learning culture of the organization within the constructs of the structure domain.

Table 11

Positive Agreement and Positive Impact Score Data for the Structure Domain: Eury Value-Added Experience Model Survey Instrument

Question	SA(N)	A(N)	PIS(N)
Q6: I currently participate with my colleagues to improve student learning in my classroom and throughout the entire school organization.	75(15)	56(14)	131
Q10: I take advantage of the professional learning opportunities provided by the school organization.	50(10)	80(20)	130
Q9: I effectively and efficiently use my non-instructional time for instructional planning.	55(11)	60(15)	115
Q8: I provide support and assistance to my colleagues both vertically and horizontally in my organizations structure	35(7)	76(19)	111
Q15: I have confidence within my colleagues to develop formative assessments in a collaborative environment to guide my daily instruction.	40(8)	68(17)	108
Q29: We would change this organization if it would help us to better meet our mission.	30(6)	72(18)	102
Q34: Employees and volunteers receive appropriate orientation and training.	30(6)	72(18)	102
Q32: Evaluation is part of every program and operation of this organization.	35(7)	60(15)	95
Q36: Individual employees and volunteers are engaged in action learning.	35(7)	60(15)	95
Q27: Leaders are continually being developed for future roles in the organization.	45(9)	48(12)	93
Q28: Organization is always looking for ways to use resources more effectively and efficiently.	45(9)	48(12)	93
Q37: Work teams are engaged in action learning.	35(7)	52(13)	87

Question	SA(N)	A(N)	PIS(N)
Q_{22}: Processes are in place within the organization to effectively protect the collaborative time for planning with my fellow colleagues within the organization.	35(7)	40(10)	75
Q_{41}: Organization's products and services match what the clients/customers want.	10(2)	64(16)	74
Q_{30}: Board pays attention to enhancing the overall performance of the organization.	25(5)	48(12)	73
Q_{39}: Organization works with community for mutual learning.	25(5)	32(8)	57
Q_{42}: Resources (people, money, facilities, and equipment, etc.) are aligned with intended outcomes of the organization.	10(2)	40(10)	50

Note: (N) = Number of Positive Participant Responses, SA= Strongly Agree Responses, A= Agree Responses, PIS= Positive Impact Score.

The headings of Table 11 deal with the specific questions asked from the

EVAEMS instrument that dealt with the domain of dispositions. The headings of

strongly agree and agree pertain to the number of participants (N) who rated their

responses to the questions as strongly agree or agree on the survey instrument. The

positive impact score is a combined score of both the strongly agree and the agree

responses from the specific questions with regard to the collective learning culture of the

organization within the structure domain of the EVAEM. The number of questions

pertaining to the structure domain of the EVAEMSI had the largest number compared to

the other four domains of the EVAEMSI. A total of 19 questions were identified by the

researcher as questions that pertained to the structure domain of the EVAEMSI.

The data in Table 11 identified question 6 as having the highest positive

agreement score and positive impact score of the 17 questions in the structure domain.

The researcher asked the participants in the EVAEMSI the question, "I currently

participate with my colleagues to improve student learning in my classroom and throughout the entire school organization." The classified staff members of the school organization gave question 6 a positive impact score of 131. A total of 15 members of the organization gave this question a strongly agree score of 75, while 14 individuals gave this question an agreement score of 56.

The median score for the positive agreement and positive impact score goes to question 36. Question 36 asked the participants in the EVAEMSI to rate how they believed individual employees and volunteers are engaged in action learning at the school organization. A total of seven individuals rated this question with a score of 35 with an answer of strongly agree, while 15 people were in agreement of this question with a score of 60. A combined positive impact score of 95 was obtained by adding the strongly agree score of 35 with the score of 60 from those who chose to agree to this statement.

In the structure domain of the EVAEMSI, question 42 obtained the lowest positive impact score of the 17 questions. The researcher asked the participants in the EVAEMSI to rate their perception of how the resources (people, money, facilities, and equipment, etc.) are aligned with the intended outcomes of the organization. The classified staff members of the research site gave this question a positive impact score of 50. A total of two individuals were in strong agreement with a score of 10, while 10 individuals agreed to this question with a positive agreement score of 40.

Table 12

Strongest Possible Points from Positive Responses, Greatest % of Possible, % of Contribution of Positive Responses from the Structure Domain: Eury Value-Added Experience Model Survey Instrument

Question	Total # of Possible	% of Possible	% of Domain
Q_6: I currently participate with my colleagues to improve student learning in my classroom and throughout the entire school organization.	145(29)	90.3	8.23
Q_{10}: I take advantage of the professional learning opportunities provided by the school organization.	150(30)	86.7	8.17
Q_9: I effectively and efficiently use my non-instructional time for instructional planning.	130(26)	88.5	7.23
Q_8: I provide support and assistance to my colleagues both vertically and horizontally in my organizations structure	130(26)	84.6	6.91
Q_{15}: I have confidence within my colleagues to develop formative assessments in a collaborative environment to guide my daily instruction.	125(25)	86.4	6.79
Q_{29}: We would change this organization if it would help us to better meet our mission.	120(24)	85	6.41
Q_{34}: Employees and volunteers receive appropriate orientation and training.	120(24)	85	6.41
Q_{32}: Evaluation is part of every program and operation of this organization.	110(22)	86.4	5.97
Q_{36}: Individual employees and volunteers are engaged in action learning.	110(22)	86.4	5.97
Q_{27}: Leaders are continually being developed for future roles in the organization.	105(21)	88.6	5.84
Q_{28}: Organization is always looking for ways to use resources more effectively and efficiently.	105(21)	88.6	5.84
Q_{37}: Work teams are engaged in action learning.	100(20)	87	5.47

Question	Total # of Possible	% of Possible	% of Domain
Q$_{22}$: Processes are in place within the organization to effectively protect the collaborative time for planning with my fellow colleagues within the organization.	85(17)	88.2	4.71
Q$_{41}$: Organization's products and services match what the clients/customers want.	90(18)	82.2	4.65
Q$_{30}$: Board pays attention to enhancing the overall performance of the organization.	85(17)	85.9	4.58
Q$_{39}$: Organization works with community for mutual learning.	65(13)	87.7	3.58
Q$_{42}$: Resources (people, money, facilities, and equipment, etc.) are aligned with intended outcomes of the organization.	60(12)	83.3	3.14

Note: Total # of Possible = Strongest Possible Point from Positive Participant Responses, % of Possible = Greatest Possible % of Positive Points, % of Domain = % of Contribution to the Total Points of Positive Participant Responses.

The data provided in Table 12 is an extension of the data provided in Table 11.

The data provided in Table 12 presents the results of the data obtained from the

EVAEMSI that deal with the domain of structure in the EVAEM. Table 12 identifies

three additional measurements required to measure the impact of the structure domain

within the research study on the collective learning culture of a school organization. The

strongest possible point from positive (N), the greatest possible percent of possible

positive points, and the percent of contribution to the total points of positive responses

are presented in the results from the EVAEMSI in Table 12.

The participants in the EVAEMSI identified question 10 as having the strongest

possible points from positive with a score of 150 from 30 participants. However, when

the greatest possible percent of the possible positive points is calculated for question 10, a

percentage rate of 86.7% is obtained. On the other hand, question 6 obtained a score of

145 strongest possible points from positive responses for the 29 participants who chose to answer this question in the EVAEMSI. The greatest possible percentage of possible positive points for question 6 was a score of 90.3%, thus making question 6 as having the highest percentage of greatest possible percent of possible points among all 17 questions of the structure domain on the EVAEMSI.

The classified staff members awarded question 36 as having the median score in Table 12 with the strongest possible points for positive responses score of 110 from 22 positive responses. Question 36 also obtained a score of 86.4% from the greatest possible percent of possible positive points available from the responses of the participants on the EVAEMSI. The classified staff members selected question 42 as having the lowest score of strongest possible points from positive responses with a score of 60 from 12 responses. Therefore, only 12 classified staff members chose question 42 as having a positive impact on the collective learning culture of the school organization. The results of the low possible point from positive score of 60 on question 42 allow a low percentage rate of 83.3% on the greatest possible percentage of possible positive points from the 17 questions that dealt with the structure domain of the EVAEM.

Table 13

Cumulative Frequency Distributions for the Structure Domain: Eury Value-Added Experience Model Questionnaire Instrument

Theme	*f*	*%*	Cumulative *%*
Organizational Structure	8	21	21
Grouping of Students	7	18.4	39.4
Organizational Scheduling	5	13.2	52.6
Opportunities, Programs, Activities	7	18.4	71
Physical and Social Environment	6	15.8	86.8

Note: f = Frequency of the Theme, % = Percent of the Domain, Cumulative % = Cumulative Percent of the Domain.

In Table 13, the researcher used the EVAEMQI to acquire categorical (qualitative) data from the participants in the research study on the collective learning culture of a school organization. The five main themes identified in Table 13 were obtained by the researcher for the professional experience domain of the EVAEM via the use of the questionnaire instrument. The researcher was able to identify and code the responses of the participants on the questionnaire instrument to obtain the frequency (*f*), the percent of distribution of the theme (P), and the cumulative percent (Cumulative P) for each domain of the EVAEM. The five themes identified by the researcher from the questionnaire instrument for the structure domain of the EVAEM are the organizational structures, grouping of students, organizational scheduling, opportunities, and the physical and social environment.

The researcher was able to code and identify the theme of organizational structure as having the highest frequency of distribution in the qualitative data obtained from the EVAEMQI. The theme of organizational structure had a frequency rate of eight within the narratives of the responses on the questionnaire instrument in the structure domain.

The theme of organizational structure had a percent of distribution of the structure

domain with a score of 21%. The theme of organizational structure according to the

responses of the participants on the structure question of the EVAEQMI noted that the

theme of organizational structure had the highest frequency rate and the highest percent

of distribution among the responses.

The coded theme that obtained the lowest frequency rate and the percent of

distribution among the coded responses of the structure domain of the EVAEQMI was

the theme of organizational scheduling. The theme of organizational scheduling obtained

a frequency rate of five with a percent of distribution of 13.2% of the total responses

coded by the researcher from the structure domain narratives of the EVAEQMI.

Table 14

Cumulative Frequency Distributions for the Structure Domain: Eury Value-Added
Experience Model Focus Group Narratives

Theme	f	%	Cumulative %
Organizational Structures	60	36.8	36.8
Grouping of Students	32	19.6	56.4
Organizational Scheduling	16	9.8	66.2
Opportunities, Programs, Activities	16	9.8	76
Physical and Social Environment	39	23.9	99.9
Structures for Leadership	5	13.1	99.9

Note: f = Frequency of the Theme, % = Percent of the Domain, Cumulative % = Cumulative Percent of the
Domain.

In Table 14, the researcher was able to identify six different themes from the

narratives obtained from the participants in the two focus group sessions. The number of

themes was increased by the researcher due to the amount of narrative obtained from both

of the focus group sessions. The number of themes in Table 13 identified by the

researcher from the responses on the questionnaire instrument was five; however, the

number of themes that dealt with the structure domain of the EVAEM was increased to

six in Table 14 from the narratives obtained by the researcher in the focus group sessions.

The researcher was able to identify and code the responses of the participants on the

questionnaire instrument to obtain the frequency (*f*), the percent of distribution of the

theme (P), and the cumulative percent (Cumulative P) for each domain of the EVAEM.

The theme that obtained the highest frequency rate from the coded responses of

the classified staff members from the two focus group sessions was the theme of

organizational structures. The researcher was able to code 60 responses that dealt with

the theme of organizational structure from the focus group narratives. The theme of

organizational structure had the highest percent of distribution among the six different

themes identified by the researcher with a percentage rate of 36.8%, thus making the

theme of organizational structure the most distributed coded theme of the responses

within the structure domain. The theme of structures for leadership obtained the lowest

frequency rate of distribution among the six themes identified from the narratives of the

participants in the two focus group sessions. Structures for leadership obtained a

frequency rate of five and a distribution rate of 13.1% from the coded responses within

the structure domain of the focus group narratives.

Section 4: Quantitative and Qualitative Results of the Shared Decision-Making Domain

The researcher was able to identify 17 questions from the EVAEMSI that

provided a valid and logical measurement of the collective learning culture of the

organization within the constructs of the shared decision-making domain.

Table 15

Positive Agreement and Positive Impact Data for the Shared Decision-Making Domain: Eury Value-Added Experience Model Survey Instrument

Question	SA(N)	A(N)	PIS(N)
Q_{26}: This organization is committed to continuous improvement.	75(15)	52(13)	127
Q_{11}: My professional knowledge and input is valued by my learning organization.	65(13)	56(14)	121
Q_{20}: I take full advantage of the opportunities to create processes that directly influence student learning in my organization.	40(8)	68(17)	108
Q_{12}: I seek out opportunities to share my knowledge and also serve as a teacher leader in my school organization.	65(13)	40(10)	105
Q_{21}: The organizational structure of the school allows me as a teacher to share my beliefs, issues, and concerns in the governance of the organization.	45(9)	52(13)	97
Q_{27}: Leaders are continually being developed for future roles in this organization.	45(9)	48(12)	93
Q_{28}: Organization is always looking for ways to use resources more effectively and efficiently.	45(9)	48(12)	93
Q_{33}: Evaluation results are used in organizational planning.	25(5)	60(15)	85
Q_{38}: Effective leadership is recognized and rewarded.	30(6)	40(10)	70
Q_{23}: As a member of the organization, I have the necessary opportunities/ avenues to actively participate in the allocation of resources in the organization.	25(5)	32(8)	57

Note: (N) = Number of Positive Participant Responses, SA= Strongly Agree Responses, A= Agree Responses, PIS= Positive Impact Score.

The headings of Table 15 deal with the specific questions asked from the

EVAEMSI that dealt with the domain of dispositions. The headings of strongly agree

and agree pertain to the number of participants (N) who rated their response to the question as strongly agree or agree on the survey instrument. The positive impact score is a combined score of both the strongly agree and the agree responses from the specific question with regard to the collective learning culture of the organization within the structure domain of the EVAEM. A total of 10 questions were identified by the researcher as questions that pertained to the shared decision-making domain of the EVAEMSI.

The data in Table 15 identified question 26 as having the highest positive impact score of the 10 questions pertaining to the shared decision-making domain on the EVAEMS instrument. The researcher asked the participants to rate how they perceive question 26 on the collective learning culture of the school organization. Question 26 asked to rate the impact of how they perceived the organization is committed to continuous improvement. A total of 15 participants selected a response of strong agreement with this question. A score of 75 was obtained from the 15 participants who selected strongly agree on the EVAEMSI. On the other hand, 13 participants chose to be in agreement with the same statement. A score of 52 was obtained from the 13 participants who selected to agree with question 26 on the survey instrument. The total positive impact score for question 26 had a score of 127, thus making question 26 as having the strongest positive impact on the collective learning culture of the school organization with the shared decision-making domain of the EVAEM.

The data in Table 15 also identified question 23 as having the lowest positive impact score of the 10 questions within the shared decision-making domain of the survey instrument. The researcher asked the participants to rate how they perceived question 26, "as a member of the organization, I have the necessary opportunities/avenues to actively

participate in the allocation of resources in the organization." A total of five participants

selected to support the question with strong agreement (25). A total of eight participants

selected to support question 23 with agreement (32). The score of strongly agree (25)

plus the score of agreement (32) produces a positive impact score of 57. Thus, question

23 had the lowest positive impact score of the 10 questions from the shared decision-

making domain questions in the survey instrument.

