ABSTRACT

Janette Hernandez, GOING AGAINST THE GRAIN: REIMAGINING THE ROLE OF HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPALS AND PRINCIPAL SUPERVISOR AS ADAPTIVE LEADERS (Under the direction of Dr. Matthew Militello). Department of Educational Leadership, March 2019.

To create conditions for high school principals and the principal supervisor to successfully lead career-themed pathways, a principal supervisor established a Community of Practice (CoP) and differentiated equity-focused coaching for principals so they could deeply engage in leading the implementation of high school small learning communities. Through the use of a participatory action research (PAR) methodology that included the principals as co-practitioner researchers (CPR), the study examines how the principals and principal supervisor remained focused on the larger vision and goal of leading schools with intentionality and instructional focus. By purposefully identifying adaptive challenges, using community learning exchange pedagogies and ensuring a robust planning and implementation process for students, the principals were able to concentrate on joint work and recognize how to apply the adaptive leadership framework to their challenges.

The participatory action research process provided guidelines for collecting and analyzing the qualitative data to construct theories grounded in the data that led to these three claims: (1) Interrupting typical district supervisory-principal relations requires going against the grain of typical district practice; (2) the adaptive leadership framework provided a metacognitive and meta-affective framework that was useful, but insufficient, in principals fully transferring their reflection to school leadership practice; and (3) living with the tension of the dual role of evaluator and supporter, the district supervisor has to blend professional capital with professional accountability to achieve a balanced approach to supervising and coaching. The CoP structure and CLE protocols provided opportunity for co-designing joint work, differentiating between

technical and adaptive challenges, and using the adaptive leadership framework as anchor for discussion and action. The transfer of practices to school is complex because of the uncertainty and ambiguity that exists in schools and districts.

Findings indicate that more research is needed on role of principal supervisors who go against the grain of traditional district office roles with intentionality and create opportunities for high school principals to develop their professional capital as adaptive leaders. That requires a district commitment to redefining the role of supervisor if the supervisor is to fully support site leadership.

GOING AGAINST THE GRAIN: REIMAGINING THE ROLE OF HIGH SCHOOL

PRINCIPALS AND PRINCIPAL SUPERVISOR AS ADAPTIVE LEADERS

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CHAPTER ONE: FOCUS OF PRACTICE

Most districts across the nation have some version of this statement in their mission: *The district prepares all students for success in college and career.* Yet many districts do not equitably support students in completing high school prepared to undertake the first step of adult life in college or postsecondary learning (Kirst & Venezia, 2005). In the Athena Unified School District, located in northern California, only 39% of students have completed the courses required for admission to the University of California and California State University. The completion rate for African-American students is 22%. Latino students are at 23% and students receiving Special Education services are at 1.5%. The graduation rate in Athena increased from 83% to 89% over the between 2011 and 2018 yet there remains a significant opportunity gap for college and career readiness (Boykin & Noguera, 2013). In addition, most students remain in Athena after graduation, where 50% of graduates attend the community college. However, many are required to take remedial classes and typically do not transfer to a four-year institution. Only one in seven Athena students ever go on to graduate from a four-year college (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2016).

When I think of the participatory action research journey, I am reminded of the story of a father of an Athena high school student who approached me regarding concerns about his son. When I asked what Small Learning Community (SLC) he was in at the high school, he stated that he attended Athena schools as a child and did not understand the utility of the SLCs. His son did not know which SLC to choose at such a young age and chose the engineering pathway although he was not an academically strong student, and he believed that students were required to have good grades to get into that SLC. By the end of the first semester of taking a required career technical education course, Introduction to Principles of Design, he had a different point

of view and excitedly shared that his son reported that he wanted to become an engineer. It was a different experience from his high school days where he had coasted through high school with no expectation of going to college. He was excited by his son's ambition and now saw the relevance of SLCs to his son's school experience. That is a single story, but it is not a singular experience; it is the story of generations of students in our district, and I believe focus and stronger attention to each student can make a difference for more students.

Based on the data and a clear moral imperative to create more equitable opportunities and outcomes for our students, the leaders in our district embarked on a mission to redefine academic and civic success in our high schools, create opportunities for students to understand the relevance of their high school experience to their futures, and view college and career as viable options for them. We have worked and are still working to create the necessary conditions in high schools and to cultivate a sense of purpose and resilience in our students so they can pursue and achieve their personal goals. In 2013, the District committed to a vision: *all students will reach their highest potential as creative and critical thinkers prepared for college, career and life-long learning*. The participatory action research project helped define the road forward on the journey of living our vision.

Focus of Practice

At the outset of the project, the three high school principals in the district (two are comprehensive high schools and one at a small school of the arts) were committed to a more robust set of practices to support teachers in achieving college, career, and community readiness for Athena students. However, the three principals responsible for the implementation at the high schools were at different points in their careers and understanding of the ways in which their schools could further develop the SLCs (small learning communities). The participatory action

research (PAR) project was focused first on my role as their supervisor and how I could support the three principals as effective leaders in their contexts. I wanted to understand and act strategically by effectively differentiating support for each principal so each could thoughtfully and effectively undertake the SLC redesign and implementation at his or her school.

In my role as Director of Secondary Education, I needed to fully understand how to be an effective supervisor by ensuring differentiated supports to principals and making certain that the array of district supports were aligned and available. Therefore, in the PAR project, the focus of practice was to engage the principals individually and collectively and analyze the ways in which a district leader can supervise and coach high school principals using nontraditional professional learning opportunities to improve high schools. In this section, I discuss the assets and challenges related to the focus of practice, discuss the improvement goal and the purpose of the project, and present the research questions that guided the PAR inquiry.

Focus of Practice (FoP): Assets and Challenges

The situation in Athena at the start of the project in 2016 suggested that key assets and challenges influenced how the SLCs were organized and how well they were serving students. I present a fishbone, a process in the improvement sciences that helped analyze the root causes of a focus of practice (Bryk, Gomez, Grunow, & LeMahieu, 2015). The revised version of the fishbone that was used in the participatory action research emphasizes the assets and challenges related to the focus of practice and helped determine how to use our assets to address our challenges. The principals have to make many decisions and engage teachers, students, and families in this process. My role was to help them identify the assets to build on and the supports they needed to make informed decisions and create more opportunities for success. The fishbone diagram outlines the focus of practice (FOP) from macro, meso, and micro perspectives,

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describing the strengths and challenges in each area. The macro context includes the structural elements at the national and state policy level, the meso level identifies the district level, and the micro level is what is happening at the school and principal level (see Figure 1).