Table 16

Strongest Possible Points from Positive Responses, Greatest % of Possible, % of Contribution of Positive Responses from the Shared Decision-Making Domain: Eury Value-Added Experience Model Survey Instrument

Question	Total # of Possible	% of Possible	% of Domain
Q_{26}: This organization is committed to continuous improvement.	140(28)	90.7	13.28
Q_{11}: My professional knowledge and input is valued by my learning organization.	135(27)	89.6	12.66
Q_{20}: I take full advantage of the opportunities to create processes that directly influence student learning in my organization.	125(25)	86.4	11.3
Q_{12}: I seek out opportunities to share my knowledge and also serve as a teacher leader in my school organization.	115(23)	91.3	10.98
Q_{21}: The organizational structure of the school allows me as a teacher to share my beliefs, issues, and concerns in the governance of the organization.	110(22)	88.2	10.15
Q_{27}: Leaders are continually being developed for future roles in this organization.	105(21)	88.6	9.73
Q_{28}: Organization is always looking for ways to use resources more effectively and efficiently.	105(21)	88.6	9.73
Q_{33}: Evaluation results are used in organizational planning.	100(20)	85	8.89
Q_{38}: Effective leadership is recognized and rewarded.	80(16)	87.5	7.32
Q_{23}: As a member of the organization, have the necessary opportunities/ avenues to actively participate in the allocation of resources in the organization.	65(13)	87.7	5.96

Note: Total # of Possible = Strongest Possible Point from Positive Participant Responses, % of Possible = Greatest Possible % of Positive Points, % of Domain = % of Contribution to the Total Points of Positive Participant Responses.

The data provided in Table 16 are extensions of the data provided in Table 15.

The data provided in Table 16 present the results of the data obtained from the

EVAEMSI that deal with the domain of shared decision making in the EVAEM. Table

17 identifies three additional measurements required to measure the impact of the shared

decision-making domain within the research study on the collective learning culture of a

school organization. The strongest possible point from positive (N), the greatest possible

percent of possible positive points, and the percent of contribution to the total points of

positive responses are presented in the results from the EVAEMS in Table 16.

The participants identified question 26 as having the strongest possible points

from the positive responses of the 10 questions in Table 16. The participants in the

EVAEMSI rated question 26 as having a score of 140 possible points for the positive

responses of 28 participants in the survey instrument. The data in Table 16 also note

question 26 as having a percentage rate of 90.7% of the greatest possible percent of

possible positive points. However, the data in Table 16 also note that question 12 had a

higher percent of the greatest possible percent of possible points of the 10 questions in

the shared decision-making domain of the EVAEMSI. Question 26 scored 91.3% of the

greatest possible percent of the possible positive points for this question in the shared

decision-making domain of the EVAEMSI.

The data from Table 16 also demonstrate that the classified staff members of the

school organization perceived question 23 as having the least positive impact of the 10

questions in the shared decision-making domain of the survey instrument. A score of 140

strongest possible points from 13 positive responses was obtained from the data of the

survey instrument with regard to this question from the shared decision-making domain

of the survey instrument. The data in Table 16 also note that question 26 had the lowest

percent of contribution of the total points of the positive responses from the participants

on the EVAEMSI. Question 23 was able to acquire a 5.96% of contribution of the total

points of the positive responses from the participants in Table 16.

Table 17

Cumulative Frequency Distributions for the Shared Decision-Making Domain: Eury
Value-Added Experience Model Questionnaire Instrument

Theme	f	%	Cumulative %
School Improvement Team (SIT)	7	25	25
Meetings	10	35.7	60.7
Committees	2	7.1	67.8
Programs	9	32.1	99.9

Note: f = Frequency of the Theme, % = Percent of the Domain, Cumulative % = Cumulative Percent of the
Domain.

In Table 17, the researcher used the EVAEMQI to acquire categorical

(qualitative) data from the participants in the research study on the collective learning

culture of a school organization. The four main themes identified in Table 17 were

obtained by the researcher for the shared decision-making domain of the EVAEM via the

use of the questionnaire instrument. The researcher was able to identify and code the

responses of the participants on the questionnaire instrument to obtain the frequency (f),

the percent of distribution of the theme (P), and the cumulative percent (Cumulative P)

for each domain of the EVAEM. The four themes identified by the researcher from the

questionnaire instrument for the shared decision-making domain of the EVAEM are the

school improvement team, meetings, committees, and programs.

The researcher was able to code and identify the theme of meetings as having the

highest frequency of distribution in the qualitative data obtained from the EVAEMQI.

The coded theme of meetings had a frequency rate of 10 from the narratives of the

responses on the questionnaire instrument in the shared decision-making domain. The theme of meetings had a percent of distribution of the shared decision-making domain with a score of 35.7%. The coded theme of meetings had the highest frequency rate and the highest percent of distribution among the responses within the shared decision-making domain of the questionnaire instrument.

The data in Table 17 also identify the coded theme of committees as having the lowest frequency rate of the four themes identified by the researcher from the narratives of responses on the questionnaire instrument. The theme of committees had a frequency rate of two from the data obtained from the participants' narratives on the questionnaire instrument. Thus, the theme of committees also had the lowest percent of distribution among the four themes of the shared decision-making domain with a score of 7.1% of the total percent of the total distribution of the theme in the domain.

Table 18

Cumulative Frequency Distribution of the Shared Decision-Making Domain of the Eury Value-Added Experience Model Focus Group Narrative

Theme	*f*	*%*	Cumulative *%*
School Improvement Team (SIT)	2	8	8
Meetings	7	28	36
Committees	2	8	44
Programs	4	16	60
Opportunities (Positive or Negative)	10	40	100

Note: f = Frequency of the Theme, % = Percent of the Domain, Cumulative % = Cumulative Percent of the Domain.

In Table 18, the researcher was able to identify five different themes from the narratives obtained from the participants in the two focus group sessions. The number of themes was increased by the researcher due to the amount of narrative obtained from both

of the focus group sessions. The number of themes in Table 17 identified by the researcher from the responses on the questionnaire instrument was four, however the number of themes that dealt with the shared decision-making domain of the EVAEM was increased to five in Table 18 from the narratives obtained by the researcher in the focus group sessions. The researcher was able to identify and code the responses of the participants from the narratives obtained from the participants in the two focus group sessions to obtain the frequency (f), the percent of distribution of the theme (P), and the cumulative percent (Cumulative P) for each domain of the EVAEM.

The coded data presented in Table 18 identifies the theme of opportunities (positive and negative) as having the greatest frequency rate of 10 within the coded responses of the narratives from the two focus group sessions. The theme of opportunities (positive and negative) obtained a score of 40% of the total number of themed responses from the narratives of the two focus group sessions within the shared decision-making domain of the EVAEM. The data in Table 18 also identify that there are two themes from the coded responses of the participants in the focus group sessions as having the least positive impact on the collective learning culture of the school organization within the shared decision-making domain of the EVAEM. The themes of school improvement team and committees were identified by the researcher from the narrative responses of the focus group sessions as having the least positive impact with the shared decision-making domain. The themes of school improvement team and committees both obtained a frequency rate of two responses and a score of 8% with regard to the percent of distribution of the theme within the shared decision-making theme of the EVAEM.

Section 5: Quantitative and Qualitative Results for the Assessment and Reflection Domain

The researcher identified seven questions from the EVAEMSI that provided a

logical and valid measure of the collective learning culture of the organization within the

assessment and reflection domain of the EVAEM. The seven EVAEMSI questions that

pertain to the assessment and reflection domain of the survey instrument are found in

Table 19.

Table 19

Positive Agreement and Positive Impact Data for the Assessment and Reflection Domain:
Eury Value-Added Experience Model Survey Instrument

Question	SA(N)	A(N)	PIS(N)
$Q_{17:}$ I am willing to collaborate, provide feedback, and supply assessment of my own teaching to my fellow colleagues.	75(15)	60(15)	135
Q_{14}: I am committed to critical self-reflection and evaluation of my own instructional practices as a teacher.	50(10)	80(20)	130
Q_{16}: I engage in discussions with my colleagues about new and innovative instructional strategies and practices in the teaching profession.	45(9)	72(18)	117
Q_{19}: I feel confident in my ability to use common formative assessment data to guide my daily instruction.	35(7)	60(15)	95
Q_{32}: Evaluation is part of every program and operation of this organization.	35(7)	60(15)	95
Q_{41}: Organization's products and services match what clients/customers want.	10(2)	64(16)	74
Q_{42}: Resources (people, money, facilities, equipment, etc.) are aligned with intended outcomes of the organization.	10(2)	40(10)	50

Note: (N) = Number of Positive Participant Responses, SA= Strongly Agree Responses, A= Agree
Responses, PIS= Positive Impact Score.

The positive response data from the participants on the EVAEMSI is presented in

Table 19 from the left to the right. The headings of the table deal with the specific question asked from the EVAEMSI that dealt with the domain of assessment and reflection. The headings of strongly agree and agree pertain to the number of participants (N) who rated their response to the question as strongly agree or agree on the survey instrument. The positive impact score is a combined score of both the strongly agree and agree responses from the specific question with regard to the collective learning culture of the organization within the assessment and reflection domain of the EVAEM.

The data in Table 19 present the positive agreement and positive impact data for the 10 questions that were presented to the research participants for the assessment and reflection domain of the survey instrument. The data provided from the participants' responses note that question 17 had the highest agreement scores and positive impact scores of the 10 questions. The researcher asked the participants to rate their response to question 17 by asking them if they were willing to collaborate, provide feedback, and supply assessment of their own teaching to their fellow colleagues. A total of 15 participants chose to select the choice strongly agree to question 17 with a score of 75. Table 19 also notes that 15 participants were also in agreement with the question with a score of 60. Thus, the combined positive impact score of 135 from the 30 participants who answered positively on question 17 can be observed in the data from Table 20.

The question that obtained the lowest positive impact score according to Table 19 from the data obtained from the assessment and reflection domain of the survey instrument is question 42. The researcher asked the classified staff members in the survey instrument to rate their perception of whether the resources (people, money, facilities, equipment, etc.) are aligned with intended outcomes of the organization. The data in Table 19 clearly note that only two participants chose strongly agree with a score

of 10 for question 42. A total of 10 participants in the survey instrument chose to be in

agreement with a score of 40 on question 42. Thus, question 42 had the lowest positive

impact score of 50 from the responses of the classified staff members on the assessment

and reflection domain of the EVAEMSI.

Table 20

Strongest Possible Points from Positive Responses, Greatest % of Possible, % of Contribution of Positive Responses from the Assessment and Reflection Domain: Eury Value-Added Experience Model Survey Instrument

Question	Total # of Possible	% of Possible	% of Domain
Q17: I am willing to collaborate, provide feedback, and supply assessment of my own teaching to my fellow colleagues.	150(30)	90	19.4
Q$_{14}$: I am committed to critical self-reflection and evaluation of my own instructional practices as a teacher.	150(30)	86.7	18.7
Q$_{16}$: I engage in discussions with my colleagues about new and innovative instructional strategies and practices in the teaching profession.	135(27)	86.7	16.8
Q$_{19}$: I feel confident in my ability to use common formative assessment data to guide my daily instruction.	110(22)	86.4	13.6
Q$_{32}$: Evaluation is part of every program and operation of this organization.	110(22)	86.4	13.6
Q$_{41}$: Organization's products and services match what clients/customers want.	90(18)	82.2	10.6
Q$_{42}$: Resources (people, money, facilities, equipment, etc.) are aligned with intended outcomes of the organization.	60(12)	83	7.2

Note: Total # of Possible = Strongest Possible Point from Positive Participant Responses, % of Possible = Greatest Possible % of Positive Points, % of Domain = % of Contribution to the Total Points of Positive Participant Responses.

The data provided in Table 20 are extensions of the data provided in Table 19.

The data provided in Table 20 present the results of the data obtained from the

EVAEMSI that deals with the domain of assessment and reflection in the EVAEM. Table 20 identifies three additional measurements required to measure the impact of the assessment and reflection domain within the research study on the collective learning culture of a school organization. The strongest possible point from positive (N), the greatest possible percent of possible positive points, and the percent of contribution to the total points of positive responses are presented in the results from the EVAEMSI in Table 20.

The participants identified questions 17 and 14 as having the strongest possible points from the positive responses of the seven questions in Table 20. A score of 150 was obtained from questions 17 and 14 for having the strongest possible points from the positive responses. However, question 17 obtained the greatest possible percent of possible positive points with a score of 90% from the responses of the participants who answered question 17 from the survey instrument. The data from Table 20 also identify question 42 as having the lowest score with regard to the possible points from the positive responses with a score of 60 from 12 participants. Therefore, question 42 has a value of only 7.2% of the contribution to the total points of the positive responses on the assessment and reflection domain of the EVAEMSI.

Table 21

Cumulative Frequency Distributions for the Assessment Domain: Eury Value-Added Experience Model Questionnaire Instrument

Theme	f	$\%$	Cumulative $\%$
Collaboration, Teacher Learning	7	14.6	14.6
Student Learning	10	20.8	35.4
Assessments, Tests, Quizzes	14	29.2	64.6
Reflection	17	35.4	100

Note: f = Frequency of the Theme, % = Percent of the Domain, Cumulative % = Cumulative Percent of the Domain.

In Table 21, the researcher used the EVAEMQI to acquire categorical (qualitative) data from the participants in the research study on the collective learning culture of a school organization. The four main themes identified in Table 21 were obtained by the researcher for the assessment and reflection domain of the EVAEM via the use of the questionnaire instrument. The researcher was able to identify and code the responses of the participants on the questionnaire instrument to obtain the frequency (*f*), the percent of distribution of the theme (P), and the cumulative percent (Cumulative P) for each domain of the EVAEM. The four themes identified by the researcher from the questionnaire instrument for the assessment and reflection domain of the EVAEM were collaboration/teacher learning, student learning, assessments/tests/quizzes, and reflection.

The researcher was able to code and identify the theme of reflection as having the highest frequency of distribution in the qualitative data obtained from the EVAEMQI within the assessment and reflection domain. The theme of reflection obtained a frequency rate of 17 responses from the coded narratives of the participants on the questionnaire instrument. The theme of reflection obtained a percentage of the

distribution of theme in the assessment and reflection domain of the questionnaire instrument with a score of 35.4%. Thus, the theme of reflection among the other three themes of the assessment and reflection domain had the highest frequency and the largest percentage of the total coded responses from the narratives of the participants on the questionnaire instrument.

The theme of collaboration/teacher learning is presented in Table 21 as having the lowest frequency rate and percentage of distribution of the total coded responses within the assessment and reflection domain. A frequency rate of 7 and a percentage of 14.6% can be identified in Table 21. The data for the coded information illustrate how the participants in the questionnaire instrument perceived the role of collaboration and teacher learning within the assessment and reflection domain of the EVAEM.

Table 22

Cumulative Frequency Distributions for the Assessment and Reflection Domain: Eury Value-Added Experience Model Focus Group Narrative

Theme	*f*	*%*	Cumulative *%*
Collaboration, Teacher Learning	20	29	29
Student Learning	10	14.5	43.5
Assessments	21	30.4	73.9
Reflection	18	26.1	100

Note: f = Frequency of the Theme, % = Percent of the Domain, Cumulative % = Cumulative Percent of the Domain.

In Table 22, the researcher was able use the same four themes identified by the researcher in Table 22 with regard to the coded themes of the responses from the questionnaire instrument. The four themes identified by the researcher from the participants' narratives in the two focus group sessions were collaboration/teacher

learning, student learning, assessments, and reflection. The researcher was able to identify and code the responses of the participants from the narratives obtained from the participants in the two focus group sessions to obtain the frequency (f), the percent of distribution of the theme (P), and the cumulative percent (Cumulative P) for each domain of the EVAEM.

The data in Table 22 identify that the theme of assessments had the greatest frequency rate of the four themes of the assessment and reflection domain narratives with a score of 21. The assessment theme had a 30.4% rate of distribution of the responses acquired by the researcher from the coded data from the two focus group sessions within the assessment and reflection domain of the EVAEM. The data in Table 22 also identify the theme of student learning as having the lowest frequency rate and lowest percentage rate of distribution of the coded responses from the participants in the two focus group sessions. A frequency rate score of 10 and a distribution percentage of 14.5% were obtained from the number of coded responses in the narrative of the participants in the focus group sessions.

Section 6: Quantitative Summary for the Five Domains from the EVAEMSI

Table 23

Greatest to Weakest Positive Responses from the Participants for the Five Domains of the EVAEMSI

Domain	Total Pos. Pts. Earned	Possible Pos. Pts. (SA)	%
Domain #2:			
Professional Experience	493	600	82.2
Domain #1:			
Dispositions	1,282	1,650	77.7
Domain #5:			
Assessment and Reflection	696	1,050	66.3
Domain #4:			
Shared Decision Making	956	1,500	63.7
Domain #3:			
Structure	1,591	2,550	62.4
Total of all Five Domains:	5,018	7,350	68.3

Note: Domain= Domains of the EVAEM, Total Pos. Pts. Earned = total score of positive responses from the participants on the EVAEMSI, Possible Pos. Pts. = possible positive responses from the participants if all participants on the EVAEMSI selected to respond with (SA) strongly agree, % = percent of positive points earned/possible positive points.

The data in Table 23 summarize the greatest to weakest positive participant responses for each domain that was obtained from the EVAEMSI. The professional experience domain on the EVAEMSI had the greatest positive response rate with 493 positive points of 600 possible positive points or 82.2% of the possible positive points. The dispositions domain of the EVAEMSI had the second to highest positive participant response rate with a total of 1282 positive points of a total of 1,650 possible positive points or 77.7% of the possible positive points within the domain. The assessment and reflection domain obtained the median position of the five domains of the EVAEM from the data obtained from the participants' responses on the EVAEMSI. The total positive points earned for the assessment and reflection domain on the EVAEMSI was 696

positive points of 1,050 total positive points. The percent of possible positive points earned by the assessment and reflection domain from the quantitative data had a percentage of 66.3%. The shared decision-making domain of the EVAEM scored a 63.7% positive response rate from the positive points obtained from the participants on the EVAEMSI compared to the total possible positive points available within the shared decision-making domain. The domain with the lowest positive response percentage was the structure domain according to the participants' response data obtained from the survey instrument. The structure domain had 1,591 positive response points of 2,550 total possible positive response points. The structure domain percentage of positive points earned of total positive points was 62.4%. The combined total of positive points earned for all five domains of the EVAEM on the EVAEMSI was a total of 5,018 points of a possible total of 7,350. Thus, the five domains of the EVAEM had a combined percentage rate of 68.3% from the positive points earned from the participants' responses on the EVAEMSI compared to the total possible points that could have been obtained.

Summary

In Chapter 4 of the research study on the collective learning culture of a school organization, the researcher was able to present the quantitative and qualitative data from the methods of inquiry. The researcher was able to present the quantitative data derived from the EVAEMSI in a logical manner for each of the five domains of the EVAEM. The researcher was also able to present the data obtained from the qualitative instruments in a logical manner in Chapter 4 of this research study. The data from the results of the EVAEMQI and the two focus group sessions were presented in Chapter 4 for each of the five domains of the EVAEM. A quantitative summary of the five domains' data obtained from the EVAEMSI was also presented in Chapter 4 of this research study on the

collective learning culture of a school organization. In Chapter 5 of this research study

on the collective learning culture of a school organization, the researcher presents

conclusions, recommendations, and topics for discussion based on the five research

questions of this study.

Chapter 5: Conclusions and Recommendations

Restatement of the Problem

Public school reform will continue to face an extraordinary number of challenges in the 21st century. Public education in the United States continues to face a number of external challenges with regard to public school reform. The challenges to the sustainability and effectiveness of public school reform have been considerably influenced by the unstable economic, social, and political trends and events of the last 10 years. The downturns and recessions in the American economy, the rapid development of the globally competitive economic environment, and the fiscal instability at the federal, state, and local levels of government continue to have a direct impact on the sustainability and effectiveness of educational reform in our public schools. In this study on the collective learning culture of a school organization, the researcher used the EVAEM as a theoretical value-added model to assist in the organizational change (reform) and to increase the collective learning culture of the school organization.

Restatement of the Research Purpose

The intent of the researcher in this mixed-methods study was to investigate the perceptions of the staff members with comparative analysis on the collective learning culture of a suburban middle school in North Carolina. The study's goal was to use the "implementation of a model that facilitates the evolvement of a learning culture through research-based experiences supported by various theories of change and sustained learning" (Balls et al., 2011, p. 1). Thus, the ability to transform the individual and collective learning culture of an organization is imperative to enhance the performance, sustainability, and longevity of the organization. Balls et al. (2011) also noted of the products of "this transformational opportunity, it is anticipated that multiple student

outcomes will be impacted; graduation rates, student promotional rate, student proficiency rate, and postsecondary indicators" (p. 25). The belief is that the use of the EVAEM would provide insight into the transformational endeavor for increasing the collective learning culture into one that positively enhances student achievement, the longevity of the organization, and the sustainability of the organization.

In this case study, the collective learning culture of a middle school organization was examined with the five domains of the EVAEM. The domains of dispositions, professional experiences, structures, shared decision making, assessment, and reflection skills were examined by the researcher to create a comparative analysis of the perceptions of the classified staff members of the research site. The researcher used the five domains of the EVAEM to "suggest new ways of gaining insights into teacher's practices, new ways of examining strengths and weaknesses, and new ways of developing teacher capacity in individual and collective considerations" (Balls et al., 2011, p. 2). There had been a limited amount of theoretical research on the use of the EVAEM as a means for investigating the collective learning culture of a school organization prior to this research study. The researcher used the theoretical constructs of the EVAEM and implemented these five constructs of the value-added model to measure the perceptions of the classified staff members.

Research Questions

The following questions guided this research study on the collective learning culture of a school organization:

1. What is the impact of the classified staff members' (teachers') dispositions on the collective learning culture of the organization?

2. What is the impact of professional experiences of the classified staff members

(teachers) on the collective learning culture of the organization?

3. What is the impact of the physical and organizational structure of the school on the classified staff members' (teachers') collective learning culture of the organization?

4. What is the impact of the shared decision-making process of the classified staff members (teachers) on the collective learning culture of the organization?

5. What is the impact of the assessment and reflections skills of the classified staff members (teachers) on the collective learning culture of the organization?

Overview

The researcher incorporated the quantitative and qualitative data results from Chapter 4 in this case study to develop a series of conclusions, recommendations, and future topics for discussion and investigation in Chapter 5. The researcher presented his conclusions and recommendations from the data obtained in the comparative analyses of the five domains of the EVAEM. Therefore, each of the five research study questions is addressed individually in Chapter 5 to provide an in-depth analysis for each research question. The researcher concluded the study by providing recommendations for the research site to enhance the collective learning culture of the school organization. The researcher also provided a number of limitations observed in this research study and possible topics or themes for future discussion to increase the scholarly knowledge on the impact of collective learning culture on an organization via the use of the EVAEM.

Disposition Domain

Research Question 1. What is the impact of the classified staff members' (teachers') dispositions on the collective learning culture of the organization? The researcher focused on the first domain of disposition from the EVAEM to investigate the

perceptions of the classified staff members' (teachers') dispositions on the collective

learning culture of the research site. The researcher used the quantitative and qualitative

data provided in Tables 3-6 in Chapter 4 of this research study. In order to answer the

first research question in this study, the researcher was able to analyze the quantitative

data from the EVAEMSI in Tables 3 and 4, the qualitative data from the EVAEMQI in

Table 5, and the two focus group sessions in Table 6.

Conclusion 1

The classified staff members (teachers) who participated in the EVAEMSI in the

disposition domain placed a stronger positive impact on the survey questions that they

identified as pertaining to them individually rather than collectively. The disposition of

questions 5, 13, 14, and 12 all focus on the individual teacher's perceptions of his/her

disposition on the collective learning culture. The beginning of each of these four

questions start with "My teaching," "I set my," "I am," and "I seek out" and are all

individually perceived dispositional questions of the EVAEMSI. Bandura's (1997) social

cognitive theory of self-efficacy supports the results from the data obtained from the

EVAEMSI. "According to Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory, individuals possess

a self-system that enables them to exercise a measure of control over their thoughts,

feelings, motivations, and actions" (Pajares, 1997, p. 3). The results of the survey

instrument clearly demonstrated that the participants in this study believe that they have a

high level of perceived self-efficacy from the quantitative data obtained from questions 5,

13, 14, and 12.

Bandura's (1997) theory supports the remaining questions (26, 24, 25, 43, 29, 40,

and 35) and all are questions on the EVAEMSI in the disposition domain that require the

participants to measure the impact of dispositions as a collective group of teachers. Thus,

these seven questions start off with "This organization is," "This organization has,"

"Employees and volunteers are committed," "Learning and," "We would change," "This

organization is," and "Employees and volunteers are clear" and were perceived by the

research participants as collective dispositional questions on the EVAEMSI. The results

of the dispositional domain in the quantitative instrument demonstrate that the perceived

collective efficacy of the school organization is not as high as the individuals' perceived

self-efficacy with regard to the disposition domain of the EVAEM. Therefore, the

researcher recommends that the classified staff members participate in efficacy training

that focuses on the enhancement of the collective efficacy at the research site.

The data obtained from the survey instrument in the disposition domain identify

that the classified staff members (teachers) have a high level of self-efficacy, but the

perceived collective efficacy is lower than the individual perceived self-efficacy of the

members of the group. Collective teacher efficacy refers to "the perceptions of teachers

in a school that the efforts of the faculty as a whole will have a positive effect on

students" (Goddard et al., 2000, p. 480, cited in Demir, 2008, p. 95). The question of

why it is important for the classified staff members (teachers) to have a high level of

perceived collective efficacy can be easily summed up by Bandura. Bandura (1993)

noted that

> the stronger the faculty's shared beliefs in their instructional efficacy, the better
>
> students performed academically. High levels of perceived collective efficacy are
>
> associated with a robust sense of purpose that helps groups see setbacks as
>
> temporary obstacles to be overcome rather than evidence confirming their
>
> inefficacy. (Goddard & Skrla, 2006, cited in Demir, 2008, p. 95).
>
> If the group or organization has a high level of collective efficacy, a high level of

goal attainment will be met by the collective group of individuals. If a collective group of individuals has a low level of collective efficacy, the goal attainment may not be met and difficulties and issues will be prevalent in the course of action to attain the desired outcomes. Thus, a high level of perceived collective efficacy will enable a collective group of individuals to sustain change, obtain the desired goals and attainments of the course of actions, and ultimately allow the sustainability and continued growth of the organization in the future. Bandura (1997) noted that "teachers' beliefs in their collective efficacy contributes significantly to how well their schools perform academically after controlling for the socio-economic and racial composition for student bodies, teachers' experience level, and prior school achievement" (p. 469). If teachers believe that they can accomplish success as an organization, the probability of triumph is multiplied.

Conclusion 2

The quantitative and qualitative data obtained from the disposition domain clearly identified that the classified staff members had a very strong perception of the inherent value system of a code of ethics in the teaching profession.

> The National Education Association (NEA, 1975) adopted a code of ethics for the profession with three parts: a statement of ethical stances important in the profession (including respect, responsibility, believing in worth and dignity for each human being, and a devotion to excellence); the two principles of commitment to the student and commitment to the profession. (Burant et al., 2007, p. 15)

The ethical stance perception can be observed in the narrative provided from participant 4 in the focus group sessions: "If we are not modeling the behavior, values, and ethics that we expect our students are required to demonstrate to us, then we are being unethical as a

teacher in the teaching profession" (Personal communication, 2013). The narrative provided from participant 4 was a product of the whole group discussion on what teachers in the teaching profession believe are non-negotiable dispositional values that every teacher should possess. The discussion quickly moved to the dispositions that teachers model to their students and how the students interpret these dispositions in their lives.

An example of the dispositional ideals of the commitment to the student can be viewed in the narrative response of participant 2 in the focus group session of this research study. The background behind the narrative from participant 2 was the discussion on how teachers face those students who are failing school, those students who possess an "I don't care attitude, and the students that have no desire to achieve or attain a goal in their education" (Personal communication, 2013). Participant 2 focused on the commitment to individual students and to the collective group of students by stating,

> A teacher with a strong disposition is going to make it or break it; help the student
> or address the issues of all the students. Attitudes, values, morals, and ethics are
> extremely important in the disposition of a teacher and to the collective learning
> culture of the whole school. (Personal communication, 2013)

The commitment to the profession of teaching can also be seen in the narrative response from participant 9 in the focus group sessions of this research study. Participant 9 noted his/her belief in the importance of dispositions on the collective learning culture of the school organization by stating the following:

> I think that whenever a teacher demonstrates any of those things (morals, values,
> ethics and attitudes) positively, I think it affects the whole school. In a positive
> manner, I mean if you are doing those things and you have good morals, values,

ethics, and a positive attitude it is going to be reflective on the culture of the

school. It rubs off on the students, teachers, and everyone that is directly involved

in the school. (Personal communication, 2013)

In Table 5, the qualitative data obtained from the participants' responses on the

EVAEMQI clearly demonstrate that participants perceived that the theme of values,

morals, ethics, and attitudes had the highest frequency of the coded responses on the

EVAEMQI within the disposition domain. Values, morals, ethics, and attitudes had the

highest frequency rate of 10 coded responses from the data provided on the EVAEMQI

with regard to the domain of dispositions (Table 5). Thus, the total percent of responses

on the disposition question in the EVAEMQI identifies the coded theme of values,

morals, ethics, and attitudes as having the highest percent of occurrence with 38.5% of

the total (Table 5).

Conclusion 3

The researcher can conclude that the construct of student learning/student

achievement was perceived by the classified staff members as having an important

significance on the collective learning culture of the research site. Participant 3 provided

a significant narrative on the importance of a teacher's disposition with respect to student

learning and achievement.