Improvement Goal

To increase the capacity of three high school principals, who have differentiated knowledge, skills, and commitment, to effectively lead the development and implementation of small learning communities, I worked with each principal to establish individualized improvement goals that had the potential to increase the number of students who are college, career, and community ready. I collected and analyzed evidence related to the principals, including memos, observations, conversations, interviews, and other artifacts throughout the cycles of inquiry and used the evidence to review progress of their learning goals as well as my leadership actions. In Table 1, the key actions in which I engaged as the primary driver and the key actions of the three high school principals as the secondary drivers.

Throughout the PAR project, I continued to develop strong relationships with the high school leaders, listen to their needs, and differentiate support so they were better-equipped to effectively lead the implementation of small learning communities in their high schools. I expected that this would not look exactly the same in each school as the context is different and the principal experience and individual leadership styles are different and will engage in similar processes for similar outcomes.

Purpose Statement

The overarching purpose of the participatory action research (PAR) project was to conduct a deeper inquiry about how best to support the high school principals and other leaders, including person in schools and in the district, so that we collectively, with principals as

MACRO

Assets

ESSA –leverage for CCR, and offers political support

Commitment

Opportunity to prepare for 21st century

Relationships

Brings funding through grants

MESO

Assets

Mission and values

WBL Specialist, and CCR Coordinator

Partnerships with outside agencies, ROP, colleges and industries

Instructional support from TSAs- academic discourse

Board support- graduate profile and WBL grants

MICRO

Assets

SLC Leads are high capacity

Structures in place

Principal commitment and willingness

Equity mindset

WASC-self study

Experienced leaders

FOP

Differentiate support for three high school principals as they fully implement successful small learning communities.

Challenges

Lack of attention to small districts

Funding

Models

MACRO

Challenges

Competing priorities

Innovation

Balance bet autonomy and guidance- student driven

Supports for spec ed and English Learners

MESO

Challenges

Financial support, staffing support

Clear vision and decision making process

Innovative counselors

Integrated projects

Personalized supports

MICRO

Figure 1. Fishbone identifying assets and challenges with the focus of practice.

Table 1

Driver Diagram of Key Leadership Practices as Key Levers for Improvement

Primary Driver – As the principal supervisor of three principals, I facilitated the PAR process by:	Secondary Driver – High school principals facilitated the PAR process by:
Listening to principals to determine • Knowledge and expertise of SLCs • Individual agency • Principal assets	Revisiting leadership vision and theory of action with SLC leads
Utilizing Community Learning Exchange pedagogy and structures in community of practice	Co-developing guiding principles and collaborative decision-making protocols Utilizing Community Learning Exchange pedagogies with their site teams
Principal coaching	Coaching conversations with teacher leaders
Reviewing and revising district policies, practices and resources to support SLCs and implementation of graduate student profile	Engaging with district leaders to revise and implement policies and practices to support SLCs
Deepening external partnerships to support college, career and community readiness	Creating partnerships with external partners to support college and career readiness
Engaging principals in using evidence to engage in reflection and leadership action	Using evidence to reflect and implement leadership actions that lead to improvement

linchpins at each of the schools, could more deeply engage in the transformation of high schools using Small Learning Communities (SLCs) as vehicle for change. To fulfill the purpose of the PAR, a shared vision was crucial and shared decision-making processes were a vehicle for our work. We remained focused on the larger goal of implementing SLCs by purposefully directing our energies and trying avoid getting sidetracked with the day-to-day management concerns that so often plague principals, especially in large high schools (Grubb, 2011). My role as a principal supervisor was to keep us focused and ensure a robust planning and implementation process so principals could support teachers, who in turn had primary responsibility for student success, particularly students who have been historically marginalized.

Significance of the Focus of Practice

Many of our students come from working class families and stay in Athena most of their lives. The economy in Athena has been depressed for years, yet in the recent years, the technology, health, and manufacturing business sectors established themselves in the shutdown factories in the nearby areas, thereby exposing students to the college and career experiences creates possibilities within their neighborhood. The SLC framework is committed to offering more opportunities for students in and out of school; it is not simply a cohort of students and teachers, but an opportunity for instructional reform that entails a commitment to teaching with more rigor and relevance so that students are more successful and prepared for college, careers and citizenship.

The creation of the original SLC was a collaborative "bottom-up" process, meaning that teachers initially proposed and created the implementation plan for the initiation of an SLC. The superintendent teamed with teachers to develop the plans. While groups of teachers were working together to form SLCs, the only role administrators played was to provide common prep

periods and adjust schedules to double common planning time to twice monthly. These activities served to enhance a collaborative culture and build a professional learning community – but mainly for teachers. The principals were not fully viewed as "owning the SLC vision" and actually leading the instructional reform effort; rather, SLCs became more of containers for addressing student discipline (referrals and suspensions decreased) completion, attendance and discipline focused on relationships.

For our success in Athena, we needed school leaders to be fully invested in the SLC vision and lead with an understanding of they can provide coherence for SLCs to function at high capacity. Across the country, our high school counterparts are creating structures like SLCs to give more attention to student success. However, how school leadership in a large comprehensive high school is able to actively lead such efforts was not fully known at the outset of the project. The PAR project is significant because we collaboratively can shed light on how school leaders can actively engage teachers and provide more than technical assistance like scheduling to develop the SLCs in their schools.

Research Question(s)

The overarching concern for the project was: How can leadership in schools and from the district operate more successfully to develop and fully implement small learning communities in urban high schools? The specific questions that guided my participant action research cycles are:

- To what extent can I differentiate support for the three high school principals as they fully implement successful Small Learning Communities.
  - What is the most effective role for principals in the successful implementation of Small Learning Communities (SLCs) as vehicle for change?

- o What structures and supports are most useful to SLC teams (teachers, principal and counselor)?

- To what extent is my leadership of the three principals useful and supportive in implementing effective SLCs?