The teacher is in charge of the initial classroom learning environment; thus, they

are the one's starting the expectation of success within the classroom. They are

the ones that start the classroom environment as soon as they greet that student at

the door of the classroom. From the child's view, your disposition as teacher,

such as greeting the child as they are walking down the hallway with a smile on

your face, good morning, how are you, how was your weekend? That sets the

whole tone even before they get into your classroom that your visible disposition to them allows the student to feel that they can succeed in your classroom. You as a teacher are able to create this immediate relationship with the student to allow them to feel that will be successful in your classroom. (Personal communication, 2013)

The researcher concluded from the data obtained in Chapter 4 that it was crucial to measure the perceptions of the classified staff members' (teachers') dispositions on the collective learning culture of the research site. The quantitative and qualitative data of this research study clearly demonstrate that the participants at this research site understand that the domain of dispositions has a significant role in the collective learning culture of the school organization. The theme of student learning and student achievement within the concept of teaching dispositions is viewed by many educational researchers as one of the basic tenets of what makes an effective teacher. Wesson (2008) noted in his study that

a widely supported idea in the field of education of that teacher beliefs and behaviors directly influence students' education achievement, including their social and academic success (Bresttani, Weinstein, & Marshall, 1984; Brophy & Good, 1984; Darling-Hammond, 2000), are predictors of teaching strategies used in the classroom (Lortie, 1975, Pajares, 1992). It is also believed that since a teacher's ideas about the capabilities of a student directly influences the teacher's behavior and teacher behavior influence student behavior; therefore, a teacher's disposition are critical to success in the classroom. Effective teaching happens when teachers are knowledgeable about their subject area, have positive teaching skills, and possess dispositions that foster student learning and development

(Darling-Hammond, 2000; Wasicsko, 1977). (p. 12)

Summary for the Dispositions Domain

The participants in this study on the collective learning culture of a school organization support the belief that dispositions have a significant impact on the collective learning culture of a school organization. In the focus group sessions, the researcher asked the participants to rate the impact of the domain of dispositions on the collective learning culture of the school organization. The participants in the focus group responded to the question by rating the impact of the disposition domain on the collective learning culture on a scale of 1 to 10. The participants could answer with 1 being the least important, and 10 having a very significant impact on the collective learning culture of the school organization. The researcher believes that a general conclusion can be made that the participants in the focus group sessions clearly believe that the perceptions of the classified staff members' (teachers') dispositions on the collective learning culture of the school organization had the highest impact of any of the five domains of the EVAEM.

Professional Experiences Domain

Research Question 2: What is the impact of professional experiences of the classified staff members (teachers) on the collective learning culture of the organization? The researcher focused on the second domain of professional experiences from the EVAEM to investigate the perceptions of the classified staff members' (teachers') professional experiences on the collective learning culture of the research site. The researcher used the quantitative and qualitative data provided in Tables 7-10 in Chapter 4 of this research study. In order to answer the second research question in this study, the researcher analyzed the quantitative data from the EVAEMSI in Tables 7 and

8, the qualitative data from the EVAEMQI in Table 9, and the coded data in Table 10.

Balls et al. (2011) noted that a professional development opportunity for individual teachers and also for the collective groups of teachers can be considered as a method of providing professional experiences to the members of the school organization. Individual members of the organization inherently bring external professional experiences that may affect and influence their knowledge, skills, and dispositions to the organization. Individual members of an organization, such as teachers in a school, bring to the organization a multiple number of experiences, customs, beliefs, and skills. Individual members and the collective group of members, such as a group of teachers or staff members in a school organization, also obtain professional experiences from within (internally) the organization. Bandura (1997) noted that

> People do not rely on experienced mastery as the sole source of information concerning their level of self-efficacy. Many expectations are derived from vicarious experience. Seeing others perform threatening activities without adverse consequences can generate expectations in observers that they too will improve if they intensify and persist in their efforts. They persuade themselves in other can do it, they should be able to achieve at some improvement in performance. (Bandura & Barab, 1973, cited in Bandura, 1977, p. 197)

The ability of a school organization to increase the amount of opportunities for vicarious experiences in the school setting would inevitably increase the ability of the members of the organization to increase their professional experiences.

Conclusion

A total of four questions on the EVAEMSI were predetermined by the researcher to measure the impact of professional experiences on the collective learning culture of the

research site. The responses to the EVAEMSI professional experience domain questions

had a very strong positive agreement among the four questions. The quantitative data in

Tables 7 and 8 demonstrate that the classified staff members (teachers) had a high level

of positive agreement and positive responses among the four questions of the EVAEMSI.

The researcher believes that the quantitative data in Tables 7 and 8 further demonstrate a

positive measurement of how the participants perceived the role of professional

experiences as they impact the collective learning culture of the research site. Three of

the four questions on the EVAEMSI targeted the idea that collaboration and the ability of

teachers in a collective group to share their knowledge, experiences, and skills have a

positive impact on the collective learning culture of the research site. The positive

impact data obtained from Tables 7 and 8 demonstrate that the collective group of

teachers at the research site relies on the professional experiences of others in the

development of the collective learning culture of the research site. Questions 5, 21, and 7

on the EVAEMSI have the theme of collaboration with fellow teachers as a main tenet in

the question. The ability for teachers to collaborate with fellow teachers will inevitably

increase the collective learning culture of the research site.

The qualitative data in Tables 9 and 10 demonstrate that the classified staff

members (teachers) perceive that professional experiences have a significant impact on

the collective learning culture of the school organization. The researcher believes the

qualitative data obtained from the EVAEMQI and the two focus group sessions enhance

the overall collective classified staff members' perceptions of how professional

experiences impact the collective learning culture of the school organization. The

narratives of the participants in the two focus group sessions provide the perception that

classified staff members believe that teacher learning, collaboration, and the different

experiences teachers bring to the profession are crucial in the sustainability and longevity of a school organization.

A number of narratives from the participants focused on what the teacher brings to the classroom and what he/she brings to the collective group of teachers at the school organization. The knowledge, skills, and experiences of each individual in a school organization are important to the collective learning culture of the entire school organization. Ngwenya-Scoburgh (2009) noted that an "organization has to create an inclusive culture of learning that incorporates collections of parts (subsystems) integrated to accomplish an overall goal (a system of people as an organization)" (p. 8). The subsystems of the organization or the people of the organization must be heterogeneous in nature. The knowledge, skills, and experiences of each individual of the school organization are important to the overall culture of the school organization.

The researcher proposed the question to the two focus groups by asking the participants how they perceive professional experiences can have an impact on the instruction that takes place in the school organization. Participant 3 in the focus group sessions supplied the researcher with some insight into why she believes professional experiences are so important to the collective learning culture of the school organization. She noted that as a member of the collective group of teachers within the school organization,

> you have different prior knowledge, you come to the organization with different experiences in life, life experiences, you have a vast array of prior knowledge that you both bring forth, and then you share all of that wealth of experience with your colleagues. (Personal communication, 2013)

Participant 4 stressed this connection in the focus group sessions by stating,

everybody has a different background, some people are new teachers, who may be

lateral entry, some people may have a master's degree, some people are still kind

of in the middle years of their teaching experience, some people are coming over

from a business background and into education, and they may be a first-year

teacher. Let's say they are teaching a business marketing class, but they have

been self-employed for 20 years with the marketing and doing it all by

themselves, or they were a commercial artist and now they are coming into a

school to teach art, or a construction worker coming into a school to teach a

construction course. These new teachers have real world experiences, but what

they lack is the experience of how to do it (teach) in a school setting. So, now the

collaboration element is an important professional development opportunity, so

now they are able to get with a teacher that has been in the school system for so

long, who possess the teaching experience. The reality is if everybody was the

same it would create a boring learning environment, different experiences make a

school what it needs to be. . . . And that is how you learn collectively as an

organization. (Personal communication, 2013)

The results obtained from the EVAEMQI noted that the responses from the

participants on the questionnaire identified that the idea of collaboration had the strongest

coded theme in the professional experience domain. Cibulka and Nakayama's (2000)

study on teacher learning focused on the importance of collaboration in the learning

process as a teacher. Cibulka and Nakayama discussed the importance of the socially

constructed teacher learner by stating that "teacher learning occurs when teachers have

the possibility to share, discuss, and elaborate on their thoughts, experiences, and

learning" (p. 13). A common theme identified by the researcher from the two focus

group sessions was the role of collaboration in the collective learning culture of the

school organization. "It is the social context that facilitates learning through repeated

interaction, feedback, guidance, encouragement, explanations, and suggestions, and

reflections" (Cibulka & Nakayama, p. 13).

Participant 1 in the focus group sessions supplied the following narrative,

explaining the importance of collaboration and the ability to harness the professional

experiences of the collective group of teachers within the school organization:

> I believe it goes back to that mission of doing the best things, so you learn from
>
> those people, and I think also sometimes it goes back to the amount of time
>
> required to meet with others to collaborate together. You know the reality is two
>
> heads are better than one, five are better than one, and if we can divide and
>
> conquer based upon what is best, sometimes that is what we will need to do as a
>
> school organization to obtain our goals. (Personal communication, 2013)

Summary for the Professional Experiences Domain

In summary, the data obtained from the quantitative and qualitative instruments in

this research study on the collective learning culture of a school organization clearly

demonstrate that the participants' perceptions of professional experiences have a strong

positive impact of the collective learning culture of the research site. The data in Table

23 clearly demonstrate that the participants in this research study believe that the

professional experience domain of the EVAEM had the strongest percentage of positive

points earned compared to the total positive points possible in the professional experience

domain. The researcher can conclude that the quantitative data from the professional

experience domain demonstrate that the classified staff members perceive that the

professional experience domain had the strongest positive affect on the collective

learning culture of the school organization.

Structure Domain

Research Question 3: What is the impact of the physical and organizational structure of the school on the classified staff members' (teachers') collective learning culture of the organization? The researcher focused on the perceptions of the classified staff members on the physical and organizational structure of the research site to measure their perceptions of the collective learning culture. The quantitative and qualitative data obtained from the classified staff members' (teachers') responses for the third domain of the EVAEM can be obtained from Tables 11-14 in Chapter 4. The participant responses to the quantitative instrument can be reviewed in Tables 11 and 12 and the qualitative responses can be reviewed in Tables 13 and 14 in Chapter 4.

Conclusion

The quantitative and qualitative data from the structure domain of the EVAEM clearly identified that the classified staff members of the research site place a high level of importance on common planning time and the ability to collaborate with fellow colleagues as an important structural element of a school organization. Balls et al. (2011) noted that "there are too few opportunities for teachers to share practices and strengthen the profession with experiences aimed at impacting self-efficacy and collective efficacy within the structures of the arranged school setting" (p. 24). The perceptions of the participants in the structure domain of the EVAEMSI clearly demonstrated that the classified members (teachers) of this research site believed that the theme of common planning times and collaboration impacts the collective learning culture of the research site.

The narratives of the participants from the two focus group sessions also support

the importance of common planning time and the ability of teachers to collaborate on a

daily basis (teaming) as positive impacts on the collective learning culture of the research

site. The researcher asked the participants in the focus group sessions how the

organizational structure (teams, grade levels, etc.) impacts the collective learning culture

of the school organization. Participant 10 stated in her response to the researcher that

>a positive for the organizational structure of the school is common planning time
>
>with your team of teachers, grade level teachers, and your Professional Learning
>
>Community (PLC), and a positive is being able to discuss the same children and
>
>compare experiences, successes, frustrations about individual kids, this is such a
>
>good positive thing that we have in our school. (Personal communication, 2013)

Harris and Associates (1986) in their survey study of middle grade teachers noted that

>the majority of respondents indicated that they would like to have the opportunity
>
>to meet formally with colleagues. The teachers believed that a designated time to
>
>meet with colleagues would provide them with the opportunities to exchange
>
>ideas, help each other with individual student needs, and support each other.
>
>(cited in Warren & Payne, 2001, p. 302)

The participants in the focus group sessions supplied the researcher with specific

examples that are present in the organizational structure of the research site that enable

the classified staff members (teachers) to collaborate with their colleagues. Participant 2

discussed the importance of teaming within the organizational structure of the research

site by noting that

>something happens when the administration puts teachers together and students
>
>together in teams. You start to see some positives in the teaming concept. You
>
>start to see positive effects in the make-up of the organizational structure of the

schools. Students and teachers are grouped in a way to allow positive things to take place. As a team, you can work together, collaborate together, reach out to those specific students in need, you are able to create lasting relationships with the students, we are able to provide the much needed support and assistance to these students in need, we are able to provide support to them not only in their learning, but in their physical and mental growth as young adults. The ability to group teachers together supports each other, and this allows/provides a strong supportive working environment that affects the overall quality of learning in our school organization. (Personal communication, 2013)

Participant 5 in the focus group sessions also noted the importance of collaboration and common planning time. She stated in her narrative that

It is great to have the support of your fellow colleagues on your team. You are able to develop and create activities collaboratively together in a manner that increases the level of learning in your classroom. The ability to plan together and create lesson plans, activities, projects, and so on, is important because it allows the students to be stimulated to learn from multi-perspectives or subject areas such as math, language arts, science, and social studies classes working together to create and support each other in their classrooms and in the individual subject areas of learning. (Personal communication, 2013)

The narrative provided by participant 5 clearly demonstrates and supports the findings and recommendations of Cook and Faulkner's (2010) study on the effective use of common planning time in a school setting. Cook and Faulkner noted in their study that

for common planning time to be effective, it should focus on the academic and

relationship needs of the students. When interviewed, a familiar theme was heard

loudly and clearly–the primary focus of common planning time, whether grade

level, interdisciplinary, or a professional learning community, is on the academic

and relationship needs of the students. (p. 10)

The data obtained from the quantitative and qualitative instruments in this research study

also support the results of Flax's (2011) qualitative case study. Flax's qualitative case

study "investigated what occurs during common planning time for middle school level

teams of teachers in an effort to better understand the connections between what occurs

during common planning time and student achievement" (pp. iii-iv).

Summary for the Structure Domain

The researcher concludes from the comparative analyses of the data obtained in

this research study that the classified staff members (teachers) clearly identified the

importance of common planning time with the same level of importance as the benefits

described in Flax's (2011) research study on common planning time. The narratives

provided in the focus group sessions clearly identify all three of the benefits found in

Flax's research study on common planning time and student achievement. Flax noted

that the benefits of having a structured common planning time were important to the

collective group of participants in the school organization, to the individual teacher, and

to the mission of a school organization with regard to student achievement. The

narratives provided by the participants in the focus group sessions also support the

benefits of the common planning time found by Flax. The classified staff members

(teachers) discussed the perceived benefits of common planning time in the same

retrospect as the benefits of common planning time in Flax's study:

1. Whole group:

Common perception of unity, support, and consistency that benefits the teacher, students, team, and whole school. Being able to assist students so that each individual can be successful. It was clear that the teachers, students, team, and school as a whole benefitted, but the constant theme was for the betterment of the students, the student-centered focus. (pp. 119-120)

2. Teacher perceived benefit:

The general feeling was that of having support of the other teachers when addressing your own classroom challenges. The comforting feeling that you are not all by yourself with all the kids was reassuring. With the common planning time, teachers know that they had time to confide with the team for support and suggestions with strategies to effectively address student behaviors and academic concerns is a huge benefit. (p. 120)

3. Student achievement:

By having the common planning time, teachers were able to make the day and activities seamless for the students. The planning and preparation in advance allowed the teachers to be prepared for what events might occur for the day, creating a sense of unity and organizational for the students. Teachers were able to be unified and consistent in their expectations and organization for the students. The team was able to maintain a student-centered focus and strong commitment to academic achievement. (p. 120)

Thus, the quantitative and qualitative data obtained from the participants in this research study on the collective learning culture of a school organization clearly highlight the importance of collaboration and the benefits of common planning time.