Throughout the PAR project, the questions stayed at the forefront of my concern; as we moved through the process, however, the actions and evidence demonstrated that the principals required a framework to think about all of their decision-making, not just for SLCS and that I, as the principal supervisor, needed to investigate differentiated ways of supporting them. The overview of the research design outlines how I conducted the research, on which I elaborate in Chapter 4.

Participatory Action Research Design Overview

In collaboration with three high school principals, I conducted a participatory action research project in three successive cycles of inquiry from September 2017-October 2018. I supervise the development and implementation of small learning communities embedded in their high schools or a specialized SLC. My role as the district supervisor was to engage the principals in a process and use the guiding principles of action research and inquiry to support their efforts to be school leaders. They served as Co-Practitioner Researchers for the PAR project. After working with two of the three leaders for two years, and knowing the strengths and challenges of each site, I had a preliminary inquiry of the possible issues that are seen as barriers to student success. The three successive cycles of inquiry occurred in Fall, 2017; Spring, 2018 and Fall, 2018. We used the design elements of a monthly community of practice (CoP) and I engaged in differentiated coaching at school sites to do the following: implement learning exchange pedagogies and structures to collectively address the issues we identified, engage in observations

and differentiated coaching at the school sites, and identify and address barriers. In addition, I met with SLC lead teachers monthly and worked with district persons responsible for SLC implementation. I analyzed reflective memos and planning; we collaboratively reviewed district policies and practices to support SLCs in vision and resource alignment; and analyzed data, reflect, and readjusted for identifying leadership skills and practices. I supervised district persons to develop and implement policies and practices to support SLC's in vision and resource alignment. Figure 2 identifies action research cycles of the co-participant researchers (n=3) and I as we used the CoP as a place to examine problems of practice that emerged as they implemented SLCs, analyzed evidence, and made decisions about key factors that affected the SLC development.

Chapter Summary

"Don't let perfect be the enemy of the good." Voltaire

As I worked closely with principals to improve the quality of the small learning communities and increase the number of students who are prepared college, career and community readiness, I was aware that perfection was not our goal, but getting better at leadership for SLCs was. SLCs have many intended strengths with a vision and commitment to improving our high schools; yet, significant challenges to full implementation presented barriers prevented us from moving forward and fully addressing the inequities in SLCs. However, the participatory action research (PAR) project helped us to shed light on how to differentiate support and a coach each principal so that each leader was better able to lead the small learning communities in a meaningful way. As we progressed in the PAR project, the principals encountered other challenges that thwarted their efforts in the SLCs but bolstered their ability to reflect as leaders. In the community of practice meetings, we were able to address several issues
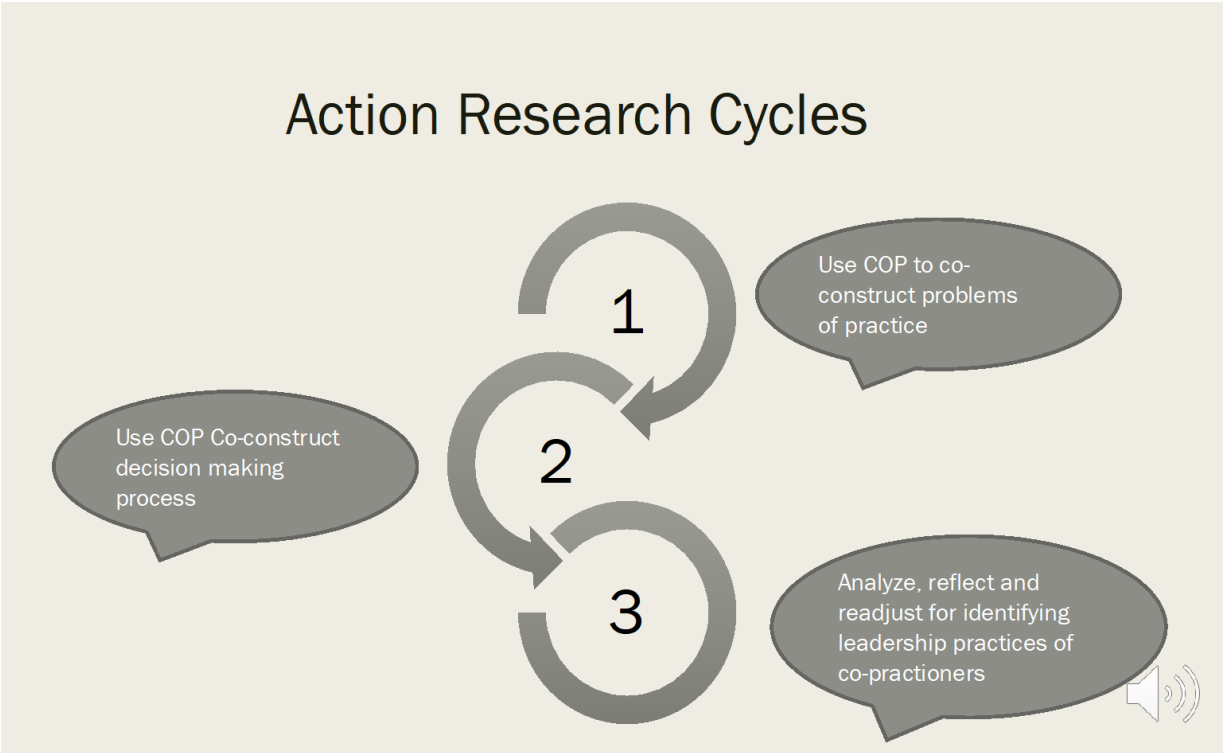
Figure 2. Action research cycle process.

that supported SLC improvement, but it was at times difficult for principals to avoid leadership in the Covey quadrant of urgency at their school sites (Covey, 1994). The PAR project was a collaborative journey that refocused my work from improving the quality of instruction in isolation to improving the quality of instruction via SLCs. The PAR helped us learn a process of relying on the context, using the evidence from the context, and applying principles of adaptive leadership to that context so we could develop and implement structures that best serve the needs of our students (Linsky, Grashow, & Heifetz, 2009)

In successive chapters, I tell the story of the PAR project. Chapter 2 presents a review of the literature that was a foundation for me as I moved forward in the PAR to understand how research and theory could inform practice; Chapter 3 describes in more detail the context of the study, and Chapter 4 details the research methodology. In each of Chapters 5, 6, and 7, I describe what happened in each of the three cycles of inquiry and analyzed the evidence from each cycle. In Chapter 8, I discuss the key claims and the implications of the study.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Since 2011, Athena Unified School District (AUSD has had promising improvements with graduation rates increasing from 83% to 89%, increased attendance rates (97.2%), and decreased suspension rates by 40%, particularly for students of color (Retrieved from https://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/). Despite these important successes, the college going rate remains stagnant at 39%, and the district still needs to ensure more equitable high school opportunities resulting in post-secondary possibilities for 21st century learners – as future leaders, heads of households, and contributing citizens. A key high school reform effort, Small Learning Communities (SLCs), demonstrates multiple promises for instructional reform, student engagement, and increased college and career options in post-secondary education (Hubbard & McDonald, 2014; Stern, Dayton, & Raby, 2010; Visher & Stern, 2015). However, without substantial attention to how this effort becomes the work of district and school leaders, the effort risks becoming yet another initiative or program that is not sustained.