Shared Decision-Making Domain

Research Question 4: What is the impact of the shared decision-making process of the classified staff members (teachers) on the collective learning culture of the organization? The fourth domain of the EVAEM dealt with the concepts of shared decision making and the empowerment of the stakeholders in the organization. Balls et al. (2011) noted in their publication that the shared decision-making domain "would measure the degree of shared decision-making opportunities to the development of productive interactions, routines, and common language of learning" within the organization (p. 26). The concepts and practices of shared decision making in the EVAEM are derived from the overarching themes of empowering the members, stakeholders, and employees of the organization. According to Short's (1994) definition of empowerment,

> empowerment is a process where school participants develop the competence to take charge of their growth and resolve their own problems. Empowered individuals believe that they have the skills and knowledge to act on a situation and improve it. Empowered schools are organizations that create opportunities for competence to be developed and displayed. (p. 1)

The quantitative and qualitative data for the responses of the participants in this research study can be viewed in Tables 15-19 in Chapter 4. The quantitative data obtained from the EVAEMSI demonstrate that the participants in this research study believe that they have a significant impact on the shared decision making and governance of the school organization. The themes of shared leadership, organizational governance, intellectual capital, and opportunities for leadership are perceived by the participants in this research study as having an impact on the collective learning culture of the school organization.

Conclusion 1

The researcher concludes from the qualitative data obtained from the EVAEMQI and the two focus group sessions that there are multiple opportunities and avenues for the classified staff members to participate in the shared decision-making processes of the organization. The participants identified a number of arranged structural elements that they believed allow them to actively participate and influence the shared decision-making processes of the research site. The participants identified arranged structural elements such as school improvement team meetings, grade-level meetings, the use of PLCs, and team meetings as avenues for the classified staff members (teachers) to participate in the shared decision-making processes of the research site. The researcher concluded from the classified staff members' (teachers') perceptions that the structural elements for collaboration and shared decision-making processes are all important in the development and creation of a strong sense of collective teacher efficacy.

Tschannen-Moran and Barr (2004) noted in their study on the relationship of collective teacher efficacy and student achievement that there are certain characteristics of schools that demonstrate that the organization may have a high sense of collective efficacy. The belief or culture of shared responsibility is one of the main characteristics of a school having a high sense of collective teacher efficacy. Demir (2008) noted from Bandura (1997) that

> collective teacher efficacy constitutes a powerful factor affecting different arenas
> of the school organization, influencing attitudes, affective, motivational, and
> behavioral aspects of teacher functioning within the school. Collective teacher
> efficacy is significantly affected by the collaboration of the staff as they develop
> their beliefs and social systems within the school. (p. 97)

The research participants in this study recognized and identified the arranged structural elements in the school organization that allows shared decision-making processes to impact the collective learning culture of the school organization.

Conclusion 2

A number of participants in the focus group sessions clearly noted in their narratives that there are specific responsibilities and roles for different members of the research site with regard to governance and decision-making processes for the school organization. Participant 10 discussed the governance and allocation of the school budget and monies in one of the focus group sessions as an example of the different responsibilities and roles that members of the organization may have. Participant 10 clearly defined how she perceived her role in the shared-decision making processes of the research site with regard to the governance and allocation of monies in a school organization. Participant 10 noted this by stating that

> I know almost know nothing as a teacher at this school with regard to the monetary allocation at school, I do know that some money has to be spent, certain amounts of monies has to be spent on certain things. So, like there is instructional money that can only be spent on instruction, you can't take money from the instructional account and spend it on something else, like hiring another teacher . . . . However, I do think , I can actively participate in the allocation of the funds of this organization. The answer is no . . . I think I can ask for things that I need or request, when I am solicited, when I get an email that says that we have a surplus of instructional money that needs to be spent, then you fill out a wish list, then yes, I have the opportunity to participate in the allocation of resources in the school organization (shared decision-making opportunity). But, I think there are a

lot of things that go on with monies and resources that I have no idea about; thus,

I have no opportunity to touch and I have no opportunity to say where it goes

because of the strings attached to it. (Personal communication, 2013)

Participant 11 noted that she believes that the classified staff members' abilities to

participate in the shared decision-making processes of the research site have a strong

impact on the collective learning culture of school. Participant 11 also noted in her

narrative that there are decision-making policies, procedures, and/or opportunities for

participation that limit or restrict the classified staff members' involvement within the

school organization. She noted in her focus group narrative that

the reality is this . . . is that at times there are times too many "cooks in the

kitchen." If we have too many people in there trying to make decisions for a

school organization and trying also to get there say in, then it just gets all messed

up, nothing positive will be prevalent with too many "cooks in the kitchen."

(Personal communication, 2013)

Participant 10 also supported this belief by stating that "we are the Indians. . . . Yes, we

are . . . . We are the Indians, not the chiefs" in this school organization (Personal

communication, 2013). Therefore, the researcher concluded from the data that the

classified staff members are well aware of certain policies, procedures, and limitations in

their level of participation in the shared decision-making processes at the research site.

Summary for the Shared Decision-Making Domain

The overarching theme of the shared decision-making domain of the EVAEM is

the belief in the construct of empowering the members, stakeholders, and employees of

the organization to be transformational and sustainable over an extended period of time.

Balls et al. (2011) noted that "a rationale for implementing empowerment structures in

school operations is to promote greater achievement through granting authority to those who know content and student well–the teachers" (p. 56). Jung and Sosik's (2002) study on transformational leadership in work groups noted in their findings that

> as expected, group members' sense of being empowered had a positive
> association with their collective efficacy. By definition, empowered followers are
> more likely to initiate any work that they feel is more interesting and important
> (Kouzes & Posner, 1995). In addition, they are more likely to perform tasks for
> which they believe they possess necessary skills and resources. Therefore, they
> may have more positive work experiences than those who are not empowered. (p.
> 328)

The classified staff members (teachers) in this research study recognize the importance of being collectively empowered with regard to the domain of shared decision making. The ability of the research site "to increase productive interactions, routines, and common language of learning" would increase the collective learning culture of the school organization (Balls et al., p. 26).

Assessment and Reflective Skills Domain

Research Question 5: What is the impact of the assessment and reflective skills of the school on the classified staff members' (teachers') collective learning culture of the organization? The researcher in this study on the collective learning culture of a school organization focused on the ability of the classified staff members (teachers) to reflect on their own practice in the classroom and school environment. Balls et al. (2011) noted that the assessment and reflective skills domain's purpose

> is to implement a measure of the degree and ability to reflect based on judgments
> and the impact of any changes to instructional delivery. Even more important

would be the process of sharing these reflections as part of the learning

community development. (p. 102)

The researcher can conclude from the data obtained by the participants in the research

study that the classified staff members (teachers) actively participate in development

processes to assess and reflect their instruction in the classroom and throughout the entire

school organization.

Conclusion 1

The researcher concludes from the quantitative and qualitative data obtained from

the participants in this research study on the collective learning culture that the use of

assessment and reflective skills is prevalent at a high level within this school

organization. A number of participants in the focus group sessions discussed that the

importance of meeting as a PLC, having the ability to collaborate with fellow teachers,

and being a member of an interdisciplinary team allow for opportunities for teachers to be

self-reflective. One of the goals of the EVAEM according to Balls et al. (2011) is the

ability of the individual members to unite collectively and collaboratively to increase the

development of the learning community. A number of participants in the focus group

sessions expressed their interest and support of the PLC model as an avenue to share their

assessment and reflective skills with their colleagues. One of the participants noted in

her narrative that

we have professional learning communities (PLCs) meetings on a regular basis.

This allows us to share and discuss different things in a supportive and

collaborative environment. . . . In these meetings you are expected to collaborate,

provide feedback, and supply reflective assessment with your colleagues in the

PLC meetings. (Personal communication, 2013)

The narratives provided by the participants in the qualitative phase of the research study support Copeland et al.'s (1993) four assumptions of what a reflective practitioner would look like in the teaching profession. Copeland et al. noted that "reflective practice in teaching is manifested as a stance toward inquiry" (p. 349). The ability of the classified staff members (teachers) to actively participate in the PLC model is an excellent method to increase reflective practice both individually and collectively within the research site.

Conclusion 2

Zeichner and Liston (1996) asserted in their book on the concept of reflection in teaching that

> If a teacher never questions the goals and the values that guide his or her work,
> the context in which he or she teaches, or never examines his or her assumptions,
> then it is our belief that this individual is not engaged in reflective teaching. (p. 1)

A number of participants noted in the EVAEMQI that they regularly reflect, evaluate, and assess individual and collective student learning, their classroom instruction, and themselves as effective practitioners in the art of teaching. A participant noted in the questionnaire with regard to the assessment and reflective skills domain that

Before teaching, I ask myself:

What do they need to know for _____? (End of Grade Test, next year, high school, college, or in real life, etc.)

What is something they already know (or interested in) that I can use to connect this idea?'

After teaching, I ask myself:

Did they get it?

How do I know ? (Test scores, assignment results, discussion, etc.)

Will they remember it? (Meaningful, relevant, interesting lessons, stick with them!)

Would I be satisfied with my own children having been in this class for this lesson/unit/discussion. Sometimes, I am really disappointed that they weren't present for the lesson/unit/discussion. (Personal communication, 2013)

A second participant also noted in their narrative on the questionnaire instrument that

It is not an earth shattering revelation, but kids–like adults–really understand and appreciate relevance and practicality. Education, no matter the subject, should be relevant and practical. As a result, I am often motivated to reflect not on the measurable results of an individual skill assessment, but rather on the bigger picture. What I think, hope, and believe they have learned from the lesson (they would agree) is applicable and meaningful for their own lives–past, present, and future–in class and out of class. (Personal communication, 2013)

Summary for the Assessment and Reflective Skills Domain

Thus, the researcher concluded from the themes associated with the participants' narratives that a number of classified staff members (teachers) support Zeichner's and Liston's (1996) concept of reflection in teaching. The qualitative data from the questionnaire instrument and the focus-group sessions clearly demonstrate that the classified staff members (teachers) perceive the importance of assessment and reflection skills on the collective learning culture of the school organization. The researcher concluded from the data obtained from the participants that if the classified staff members of the research site further developed reflective strategies, the results would inevitably enhance the collective learning culture of the research site. The ability of being self-reflective and collectively reflective as a whole group will continue to

positively support the goals of the organization.

Recommendations

The researcher in this case study on the collective learning culture of a southeastern middle school organization has determined that the study has supplied additional information to a number of disciplines in academia. The researcher believes that this study has added substantial information and data to academia in such disciplines as organizational management, collective organizational learning, collective efficacy studies, collective teacher efficacy, school organizational practices, school management studies, organizational transformation, and sustainability research.

Prior to this research study on the collective learning culture, the EVAEM was a theoretical model that was not validated in research. The researcher can conclude that the EVAEM has been validated as a means to measure the perceptions of the collective learning culture of an organization. The researcher was able to effectively complete and develop the first phase of the EVAEM to measure and assess the collective learning culture of a school organization. The EVAEM can be located in Appendix A. A collective measure of the classified staff members' (teachers') impact on the collective learning culture of the research site was obtained for each of the five domains: dispositions, professional experiences, structure, shared decision making, and assessment and reflective skills.

Recommendation 1

The researcher recommends that a fellow colleague or researcher continue this research study by focusing on phase two of the EVAEM. The researcher in this research study was able to effectively develop a needs assessment of the research site based on the five domains of the EVAEM. A collective measure of the perceptions of the participants

for each of the five domains of the EVAEM was obtained in the first phase of the value-added assessment model. Therefore, a baseline collective measure was obtained from this research study on the collective learning culture of a school organization.

The researcher believes that the continuation of the second phase of the EVAEM will further enhance the collective cultural transformation required from the participants to increase their organizational performance. Balls et al. (2011) stressed that if the EVAEM is

> facilitated adequately, the model suggests using research techniques to complete a thorough needs assessment and match those needs to proven strategies that will address individual and collective growth, especially in the areas of individual self-efficacy and collective efficacy. (p. 25)

The second phase of the EVAEM would encompass a future researcher or team of researchers to assist in the development and creation of three different experiences for the classified staff members (teachers) to participate collectively after the first phase of the EVAEM is completed. Balls et al. noted that in the second phase of the EVAEM,

> a growth plan or improvement plan will be developed for each individuals and school population. This plan would serve as the framework for action for each school. A second experience would be to involve staff in multiple action research projects that target identified needs in previous assessments. The final experience is to implement training in the areas of empowerment and efficacy. (p. 27)

In the second phase, the researcher would use the collective indexes from the first phase to develop and create three different experiences. The use of professional growth plans by the participants in this research study would support the belief in the role of being a reflective practitioner.

Schon's notion of the reflective practitioner, reflecting both on the notion the

action (after the fact), and reflecting in uncertain, volatile, and unpredictable

situations continue to be promoted widely in teacher pre-service and continuing

professional education. (Schon, 1983, cited in Fenwick, 2004, p. 261)

Fenwick (2004) noted in her study that

six approaches to the implementation of teacher professional growth plans

appeared to have the greatest value for fostering teacher learning in the Canfield

district (study site):

1. Provision of support and commitment–financial, informational, cultural, and

relational at the district and school levels;

2. Encouragement and flexibility;

3. Construction of teacher trust and risk taking;

4. Focus on content and community;

5. Encouragement of self-reflection with guidance; and

6. Allocation of sufficient resources to support teachers' learning. (p. 276)

The second experience for the participants at the research site would be the use of action

research to continue to develop and enhance the collective learning culture of the

research site. Parsons and Brown (2002) noted that

action research is a form of investigation designed for use to attempt to solve

problems and improve professional practices in their own classrooms. It involves

systematic observations and data collection which can be then used by the

practitioner-researcher in reflection, decision-making and the development of

more effective classroom strategies. (cited in Moulds, 2013, p. 1)

The North Central Regional Educational Laboratory (NCREL, 2014) also supported the

role of action research as a means to solve problems and to improve professional
learning. NCREL stated that

> action research has the potential to generate genuine and sustained improvements
> in schools. It gives educators the new opportunities to reflect on and assess their
> teaching; were, to share feedback with fellow team members; and to make
> decisions about new approaches to include in the team's curriculum, instruction,
> and assessment plans. (p. 1)

In phase two of the EVAEM, the use of collective efficacy training can be
instituted to further enhance and develop the collective learning culture of the classified
staff members at the research site. Bandura (2000) noted that the impact of perceived
collective efficacy has significant influence or plays a role on the collective function of a
group of individuals. Bandura stated that

> studies have analyzed diverse social systems, including educational systems
> (Bandura, 1997), business organizations (Earley, 1994; Hodges & Carron, 1992;
> Little & Madigan, 1994), athletic teams (Carron, 1984; Feltz & Lirgg, 1998;
> Mullen & Copper, 1994; Spink, 1990), combat teams (Jex & Bliese, 1999;
> Lindsley, Matheiu, Heffner, & Brass, 1994), and urban neighborhoods (Sampson,
> Raudenbush & Earls, 1997). The findings taken at a whole show that the higher
> the perceived collective efficacy, the higher the groups' motivational investment
> in their undertakings, the stronger their staying power in the face of impediments
> and setbacks, and the greater their performance accomplishments. (pp. 77-78)

The researcher in this study would recommend further research at this research
site where all three of these experiences in phase two of the EVAEM could be used as a
means to provide professional support to the members of the school organization.