At the outset of this reform effort in AUSD in 2007, the district superintendent engaged high school teacher leaders as the primary drivers in developing Small Learning Communities (SLCs), often termed career-themed pathways. The teacher leaders had the passion to provide more options for post-secondary success and create a more inclusive environment for students that connected to the labor market needs of the region. While the involvement of the teacher leaders was an asset to the district's efforts, this inside-out effort did not, by and large, fully include principals and counselors. The school administrators generally played a backseat role as the teacher leaders took the lead. Currently, Athena offers wall-to-wall SLCs in the two comprehensive high schools and a small school dedicated to the arts, a school organization model that is an increasingly common form of learning environment in high schools to subdivide

large school populations into smaller, autonomous groups of students and teachers focused on a regional career theme. Incoming 9th graders begin their high school experience in a small learning community of choice as means to increase high school success and provide courses that are connected to regional careers, through career technical education (Hubbard & McDonald, 2014; Kemple, 2008; Oakes & Saunders, 2008; Stern et al., 2010; Visher & Stern, 2015). The three high school principals and the district have demonstrated a commitment to SLCs and provide the technical support of scheduling students and common planning time, but that is not enough to improve outcomes for all students.

Another important set of actors in this process are central office personnel who support high school (College and Career Coordinator, Work-based Learning Specialist, and the Secondary Schools Supervisor). They work with the schools to establish and implement benchmarks for the graduate profile, strengthen the SLC student placement process, manage grants that fund the work, and systematize the work-based learning experiences around a clear vision and goals to ensure that all students have deeper experiences relevant to their SLC. The PAR project seeks drew on the substantial success to date of the SLCs but sought to more fully understand and support the principals and central office as collaborators and co-drivers of SLCs as a reform effort.

The reports, peer-reviewed articles, and normative literature discussed in the literature review offer ideas and practices that encouraged systematic implementation of small learning communities and their value to student learning. However, the roles of principal and district office support were less evident in the literature. On the one hand, the literature on the principal as an instructional leader is replete with empirical findings about how the leader should act as the leader of teaching and learning in the school (Bryk, Gomez, Grunow, & LeMahieu, 2015;

Grissom, Loeb, & Master, 2013; Heck & Hallinger, 2014; Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2003; Rigby, 2014; Leithwood, Seashore-Lwesi, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004; Supovitz, Sirinides, & May, 2010). Yet, on the specific role of the principal in a school fostering SLCs, the literature is less robust. The general role of the district supervisor has been the subject of a national research effort by the Wallace Foundation (Mitgang, 2013; Rosenbaum, 2015; Salzman, 2106) but the role of the district in the SLC efforts is generally ignored (Corcoran et al., 2013; Honig, Copland, Rainey, Lorton, & Newton, 2010).

What the literature largely demonstrates is how policy efforts and nonprofits are pushing the career-themed pathways agenda (Guha et al., 2014; Heller, Wolfe, & Steinberg, 2017; Hoachlander, Stearns, & Studier, 2008). However, in addition to more empirical research on the topic, the focus of the project might inform the work required to implement the SLC effectively that included the daily challenges of leading a large comprehensive high school with competing demands, including: curricular time, staff retention, guidance counselors, new safety government regulations, and the fast pace of digital learning. In addition, many staff were unsure about the value of SLCs and career-themed pathways for all students, as they had viewed them as an alternative to the students who are taking AP classes and who are satisfying the requirements for applying to the University of California system (termed A-G requirements) in preparation for college. In addition, while multiple empirical studies on how distributed leadership as a model of collaboration can be effective, in general, there was little specific attention to a strategic partnership with of the principal and teacher leaders in SLCs, how distributed leadership model for maximizing resources and developing trusting relationships works, and how we might measure the outcomes (Diamond & Spillane, 2016; Spillane, 2005; Supovitz et al., 2010).

The call for rigor in all areas of high school is a normative call for a set of practices that should or could improve outcomes, but it is insufficient without more comprehensive evidence of how to implement and maintain the possibility of college, career and community readiness for everyone. We recognize the need for change if we are going to engage students in their own learning and limit dead-end options. Yet, without specific and clear efforts to address and confront head on the racial and ethnic gaps, including the gaps for students with disabilities, the inequities will likely persist (Kantor & Tyack, 1982; Noguera & Boykin, 2011; Oakes & Saunders, 2008; Theoharis, 2010). We know that college for all has been the goal for many years; yet, college for all is unrealistic as 69.7% of high school seniors entered college in the fall of 2016 (NCES, 2017). Career education was typically viewed as the alternative for those who were not able to attend college. If we were to change, we had to organize schools for multiple and equitable post-secondary options (Balfanz, 2009). Past efforts at college and career readiness often reinforced tracking instead of alleviated it (Oakes & Saunders, 2008). As the PAR project began, federal, state and local goals and California State standards and the college and career readiness standards, including the Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP) required that we measure students who are prepared for post-secondary education. "What we need is a more flexible and practical definition of achievement—one in which a high school education does not simply qualify you for more school [and] can make school make sense to young people" (Rumberger, 2012, p. 3). This kind of thinking is needed if we are going to improve the future lives of our students in the innovation-driven world.

The chapter focuses on the large goal of equity and excellence by reviewing the literature in these interconnected topics: (1) college, career and community readiness, including the goals of school, the history career technical education, the reasons why we should include community

readiness, and the two models of college and career readiness; (2) the role of principals in leading schools with small learning communities that support career-themed pathways; and (3) the role of principal supervisor as district leadership. Analysis of the literature informed the direction of the PAR project, my work and coaching with principals and district office staff, and most importantly how we systematically set about to improve outcomes for all students to be prepared for college, career and civic participation. Figure 3 describes the three key areas of the literature that informed the PAR project.

In 1983, the report on *The Nation at* Risk asserted that we needed much more attention to standards and educational opportunity. As the 2013 report, *For each and every child: A strategy for educational equity and excellence* contends: To achieve the excellence and equity in education on which our future depends, we need a system of American public education that ensures all students have a real and meaningful opportunity to achieve rigorous college- and career- ready standards. A world-class education consists not solely of mastery of core subjects, but also of training in critical thinking and problem-solving, as well as in 21st-century concerns like global awareness and financial literacy. Such high levels of education are key to self-reliance and economic security in a world where education matters more than ever for the success of societies as well as individuals (*The Nation at Risk*, 1983, p. 12). The PAR project sought to fulfill the promise of equity and excellence for high school students in Athena Unified School District.

College, Career and Civic Readiness

Is education to provide for the general edification of the individual (Dewey, 1916) or must it have a pragmatic application that relates to the individual's role in the workforce (Lazerson & Grubb, 1976)? The latter approach has certainly played out as the dominant force,

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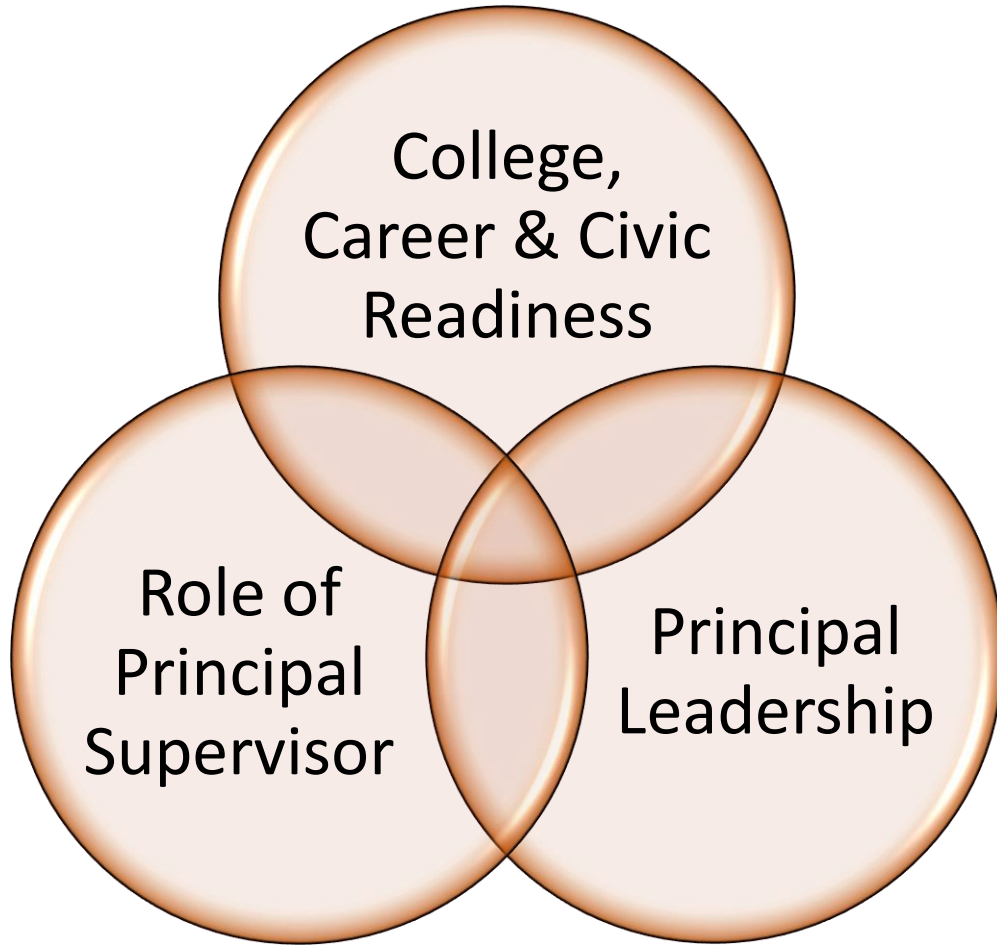
Figure 3. Three interconnected literature review topics.

and the hope is that a revised view devoted to the individual as a worker, family member, and citizen could come to bear on the new efforts we undertook. This section makes the case that, as we have focused the economic goal of schooling to the near exclusion of the social-emotional and citizenship goals of schooling, we have limited the possibilities of all students, but primarily the possibilities for the students who do not typically attend or complete college. Secondly, gross inequities have persisted because of the perceived choice and division between college-going and career-readiness. Finally, hopeful notes about the current Career and Technical Education (CTE) readiness efforts as well as the re-establishing citizenship as the purpose of schooling raise the possibility of contributing to a more equitable goal of high school educational practices.

Small learning communities demonstrate promise for high school improvement, and Athena took a bold move in 2007 to begin implementation across the high schools and energized teachers to lead this effort. I examine four major areas that need to be considered for effective implementation of SLCs: the history and current emphasis of the economic goal of schooling, tracking and equity, the history of Career Technical Education (CTE), and the need for civic engagement or community readiness as a goal of schooling. The four areas complement each other, and a review of the literature underscores the importance of a balanced set of school goals that Labaree (2008) identifies as social efficiency (economic benefits of schooling), social mobility (greater opportunity), and democratic equality (preparing citizens who can sustain the democracy). At the conclusion of the chapter, I discuss how to combine models.

Over-Emphasis on the Economic Goal of Schooling

Grubb and Lazerson (2004) and Labaree (2008) note that the drift toward the dominance of the economic purpose of education has overridden other goals related to democratic

participation and civic responsibility. When the opportunity to learn standards were ignored as the standards movement proceeded, the "right to learn" for many students who might be considered in the "forgotten half" who did not go to college was subverted and the non-college going students were again the stepchildren of our education system (Darling-Hammond, 1997; Halperin, 1998; Halperin, Melaville, & Tredway, 1988; Labaree, 2008). By the early 2000s, post-secondary opportunities that included career and civic engagement were overshadowed by the college readiness goal for all, a disingenuous response to high standards. Yet, the emphasis on the role of education as an engine of economic growth has dominated and with that emphasis is the hope of equalizing individual opportunity (Goldin & Katz, 2010).