However, based upon the comparative analysis of the classified staff members of this research study, the focus of phase two would target collective efficacy. Once these three experiences as a whole or even individually are completed by the classified staff members, a qualified facilitator would use the same quantitative and qualitative instruments that were used to obtain a collective measure based upon on the five domains of the EVAEM. The qualified facilitator would be able to use the collective indexes from the first phase and the newly acquired collective indexes from the second phase to create correlation calculations for each of the five domains of the EVAEM. The newly obtained data then could be used by the administration, school system, and the collective participants at the research site to target specific outcomes that would inevitably enhance the overall performance of the school organization.

Recommendation 2

The researcher believes that the use of the EVAEM would be beneficial for a number of different schools based upon their configuration of students being served in the school system. The EVAEM can be used at the elementary, middle, or high school levels to effectively measure the collective learning culture of the classified staff members (teachers) for each school configuration. For example, if there are five middle schools in the school system, then these five schools can be used to create a measure of the collective learning culture of the middle schools in the school system. The researcher does not advise that a school system use a mixture of middle schools, high schools, etc., together to create an all-encompassing collective measure of the learning culture for the school system. A possible answer to this issue is for a school system to look outside of its geographical region and use other school organizations that have the same variables that are similar to their school organizations. The National Forum to Accelerate Middle-

Grades Reform: Schools to Watch Initiative could be a possible resource for school organizations to identify other school organizations that may have similar variables that affect the collective learning culture of the school organization.

      The researcher would recommend that the same school configuration be used within the same school system to measure the collective learning culture for the entire school system. The data obtained from this research study on the collective learning culture of a middle school organization in the southeastern region of the United States can be used as a future template for other school organizations. The researcher believes that the EVAEM can be used as a system-wide method to obtain individual and collective school indexes of their collective learning culture. The information obtained from the application of the EVAEM would be a valuable needs assessment tool for principals, central office administrators, and possibly superintendents to target specific professional development opportunities and programs.

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Appendix A

Visual Representation of the Eury Value-Added Experience Model (EVAEM)

Eury Value-Added Experience Model
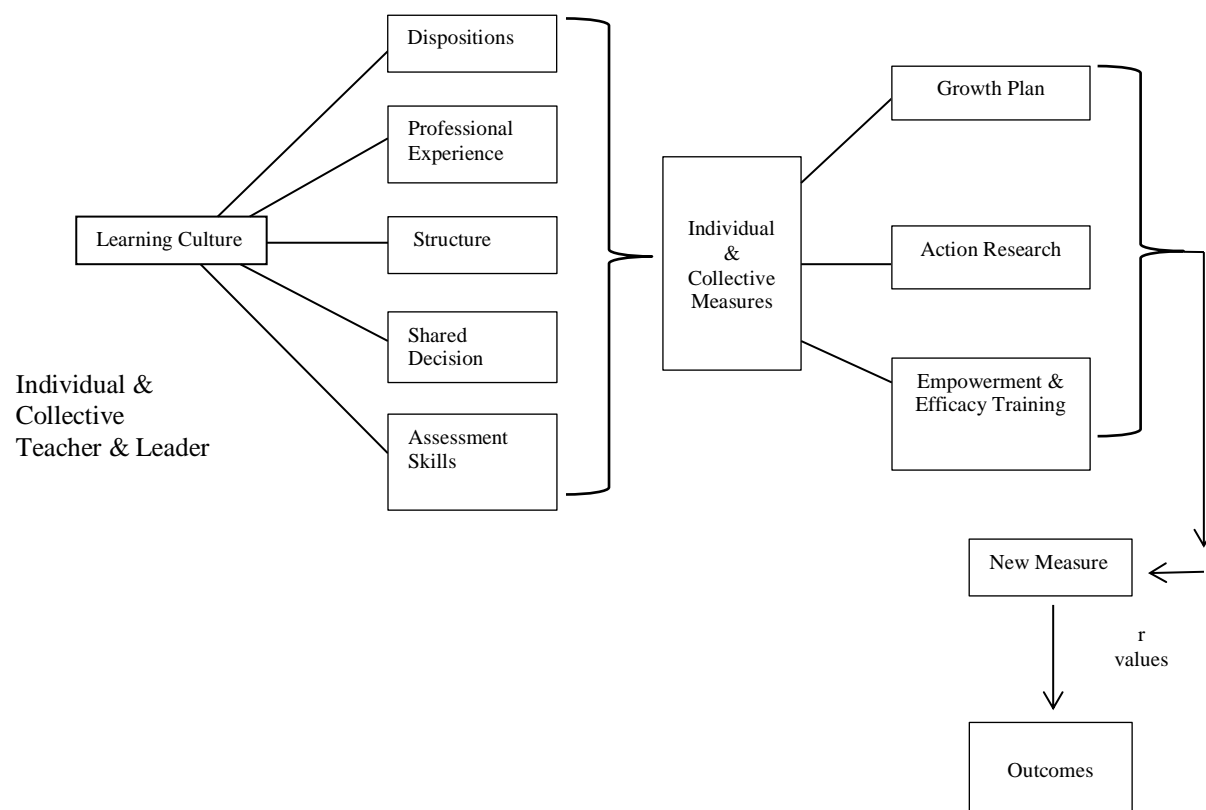
Source: Adapted from figure (Balls et al., 2011, p. 25).

Appendix B

Sequential Exploratory Mixed-Method Case Study Design for the Research Study on the
Collective Learning Culture of a School Organization

Quantitative Data Collection via the use of a Survey Instrument		Quantitative Data Analysis Statical Analysis

Phase $\longrightarrow$

Phase 1 building into Phase 2

qualitative Data Collection via the use of a Questionnaire Instrument & Focus Group Interviews		qualitative Data Analysis Coding and Narrative

Phase 2 $\longrightarrow$

Interpretation of Entire Analysis Quantitative and qualitative Mixed Methods
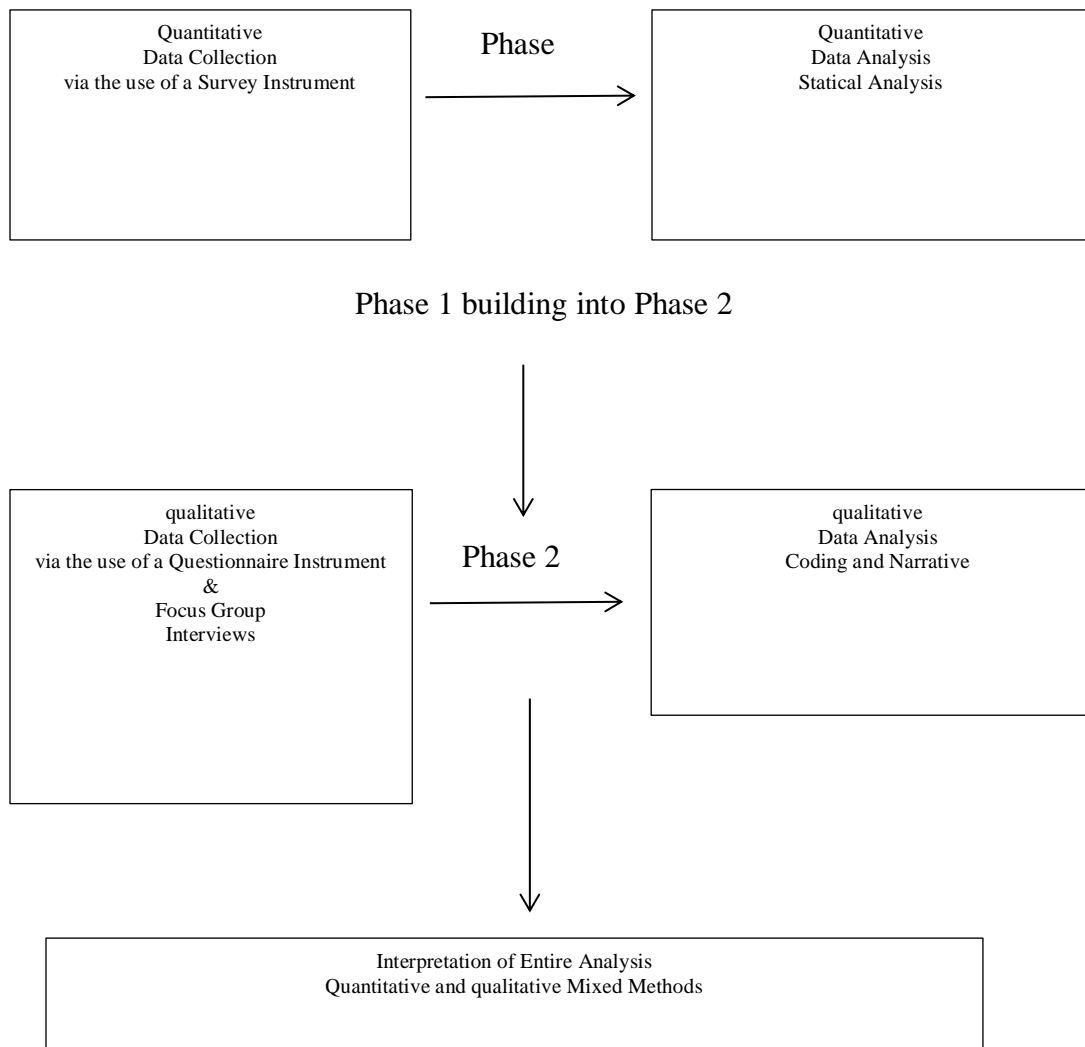
Legend:

   Box= data collection and results

Uppercase letters/lowercase letters = major emphasis, minor emphasis

Arrow = sequence + = concurrent

SOURCE: Adapted from Figure 19.1 (Creswell, 2005) noted in (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2006, p. 491).

Appendix C

Gill Organizational Learning Culture Assessment Survey (GOLCAS)

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
1. This organization has a clear vision for the future.						
2. Employees and volunteers are committed to the mission of this organization.						
3. This organization is committed to continuous improvement.						
4. Leaders are continually being developed for future roles in this organization.						
5. Organization is always looking for ways to use resources more effectively and efficiently.						
6. We would change this organization if it would help us to better meet our mission.						
7. Board pays attention to enhancing overall performance of organization.						
8. This organization uses its own experience to learn how to perform more effectively.						
9. Evaluation is part of every program and operation of this organization.						
10. Evaluation results are used in organizational planning.						

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
11. Employees and volunteers receive appropriate orientation and training.						
12. Employees and volunteers are clear about link between what they are doing and strategic goals of organization.						
13. Individual employees and volunteers are engaged in action learning.						
14. Work teams are engaged in action learning.						
15. Effective leadership is recognized and rewarded.						
16. Organization works with community for mutual learning.						
17. This organization is committed to building its capacity to be effective over the long term.						
18. Organization's products and services match what clients/customers want.						
19. Resources (people, money, facilities, equipment, etc.) are aligned with intended outcomes of organization.						
20. Learning and improving permeates everything we do.						

Adapted from *Developing a Learning Culture in Nonprofit Organizations* by Stephen J.

Gill, Sage Publications, In Press (May 2009).

Appendix D

Robertson's (2011) Frequency and Percentage Summary of Positive Responses by
Dimension for All Schools

Frequency and Percentage Summary of Positive Responses by Dimension for All Schools

Five Dimensions	Percent Agreement	Number	Phase of Development
Shared and supportive leadership	85.04	492	Institutionalization
Shared vision and values	88.58	522	Institutionalization
Collective learning and application	89.93	522	Institutionalization
Shared personal practice	82.62	485	Implementation
Supportive conditions	85.08	510	Institutionalization

Note: Non-demonstration <44.99%, initiation $\geq$ 45% to $\leq$ 64.99, implementation $\geq$ 65% to $\leq$ 84.99%, and institutionalization $\geq$ 85% (cited in Robertson et al., p. 80).

Appendix E

Marks & Louis: Observed Differences on Major Variables of School Grade Level

Observed Differences on Major Variables of School Grade Level

	Elementary	Middle	High
Capacity for organizational learning			
Structure	.50***	0.31	-0.64
Shared Commintment and collaborative activtiy	.67***	0.03	-0.5
Knoweldge and Skills	.28***	0.16	-0.35
Feedback and accountability	.36***	0.19	-0.44
Leadership	-0.16	.42***	-0.23
Capacity for organizational learning index	.46***	0.3	-0.6
Empowerment domains			
School Policy	0.05	.13**	-0.16
Teachers Work Life	.38***	0.03	-0.32
Student Expectations	.55***	0.04	-0.49
Classroom instruction	0.01	.16***	-0.23
Empowerment Index	.37***	0.12	-0.39
Teacher background			
Percentage female	88.4***	68.4	59.9
Years of experience	11.8	14.3***	13.8
Percentage academic faculty	76.4***	65.6	62.1
Satisfaction with present school	.22***	-0.09	-0.09

Note: Standardized Variable, M = 0, SD = 1 ** p ≤ .01, ***p ≤ .001
(Appendix D cited from Marks & Louis, 1999, p. 720)

Appendix F

Field Test Eury Value-Added Experience Model Survey Instrument Questions

(Field Test: EVAEMSI)

1. Are you male or female?

2. Please provide the number of years of experience that you have been employed as a practicing licensed teacher in the field of education.

3. Please provide a brief description of the areas of certification that are presently stated on your professional teaching license. (Example: K-6 Elementary Education, 6-8 Middle Grades Science, etc.).

4. What is the highest level of school that you have completed or the highest degree you have received?

5. Are you presently a National Board Certified Teacher?

6. My teaching goals and instructional methods address a variety of learning styles in my classroom.

7. I understand that students have certain needs that must be met before learning can take place.

8. I currently participate and collaborate with my colleagues to improve student learning in my classroom and throughout the entire school.

9. I feel comfortable with the implementation of the new Common Core and Essential Standards curriculum into my classroom instruction.

10. I provide support and assistance to my professional colleagues within and out of my team of teachers.

11. I effectively and efficiently use my non-instructional time for instructional planning.

12. I take advantage of professional learning opportunities.

13. My professional input is valuable to my learning organization.

14. I seek out opportunities to serve as a teacher leader.

15. I set my own personal goals for professional growth as a teacher and as a leader in the

organization.

16. I set personal goals for professional growth as a teacher and as a leader in the organization.

17. I am committed to critical reflection on my own instructional practices for my own personal and professional growth as a teacher.

18. I feel confident with colleagues developing formative assessments to guide my instruction on a daily basis.

19. I feel confident in my ability to use formative assessments to guide my instruction on a daily basis.

20. I feel confident in interpreting and reflecting on data from assessments to adjust instruction.

21. I engage in discussions with my colleagues about new and innovative instructional strategies and practices in the teaching profession.

22. I am successful in facilitating learning for all students.

23. I am willing to collaborate, provide feedback, and supply reflective assessment of my own teaching to fellow colleagues.

24. I believe as a teacher, I efficiently and effectively use all of the resources available to me within the school organization.

25. I take advantage of the opportunities to create policies and procedures that directly affect student learning in the school organization.

26. I take advantage of the technology and the assessment resources to adequately measure student performance and learning.

27. The organizational structure of the school allows me as a staff member to share my beliefs, ideas, and concerns in the governance of the organization.

28. Processes are in place within the organization to effectively protect the collaborative time for planning with my fellow team of teachers.

29. I practice and incorporate the use of student assessment criteria that I have agreed upon with other teachers in the same course or grade in my instructional practices.

30. As a member of the organization, I have the necessary opportunities/avenues to actively participate in the budget making process of the school.

31. The use of interdisciplinary teaming of teachers is an effective method for teachers to work together to provide a high level of student learning.

32. This organization has a clear vision for the future.

33. Employees and volunteers are committed to the mission of this organization.

34. This organization is committed to continuous improvement.

35. Leaders are continually being developed for future roles in this organization.

36. Organization is always looking for ways to use resources more effectively and efficiently.

37. We would change this organization if it would help us to better meet our mission.

38. Board pays attention to enhancing the overall performance of the organization.

39. This organization uses its own experiences to learn how to perform more effectively.

40. Evaluation is part of every program and operation of this organization.

41. Evaluation results are used in the organizational planning.

42. Employees and volunteers receive appropriate orientation and training.

43. Employees and volunteers are clear about the link between what they are doing and strategic goals of the organization.

44. Individual employees and volunteers are engaged in action learning.

45. Work teams are engaged in action learning.

46. Effective leadership is recognized and rewarded.

47. Organization works with community for mutual learning.

48. This organization is committed to building capacity to be effective over the long term.

49. Organization's products and services match what the clients/customer want.

50. Resources (people, money, facilities, equipment, etc.) are aligned with intended

     outcomes of the organization.

51. Learning and improving permeates everything we do.

Appendix G

Eury Value-Added Experience Model Survey Instrument Questions

(EVAEMSI)

Eury Value-Added Experience Model Survey Instrument Questions (EVAEMSI)

1. Are you male or female?

2. Please provide the number of years of experience that you have been employed as a practicing licensed teacher in the field of education.

3. Please provide a brief description of the areas of certification that are presently stated on your professional teaching license. (Example: K-6 Elementary Education, 6-8 Middle Grades Science, etc.).

4. What is the highest level of school that you have completed or the highest degree you have received?

5. My teaching goals and instructional methods address a variety of learning styles in my classroom.

6. I currently participate and collaborate with my colleagues to improve student learning in my classroom and throughout the entire school organization.

7. I feel comfortable with the implementation of the Common Core and Essential Standards curriculum into my classroom instruction.

8. I provide support and assistance to my colleagues both vertically and horizontally in my organizations structure.

9. I effectively and efficiently use my non-instructional time for instructional planning.

10. I take advantage of the professional learning opportunities provided by the school organization.

11. My professional knowledge and input is valued by my learning organization.

12. I seek out opportunities to share my knowledge and also serve as a teacher leader in my school organization.

13. I set my own personal goals for my own professional growth as a teacher and as a teacher leader in my learning organization.

14. I am committed to critical self-reflection and evaluation of my own instructional practices as a teacher.

15. I have confidence within my colleagues to develop formative assessments in a collaborative environment to guide my daily instruction.

16. I engage in discussions with my colleagues about new and innovative instructional strategies and practices in the teaching profession.

17. I am willing to collaborate, provide feedback, and supply reflective assessment of my own teaching to my fellow colleagues.

18. I believe as a teacher, I efficiently and effectively use all of the resources available to me within my learning organization.

19. I feel confident in my ability to use common formative assessment data to guide my daily instruction.

20. I take full advantage of the opportunities to create processes that directly influences student learning in my organization.

21. The organizational structure of the school allows me as a teacher to share my beliefs, issues, and concerns in the governance of the organization.

22. Processes are in place within the organization to effectively protect the collaborative time for planning with my fellow colleagues within the organization.

23. As a member of the organization, I have the necessary opportunities/avenues to actively participate in the allocation of resources in the organization.

24. This organization has a clear vision for the future.

25. Employees and volunteers are committed to the mission of this organization.

26. This organization is committed to continuous improvement.

27. Leaders are continually being developed for future roles in this organization.

28. Organization is always looking for ways to use resources more effectively and efficiently.

29. We would change this organization if it would help us to better meet our mission.

30. Board pays attention to enhancing the overall performance of the organization.

31. This organization uses its own experiences to learn how to perform more effectively.

32. Evaluation is part of every program and operation of this organization.

33. Evaluation results are used in the organizational planning.

34. Employees and volunteers receive appropriate orientation and training.

35. Employees and volunteers are clear about the link between what they are doing and strategic goals of the organization.

36. Individual employees and volunteers are engaged in action learning.

37. Work teams are engaged in action learning.

38. Effective leadership is recognized and rewarded.

39. Organization works with community for mutual learning.

40. This organization is committed to building capacity to be effective over the long term.

41. Organization's products and services match what the clients/customer want.

42. Resources (people, money, facilities, equipment, etc.) are aligned with intended outcomes of the organization.

43. Learning and improving permeates everything we do.

Appendix H

Formal Consent Letter for the Eury Value-Added Experience Model Survey Instrument

(EVAEMSI)

Eury Value-Added Experience Model: A Case Study on the Collective Learning Culture
of a Suburban Middle School in the Southeastern Region of the United States.

Consent to Participate in the Study

I am conducting research on the collective learning culture of an organization
based upon on the Eury Value-Added Experience Model. The Eury Value-Added
Experience model is a theoretical model that "suggests new ways of gaining insight into
teacher's practices, new ways of examining the strengths and weaknesses, and new ways
of developing teacher capacity in individual and collective considerations" (Balls, Eury,
and King, 2011.p. 2). I am investigating the collective learning culture of a school
organization to explore and enhance the scholarly knowledge on the collective teacher's
perceptions of the school organization. The use of Eury Value-Added Experience Model
will enable the researcher of this study to collect, evaluate, and analyze the datum to
create a descriptive needs assessment of the organization. The Eury Value-Added
Experience Model will focus on the impact of dispositions, professional experiences,
organizational structures, the use of assessment skills, and shared decision making
processes within the school organization as means to measure the collective learning
culture of an organization.

If you decide to participate in this study, you will be asked to participate in an electronic
web-survey that will focus on the collective learning culture of the organization. Once
the survey has been completed, the researcher will use the datum from the survey
instrument to develop a set of open-ended questions to be used in a focus group setting.
There are no risks in your participation in the survey or in your participation in a focus
group session. All information is confidential, and no individual or school will be
identified in this study. All focus group sessions will be conducted by the researcher and
the identity of the participants will not be shared outside of this study. The information
provided from the survey instrument and the focus group sessions will not be used for
any reason beyond this research study.

If you decide to take part in this research study on the collective learning culture of a
school organization, you will have the opportunity to provide datum and much needed
scholarly information on the collective learning culture of a school organization. Taking
part in this research study is voluntary, and if you choose not to participate in this study
there are no penalties or consequences in your decision. You may also choose to
withdrawal at any time from this study on the collective learning culture of a school
organization.

If you would like to obtain more information about this research project, please contact
me at XXXXXXX or email me at treed@gardner-webb.edu. This research project has
been approved by the Institutional Review Board at Gardner-Webb University.
Information on Gardner-Webb University's policy and procedure for research involving
humans can be obtained from Dr. Doug Eury at Gardner-Webb University.

Sincerely,

Consent Statement

I agree to participate in this research study on the collective learning culture of a school organization. I understand that if I decide to participate in this study, I will participate in the survey phase of the study and the possibility of also being a member of a focus group session. I understand that I have the right to withdraw my involvement in this research study with the understanding that there will be no recourse of my decision.

_____   _____
Signature   Date

Appendix I

Eury Value-Added Experience Model Questionnaire Instrument (EVAEMQI)

Eury Value-Added Experience Model Questionnaire Instrument (EVAEMQI)

1. **Disposition domain of the Eury Value-Added Experience Model on the collective learning cultures of a school organization.**

According to the National Council for Accreditation for Teacher education (NCATE) 2000, dispositions are the 'value, commitments, and professional ethics that influence behaviors towards students, colleagues, and communities and effect student learning, motivation, and learning." Please feel free to list your ideas, beliefs, or insights that are prevalent in your school organization that pertains to the domains of dispositions.

2. **Professional experience domain of the Eury Value-Added Experience Model on the collective learning culture of a school organization.**

According to Balls et al., they noted that individual professional experiences "can be defined as the past personal experiences of each community member as a learner, teacher, team member, and leader. Collective professional experiences of an organization as a unit can be defined as the past experiences of the organization as a whole unit" (2011, p. 73). Please feel free to provide examples of individual or collective professional experiences that you have taken part in the past few years that has added to the collective learning culture of the school organization.

3. **Structure domain of the Eury Value-Added Experience Model on the collective learning culture of a school organization.**

In the third domain of the Eury Value-Added Experience Model, the organizational structure of the school organization deals with the human element of the organization. According to Balls et al. (2011), "structures can include how students and teachers are grouped, teacher leadership, and student leaderships" (p. 53). This domain examines the organizational structure that the collective group experiences on a day-to-

day process of the school organization. Please feel free to provide examples of the domain of structure within your school organization.

4. Shared decision-making domain of the Eury Value-Added Experience Model on the collective learning culture of a school organization.

The fourth domain of the Eury Value-Added Experience Model deals with the concepts of shared decision-making and the empowerment of the stakeholders' in the organization. Balls et al. (2011), noted in their publication that the Eury Value-Added Experience Model "would measure the degree of shared decision-making opportunities to contribute to the development of positive interactions, routines, and common language of learning." Please feel free to provide examples of shared decision-making opportunities in your school organization.

5. Assessment and reflection domain of the Eury Value-Added Experience Model on the collective learning culture of a school organization.

The fifth and final domain of the Eury Value-Added Experience Model focusses on the construct of assessing one's course of action as a reflective teacher in the classroom and throughout the organization of the school. According to Taggart and Wilson (1998), the ability of a teacher to employ reflective thinking in the classroom as "the process of making informed and logical decisions on educational matters, then assessing the consequences of those decisions" is a critical element in the creation of the individual and collective learning culture of a school organization (p. 2). Please feel free to provide individual or collective examples of how you as a teacher reflect on the learning in your classroom and throughout the school organization.

Appendix J

Consent Letter for Participation in the Focus Group Sessions

Dear Research Participants,

I would like to invite you to take part in the third phase of the research study on the collective learning culture of an organization based on the Eury Value-Added Experience Model. The Eury Value-Added Experience Model is a theoretical model that "suggests new ways of gaining insight into teacher's practices, new ways of examining the strengths and weaknesses, and new ways of developing teacher capacity in individual and collective considerations" (Balls, Eury, and King, 2011, p. 2).

The Eury Value-Added Experience Model focuses on the impact of dispositions, professional experiences, organizational structures, shared decision-making processes, and the use of assessment skills within the school organization as means to measure the collective learning culture of an organization. I am investigating the collective learning culture of a school to explore and enhance the scholarly knowledge on the collective teachers' perceptions of an organization. The use of the Eury Value-Added Model will enable the researcher of this study to collect, evaluate, and analyze the datum to create a descriptive needs assessment of the organization.

Part of this research study will also include the use of 2 focus group interviews as a means to obtain a narrative of the collective learning culture of the organization. The purpose of each focus group session is to ascertain the opinions, attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions of the participants' in the Eury Value-Added Experience Model survey instrument on the collective learning culture of a school organization. The researcher in this collective learning study is particularly interested in developing a more in-depth understanding or in clarifying conflicting or equivocal (*information that misleads or is confusing*) information from the quantitative data in the research study on the collective learning culture of a school organization.

Thank you so much for your time and consideration for my request for you to participate in the focus group sessions on this research study on the collective learning culture of a school organization.

Questions or concerns, feel free to contact me via email at treed@gardner-webb.edu.

Timothy M. Reed

Appendix K

Eury Value-Added Experience Model Focus Group Session Questions

Domain #1 Disposition Focus Group Questions

Questions based upon information obtained from the EVAEMSI and the EVAEMQI:

Slide #1:

    1. What is the impact of a teacher's dispositions: **(morals, values, ethics, and attitudes)** on the learning culture of a school organization. Please give examples…

    2. Please, explain how a teacher's disposition can affect **student learning**? Give examples…..

    3. Please, explain how a teacher's disposition can influence **student achievement**? Please give examples….

Slide #2:

Dispositions questions pertain to the information based upon the EVAEMSI data obtained in May 2013:

Question #5: My teaching goals and instructional methods address a variety of learning styles in my classroom.

18 participants responded with Strongly Agree (54.5%)

14 participants responded with Agree (42.4%)

Statement: "My teaching goals and instructional methods address a variety of learning styles in my classroom," had the highest overall score of the 11 questions that pertained to the domain of dispositions under the Eury Value-Added Experience Model.

Question 1: Why did you and/or your fellow participants identify this question as the most important dispositional question in the Eury Value Added Experience Model?

Slide #3:

Question 2: Can you give me some insights in why your fellow colleagues chose this question for having the strongest positive impact on the collective learning culture of a school organization?

Slide #4:

Question #14: I am committed to critical self-reflection and evaluation of my own personal instructional practices as a teacher.

10 participants responded with Strongly Agree (33.3%)

20 participants responded with Agree (66.7%)

Question 3: Can we discuss why 2/3 of the participants chose **Agree**, while only 1/3 of the participants chose strongly **Agree**?

Question 4: Can you give some insight in why the majority of participants chose **Agree** with regards to this question in the survey?

Slide #5:

Question #12: I seek opportunities to share my knowledge and also serve as a teacher leader in my school organization.

13 participants responded with strongly agree (43.3%)

10 participants responded with agree (33.3%)

7 participants responded with neutral (23.3%)

Question 5: Can you give some insight in why 7 out of the 30 participants (23.3%) in the survey chose to be neutral with regards to this question?

Slide #6:

Question #29: We would change this organization if it would help us better meet our mission.

6 participants responded with strongly agree (20%)

18 participants responded with agree (60%)

4 participants responded with neutrality (13.3%)

2 participants responded with disagree (6.7%)

Question 6: Can you give some insight in why 80% of the participants chose that they would change this organization if it would help us better meet our mission?

Slide #7:

Domain #1 Domain Closing Activity:
If you had to rate the impact of the domain of dispositions on the collective learning culture of a school organization, how would you rate the role of dispositions on a scale of 1 to 10.

(1 being the least important – 10 being the most important)

Please explain why you chose the rating scale number?