As verified by the lifetime earning differential among non-graduates, high school graduates, graduates with postsecondary schooling or training, and those who graduate from college, we must provide significantly more opportunities for those who are not graduating and not taking advantage of postsecondary opportunities in community colleges, job training and apprenticeships, and/or college so that we address inequities (Halperin, Tredway, & Melaville, 1988). Currently, while the US is graduating students from high school at a higher rate than ever before, according to data released by the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (2016), inequities persist along racial and socio-economic status. The nation's high school graduation rate hit 82% in 2013-14, the highest level since states adopted a new uniform way of calculating graduation in 2012. Former Deputy Secretary of Education John King stated in a press release, "A high school diploma is absolutely critical, absolutely attainable and key to future success in college, in the workforce and in life. But too many students never get their diploma, never walk across the graduation stage, and, while our dropout numbers are also decreasing, we remain committed to urgently closing the gaps that still exist in too many

schools and in too many communities" (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). To that end, the federal Department of Education (DOE) has invested more than $1.5 billion in grants and awards for promising programs and initiatives, one of which is career readiness. However, inequities, old issues and dividing lines endure because, despite increasing graduation rates, for a long time, simply graduating from high school is insufficient in the job market.

Tracking and Inequity Issues

During most of the twentieth century, the goal of schooling varied for different types of students. High schools in particular were designed to prepare some students for college and other students for work; students were typically tracked in high school for college, vocational or general track. Issues of whether and how educational structures consider class, gender, race, and ability have long threads in the literature and history (Anderson, 1982; Oakes, 1985). We recognize that the educational enterprise itself, while perhaps intended to reduce inequity, may have adopted elements of design and practice that reproduce social inequality and that access to different types of educational opportunity may be incidentally or deliberately limited, based on the policies and programmatic structures of educational systems (Kantor & Tyack, 1982; Noguera & Boykin, 2011; Oakes & Saunders, 2008; Theoharis, 2010). The standards movement was supposed to change opportunity, and the vocational education efforts of the 1990s were directed toward that change; however, the change was insufficient (Labaree, 2008) because the efforts focused on social efficiency, rather than social mobility. The most commonly stated goal of high school is to prepare students for both college and careers — in fact, this is the tag line on the logo for the Common Core State Standards. Two related developments reflect this change. One is the progression from vocational education to career-technical education. The other is the attempt in some cities and states to build systems of college and career pathways, combining

career-technical with college-prep curriculum (Dougherty & Lombardi, 2016). Traditional

vocational education, as a track for students who were not deemed college-bound, has been

consistently criticized for enrolling disproportionate numbers of low-income and minority

students, and limiting their options (Oakes, 1985). Oakes and Saunders (2008) emphasize the

social justice imperatives inherent in multiple pathways reflected by the small learning

community (SLC) format: "Multiple Pathways takes the socially jarring position that, given the

right environment, all students can master complex academic and technical concepts, and that

differentiated school practices do a disservice to all" (p. 264). The costs of underserved students

are not simply individual, but social; students who do not finish high school earn lower wages

and are more likely to require expensive social services (Rosenbaum, Ahearn, Becker, &

Rosenbaum, 2015; Wise, 2008). While this message is clear in general, in the reality of schools,

tracking remains a variable in many pathways or career academy choices. The trajectory of the

traditional vocational track, later termed Career Technical Education, has a long history, with

similar issues of tracking and inequity inherent in its implementation.

History of Career Technical Education in American Education

Most recently, the passage of Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), the latest revision of

the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, has provided for unprecedented incorporation of

Career Technical Education (CTE), as well as recognition of its role in providing an

appropriately balanced education (Batel, Sargrad, & Jimenez, 2016). The landmark of 1965

Elementary and Secondary Act (ESEA), championed by the Lyndon Johnson administration as

part of Johnson's War on Poverty, has been reviewed and re-authorized by Congress six times.

Though the 2001 reauthorization of ESEA, No Child Left Behind (NCLB), increasingly

unpopular with both educators, and the congress could not agree on a set of authorizing remedies

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for NCLB's reauthorization. It was not until 2015 that the new ESEA was passed under Obama administration (Loshe, 2016). This serves as leverage, and possibly funding opportunities, for creating more robust programs, but it cannot be mandated to be effective.

Several high school reform efforts promoted the movement from vocational education to Career and Technical Education (CTE), and that has been the case for a century. For the PAR project, being fully aware of the trajectory is critical as past failures to live up to the promise of building a different system to mitigate inequities offered a warning. The timeline in Figure 4 highlights the changes from 1917 to 1987 is taken from the Association for Career and Technical Education (2016).