Slide #8:

Domain #2 Professional Experiences Focus Group Questions:

Questions based upon information from the EVAEMQI:

Statement: From the information obtained from the questionnaire in August 2013 you and your colleagues identified that the idea of collaboration was the strongest theme in the professional experience domain on the questionnaire.

Question: Why do you and your colleagues believe the role of collaboration is so important to the collective learning culture of this school organization?

Can you give the researcher some insight in why a teacher's professional experiences can have an impact on the instruction that takes place in the school organization?

Slide #9:

Professional Experience questions pertaining to information based upon the EVAEMSI data obtained in May 2013.

Question #13: I set my own personal goals for my own professional growth as a teacher and as teacher leader in my learning organization.

Question 1: What role does professional experience plays in the creation and development of your own personal growth plan?

Positives?

Negatives?

Statement: 100% of the participants in the Eury Value-Added Experience Model Survey gave this question as having a positive impact on the collective learning culture of the school organization.

Question 2: Why do you believe you and your colleagues believe that this question had such a strong impact on the collective learning culture of this school organization?

Slide #10:

Question #21: This organization uses its own experiences to learn how to perform more effectively.

8 participants responded with Strongly Agree (26.7%)

17 participants responded with Agree (56.7%)

4 participants responded with Neutrality (13.3%)

1 participant responded with Disagreement (3.3%)

Statement: 83.4% of the participants in the survey believe that this question had a positive impact on the collective learning culture of the organization.

Question 3: Can you give the researcher some insight in why 83.4% of the participants believed that this question had a positive impact on the collective learning culture of your school organization?

Slide #11:

Statement: On the other hand, 16.6% of the participants in the survey believed that this question had a neutral or negative impact on the collective learning culture of the organization.

Question 4: Can you give some insight to the researcher for why these 5 participants believed that this question had a negative or neutral view towards this question pertaining to you school organization?

Slide #12:

Domain #2 Professional Experiences Closing Activity:
If you had to rate the impact of the domain of professional experiences on the collective learning culture of a school organization, how would you rate the role of professional experiences on a scale of 1 to 10.

(1 being the least important- 10 being the most important)

Please explain why you chose the rating scale number?

Slide #13:

<center>**Domain #3 Structure Focus Group Questions**</center>

Questions are based upon the information obtained from the EVAEMQI August 2013:

How does the organizational structure (teams, grade levels) impact the collective learning culture of this school organization?

Positives?

Negatives?

Slide #14:

Can you give some insight to the researcher the structure for grouping students (ability levels, grades, teams) has on the collective learning culture of the school   organization?

Please give some insight to the researcher on the opportunities (programs, clubs, activities, etc.) that are based in the structural foundations of the school that influences the collective learning culture of the school organization?

Slide #15:

Structure Questions pertaining to the information obtained from the EVAEMSI data from May 2013.

Question #9: I effectively and efficiently use my non-instructional time for instructional planning.

11 participants responded with strongly agree (36.7%)

15 participants responded with agree (50%)

2 participants responded with neutrality (6.7%)

1 participant responded with disagreement (3.3%)

1 participant responded with a strong disagreement (3.3%)

Question 1: Can you provide to the researcher some insight in why 13.3% of the participants responded with neutrality or disagreement to this question?

Slide #16:

Question 2: What hindrances in the organizational structure of your school organization can you define that affect your instructional planning during your non-instructional time throughout the day

Statement: On the other hand, (86.7%) of the participants on the survey agreed that this question of "I effectively and efficiently use my non-instructional time for instructional planning," had positive impact on the collective learning culture of this school organization?

Question 3: Can you give the researcher some insight why (86.7%) your colleagues selected collectively at this school that they use their non-instructional time effectively and efficiently for instructional time?

Examples of the organizational structure that allows this to happen?

Slide #17:

Question # 15: I have confidence within my colleagues to develop formative assessments in a collaborative environment to guide my daily instruction.

8 participants responded with strongly agree (26.7%)

17 participants responded with agree (56.7%)

5 participants responded with neutrality (16.7%)

Question 4: What structures /programs/procedures that you have in your organizational structure allows you as a teacher to work collaboratively with your colleagues?

Question 5: Can you provide to the researcher in this research study on the collective learning culture of your school organization possible additions or improvements that would allow the 17 participants to change their selection to strongly agree?

Question 6: Why do you think 5 participants or 16.7% of the participants were neutral in their decision with regards to this specific question?

Slide #18:

Question #37: Work teams are engaged in action learning.

7 participants responded with strongly agree (23.3%)

13 participants responded with agree (43.3%)

10 participants responded with neutrality (33.3%)

Statement: Question 37# "Work teams are engaged in action learning." In the data obtained from the survey in August 2013, this question had the largest number of individuals who selected neutral with regards to this question in the structure domain of the Eury Value-Added Experience Model.

Question 7: Can you give the researcher any insight in why 1/3 of the participants in the May 2013 survey from this research site decided to select a neutral stance toward this question on the collective learning culture of the school organization.

Slide #19:

Question #42: Resources (people, money, facilities, equipment, etc) are aligned with intended outcomes of the organization.

2 participants responded with strongly agree (6.7%)

10 participants responded with agree (33.3%)

6 participants responded with neutrality (20%)

11 participants responded with disagreement (36.7%)

1 participant responded with a strong disagreement (3.3%)

Statement: 40% of the participants have a positive response to this question 20% of the participants are neutral to this question

40% of the participants have a negative response to this question

Question 8: Why did the vast majority of the participants (60%) at this research site believe that the "resources (people, money, facilities, equipment, etc.) are aligned with the intended outcomes of the organization had a negative impact on the collective learning culture of this school organization?

Specific examples, possible insights?

Slide #20:

Domain #3 Structure Closing Activity:

If you had to rate the impact of the domain of structure on the collective learning culture of a school organization, how would you rate the role of

structure on a scale of 1 to 10. (1 being the least important- 10 being the most important)

Please explain why you chose the rating scale number.

Slide #21:

Domain#4 Shared Decision-Making Focus Group Questions

Questions are based upon the information obtained from the EVAEMQI August 2013:

Statement: In August 2013, the staff questionnaire on the collective learning culture of the research site, the strongest and most recognizable pattern or trend in the data demonstrated that meetings had the strongest effect on the collective level of shared decision-making at this research site.

Question: Please provide some more insight in the data obtained from the questionnaire that shared decision-making opportunities are through meetings at the research site?

Examples, opportunities, etc.?

Slide #22:

Statement: The August 2013 questionnaire also identified that specific programs at the research site greatly influences the collective impact of the staff on shared decision-making opportunities at this research site.

Question: Please provide to the researcher specific programs that are currently being used at the research site that enables shared decision-making opportunities to have a positive impact on the collective learning culture of the research site.

Slide #23:

Question #23: As a member of the organization, I have the necessary opportunities/avenues to actively participate in the allocation of resources in the organization.

5 participants responded with strongly agree (16.7%)

8 participants responded with agree (26.7%)

13 participants responded with neutrality (43.3%)

4 participants responded with disagreement (13.3%)

Question 1: Please provide some insight why collectively the staff members who participated in this May 2013 survey chose neutrality or a stance of negativity towards this question?

Slide #24:

Question #26: This organization is committed to continuous improvement.

15 participants responded with strongly agree (50%)

13 participants responded with agree (43.3%)

2 participants responded with neutrality (6.7%)

Question 2: Please provide to the researcher some insight in the rationale why the participants of the May 2013 survey identified a (93.3%) positive connection between continuous learning and shared decision-making opportunities at the research site.   (Collective Learning Culture)

Slide #25:

Question #27: Leaders are critically being developed for future roles in this organization.

and

Question #28: Organization is always looking for ways to use resources more effectively and efficiently.

Statement: Both of these questions on the survey have the same positive impact score of 93.

Question #27

9 participants responded with strongly agree (30%)
12 participants responded with agree (40%)

Question #28

9 participants responded with strongly agree (30%)

12 participants responded with agree (40%)

9 participants strongly agree times 5 Likert points = 45

12 participants agree times 4 Likert points= 48

Combined Total: 45 + 48= 93

Question #3: At the present moment, which of these two questions have a stronger impact on the collective learning culture of the research site?

Question #4:   Please explain why you believe Question # 27 or Question #28 has the greater impact on the collective learning culture of this organization.

Slide #26:

Domain #4 Shared Decision-Making Closing Activity:

If you had to rate the impact of the shared decision-making domain on the collective learning culture of this school organization, how would you rate the role of shared decision-making on a scale of 1 to 10. (1 being the least important- 10 being the most important).

Please provide some insight in your rating scale number.

Slide #27:

Domain #5 Assessment/Reflection Focus Group Questions
Statement: In the August 2013, the assessment domain portion of the staff questionnaire on the collective learning culture of the research site. The participants in the questionnaire noted in their comments that the strongest trend or recognizable pattern in the data of the questionnaire demonstrated that the ability to reflect has the strongest influence on the collective learning culture on this school organization.

Question: Please provide to the researcher some insight or further discussion in the belief that the ability to reflect individually or collectively has the greatest impact on the collective learning culture of this school organization.

Slide #28:

Can you provide the researcher some insights in why Common Formative Assessments, End of Grade assessments, and assessments that have measurable results are important to the collective learning culture of the research site?

Positives?
Negatives?

Slide #29:

Question #17: I am willing to collaborate, provide feedback, and supply reflective assessment of my own teaching to my fellow colleagues.

15 participants responded with strongly agree (50%)

15 participants responded with agree (50%)

Statement: 100% positive impact on the collective learning culture of school organization at this research site.

Question 1: Please provide specific examples that are already implemented at this research site that pertains to the question "I am willing to collaborate, provide feedback, and supply reflective assessment to my own teaching to my fellow colleagues."

Slide #30:

Question #41: Organization's products and services match what clients/customers want.

2 participants responded with strongly agree (6.7%)

16 participants responded with agree (53.3%)

8 participants responded with neutrality (26.7%)

4 participants responded with disagreement (13.4%)

Question 2: Does the school organization provide a specific product or service that matches what the client/customer want?

Question 3: Please provide to the researcher some insight into the difficulty in answering this question as a school organization?

Question 4: Could this be the reason why 40% of the participants in the survey responded with neutrality or disagreement to this question with regards to the collective learning culture of this school organization?

Slide #31:

Question #32: Evaluation is part of every program and operation of this organization.

     7 participants responded with strongly agree (23.3%)

     15 participants responded with agree (50%)

     8 participants responded with neutrality (26.7%)

Question 5: Could you please provide some information or insight in why 8 colleagues at the research site selected a neutral position to this question in the collective learning survey.

Question 6: What are some of the individual and collective examples of how "evaluation is part of every program and operation of this organization?"

Slide #32:

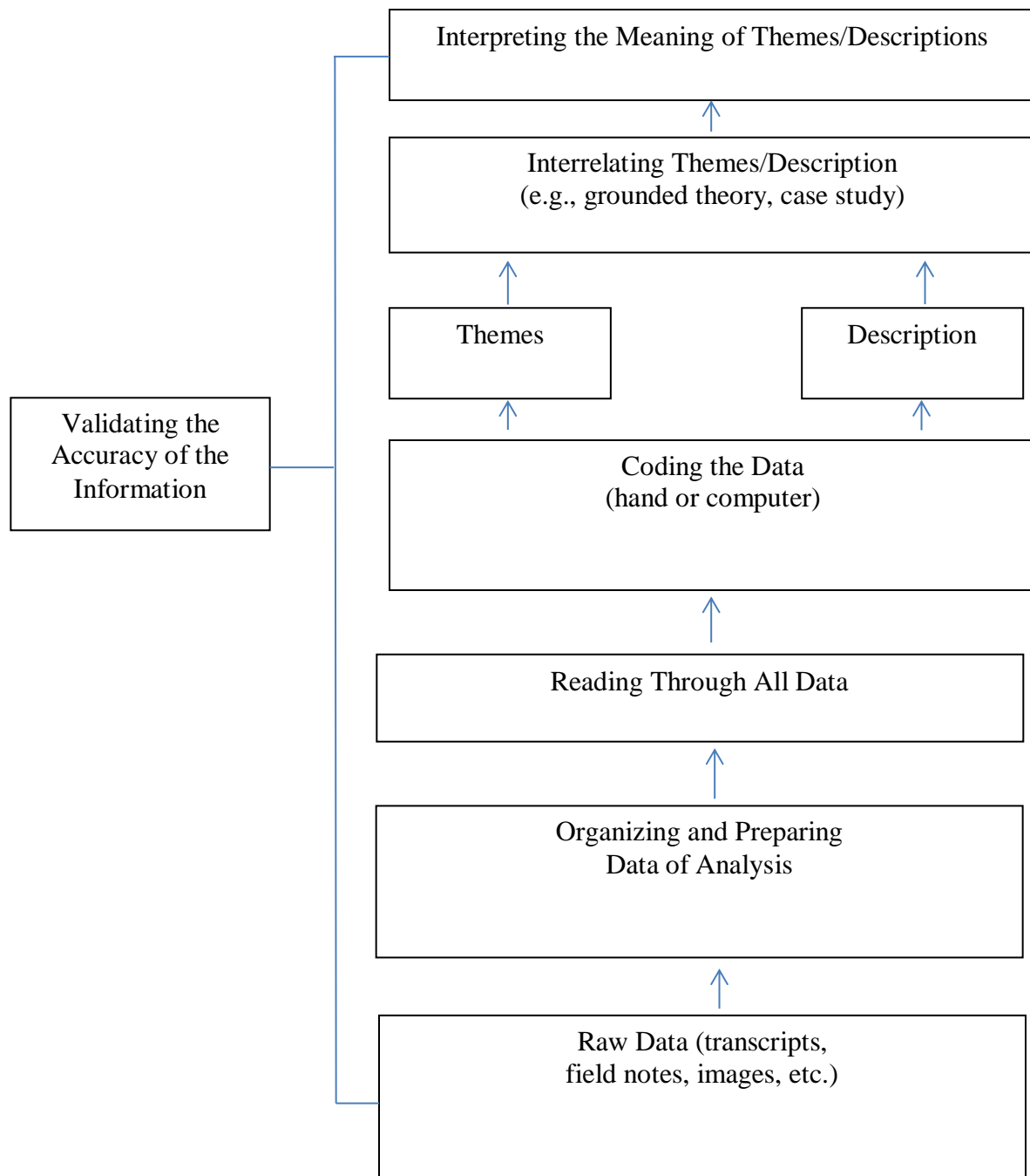Domain #5 Assessment/Reflection Closing Activity:

If you had to rate the impact of the domain of assessment/reflection on the collective learning culture of a school organization, how would you rate the role of assessments on a scale of 1 to 10.

 (1 being the least important- 10 being the most important).

Please explain why you have chosen the rating scale number?

Appendix L

Creswell's Visual Representation for Qualitative Data Analysis

Interpreting the Meaning of Themes/Descriptions

↑

Interrelating Themes/Description (e.g., grounded theory, case study)

↑   ↑

Themes		Description

↑   ↑

Validating the Accuracy of the Information

Coding the Data (hand or computer)

↑

Reading Through All Data

↑

Organizing and Preparing Data of Analysis

↑

Raw Data (transcripts, field notes, images, etc.)

Note. The data in Appendix L is from Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed-Methods Approaches (p. 185), by J. W. Creswell, 2009, Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.