With the passage of the Smith Hughes Act in 1917 (the National Vocational Education Act), the progressive agenda moved forward by granting federal support for practical training. Since then, federal CTE policy evolved in response to changing U.S. economic and social conditions. Major and important legislation between 1917 and 1980s paved the way the future. Some legislation included the creation of the American Vocational Association, an appropriation of federal funds expanded to include teacher education, marking programs, agricultural and nursing programs. Vocational education was expanded to "persons of all ages in all communities" in the Vocational Education Act of 1963. Funding for states was now authorized by student population rather than by field of study, including federal funds for academically and economically disadvantaged and disabled students. Another important landmark was the equal opportunities for women and girls were promoted in the Vocational Education Amendments of 1976. Following was the Carl Perkins Act which embraced accountability, as well as secondary-postsecondary alignment, academic integration and business partnerships.
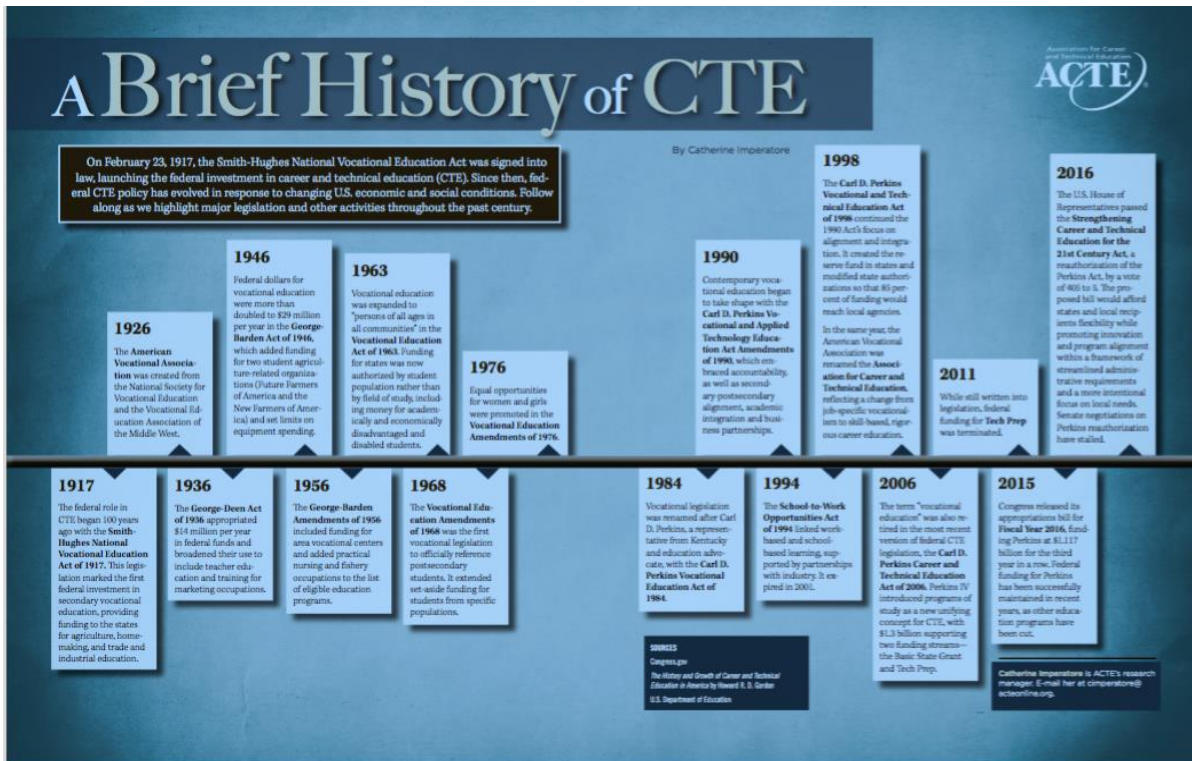
Figure 4. History of Career Technical Education.

A program that impacted California was the *High Schools That Work*, launched in 1987 by the Southern Regional Education Board. Career academies, which began in Philadelphia in 1969 and were replicated during the 1980s in California and New York City, also embodied the CTE approach by fitting an occupational course sequence together with the academic coursework expected for college. The 1994 School-to-Work Opportunities Act provided federal funding to build such systems, but this effort was strongly opposed in some places as unwarranted federal intrusion, and the legislation lapsed in 1999. The history of CTE is long with multiple activities to prepare students to be contributing members of our society. It continues to seek opportunities and attempts for inclusion.

More recent attempts to build college and career pathways on a larger scale have been initiated by states or localities. Prominent examples are the Linked Learning District Initiative in California, and P-Tech in New York (Stern & Hoachlander, 2011), further discussed in the second section of this literature review. California illustrates how one state has built a strong system of pathways in the past few decades. Positive results from a small-scale replication of the Philadelphia academy model near Silicon Valley prompted the state to begin funding California Partnership Academies (CPAs) in 1984. Meanwhile, in 2005, the James Irvine Foundation (JIF) began developing an approach termed Linked Learning. A Linked Learning pathway embodies virtually the same combination of features as a career academy.

Two general types of programs or pathway approaches called systemic and discrete. The first, a systemic approach, which are often state-driven, served a relatively large numbers of students. The approach encompasses multiple partners (such as employers and colleges) and was designed to achieve broad, fundamental, and sustainable changes in how students are prepared for college and career. It tends to be less prescriptive and more flexible. States, districts, and

schools are usually given significant autonomy in deciding on which programs and services to incorporate, if they adhere to the key principles in the approach. The systemic approach often includes a variety of specific models. Linked Learning districts, for example, are systems of pathways from ninth grade through community college; California Partnership Academies are one of the models found within these districts. The second type is a discrete model or program, typically school-based. This model supports the development of small learning communities within schools, such as career academies, or whole schools, High Schools That Work, New York City small schools of choice with a career focus, early college high schools with a CTE focus, apprenticeships, transformed vocational high schools, the New Tech Network, and International Baccalaureate programs with a career exploration component.

These changes to the long history of career and technical education offer promise, but the nature of the beast is that we may not be successful as the issues of inequity and long-term perceptions often thwart our efforts. Despite its promise, the topic requires more research. CTE may or may not be as useful as we think for lower income students, students of color, and women. Concerns about tracking, social reproduction, and the potential for heterogeneous access and impact may not be warranted, but because of past issues, these areas and needed to be explored in ways that did not appear in the CTE literature for at least the past decade. To that end, efforts to combine college and career readiness have re-introduced the citizenship purpose of schooling in the form of the goal of community-readiness in their designs.

Why Civic Engagement?

Thomas Jefferson, Horace Mann, and John Dewey understood that public schools do not serve a public so much as create a public (Postman, 1996). Postman says that "the goal of schooling, therefore, is not merely preparation for citizenship, but citizenship itself; to equip a

citizenry with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed for active and engaged civic life"

(p. 29). As schools reorient their goals and procedures for preparing students for success in

college and career in the changing landscape, it is vital to the health and future of our democracy

that our schools also prepare students for a lifetime of knowledgeable, engaged, and active

citizenship. Labaree (2008) indicates that we have all but abandoned democratic equality as a

goal of schooling because "once the state is in motion and citizenship is no longer problematic,

the ongoing contribution of schools to the goal of democratic equality is harder to establish" (p.

454).

However, our ability to create and sustain a robust democracy depends on our ability to

achieve this goal. "In 1998, approximately one-third of students in 4th, 8th, and 12th grades

performed below the basic level of achievement on the NAEP civics assessment. Of the

remaining students, most scored at the "basic" level, with roughly one-fifth of test-takers scoring

at the "proficient" level and 2% (4% of 12th graders) at the advanced level" (Ed Source, 2002, p.

1); although by international standards, this is one area in which the US did better than other

countries. The eighth-grade scores improved by 2010 and have maintained the same levels from

2006-2014, but the gaps for Hispanic and African American students with white students also

remain constant, despite small improvements (NAEP, 2014). For our purposes, this does not

bode well for a democracy. By 2013, the National Council of Social Studies revised its

characteristics of effective citizens and indicate that competent and responsible citizens share

these characteristics: they are informed and thoughtful, they participate in their communities;

they act politically; and they exhibit moral and civic virtues that balance individualism and the

common good.

Students who are community-minded are more likely to vote and discuss politics at home, to volunteer and work on community issues, and are more confident in their ability to speak publicly and communicate with their elected representatives. Schools with civic learning programs are more likely to be safe, inclusive, and respectful, and in addition, experience fewer high school dropouts (Torney-Purta & Wilkenfield, 2009). In thinking more locally about community engagement, students who grow up in challenging environments, need to learn about their communities through community mapping and service learning (Furco & Root, 2010; Halperin et al., 1988). Celio, Durlak, and Dymnicki (2011) in a meta-analysis of 62 studies involving over 11,000 students found that service-learning improved not only civic engagement but attitudes toward self, attitudes toward school and learning, and academic performance. These three key areas can be addressed when creating quality programs and graduating students prepared for college, career, and to participate in their communities.

Combining Structures and Models

I make the case for the hybrid version that AUSD chose. I review first the literature of two structures and models that promote college, career and civic engagement for high schools: Linked Learning and Small Learning Communities. Then, I discuss the key factors and outcomes, and the benefits and challenges of the hybrid design.

Linked learning: A systemic model. To promote the practice of Linked Learning, the James Irvine Foundation created an organization, ConnectEd California, which began by supporting some exemplary pilot programs (Hoachlander et al., 2008). ConnectEd conducted a multiyear Linked Learning District Initiative, involving nine large school districts in the development of systems to enroll most or all their high school students in Linked Learning pathways (Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Kemple, 2008). In 2014, California awarded $250 million in

state funds through a competitive grant process to regional consortia that would develop "career pathways" from grade 9 through 14, bridging from high school to community college. An additional $250 million was awarded for a second round of grants in 2015. This large investment could help build institutional infrastructure that sustains career and college pathways, including district systems, employer partnerships, work-based learning intermediaries, and dual enrollment agreements between high schools and community colleges.

Linked Learning is a statewide attempt to respond to the challenges high schools face in preparing students for college and career and is named to support how to link the learning from school to career education. It was designed to build on the advantages of Career Technical Education and add an academic rigor to the high school curricula. The program provides students with the opportunity to select from a variety of career pathways such as health science, digital arts, and engineering. A study conducted in eight districts in California revealed that schools need to look at larger structural and cultural issues with the district and state (Hubbard & McDonald, 2014). In the implementation of the CTE courses, competing priorities for students and produce unintended consequences. Students experienced having to choose courses between an Advanced Placement course and a CTE course. One AP course can raise a student's GPA over a 4.0 if the student passes the AP exam, and the other CTE courses grant a CTE certificate upon graduation, giving them an advantage over others in a specific industry. Both avenues make the student more competitive, depending on the chosen post-secondary education route. As a result, many students and families as well as teachers still considered that CTE courses are mainly for students who will not go to college.

Intentionally or unintentionally, the result syphoned students of color and students receiving special education services into CTE courses, thereby reinforcing the tracking system.

Linked learning made attempts to address this particular issue by pushing for academic rigor in the high school coursework and, at the same time, offering opportunities to receive a CTE certificate. However, change required structural changes in districts and schools such as scheduling, course requirements for college entrance, and ways to assess the soft skills many businesses say are lacking in our students (Visher & Stern, 2015). These difficulties represented the tip of the equity iceberg in terms of ensuring full access to both college and career readiness for the very students who have often not had access previously. The literature on the topic currently does not provide sufficient direction to make sound decisions in practice. Guided by these findings, in the PAR project, we proceeded to work on the issue of how scheduling can support both college and career outcomes.

Linked Learning attempted to construct a technical fix to a problem that is arguably inextricably tied to cultural change. Linked Learning enters a school with a culture in place—one that in many cases requires "re-culturing" (Hargreaves, 1994). Linked Learning demands that teachers hold high expectations for all students and that teachers work in teams to provide a course of study that offers rigorous content. The quality of instruction and interaction between teacher and student is essential to success. If teachers do not believe that all students can achieve, research says, it is unlikely that they will (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Murphy, 2010).

SRI International (Warner et al., 2016) released two reports with findings from a study of Linked Learning, from Year 6 and Year 7 respectively. The findings indicated that students in certified Linked Learning pathways outperformed similar students in the same districts on credit accumulation and satisfy admission requirements for the California university system. Students in certified Linked Learning pathways were more likely to report feeling engaged in and motivated by their school work. Effects on high school graduation or postsecondary enrollment

rates showed that on average, certified pathway students were 2.0 percentage points less likely to drop out of high school and 5.3 percentage points more likely to graduate from high school compared with similar students in traditional high school programs (Warner et al., 2016, p. 60). Yet, Linked Learning students and similar traditional high school students enrolled and persisted in postsecondary education at comparable rates. However, two traditionally underserved subgroups—students with low prior achievement and African American students—were more likely to enroll in a 4-year college than in a 2-year college when graduating from a Linked Learning certified pathway (Warner et al., 2016, p. 65). Secondly, through a partnership with Linked Learning, CTE focuses on the integration of academics and career, on "develop[in] stronger ties between secondary and postsecondary education and between education and work" (Stipanovic, Lewis, & Stringfield, 2012, p. 84). The reform effort was different from past work in its engagement with the community and the changing job market. When academic and technical learning are linked, so are communities, schools, and the larger labor context.

Small learning community: A discrete model. Small Learning Communities (SLCs) in Athena serve as career-themed pathways using parts of the discrete model to have some local control over the design. The design embraces some of the core principles of the most promising pathway programs (Visher & Stern, 2015). Our design was built on the following: choice of which pathway is up to the student (and parents); personal support for students, employer partnerships and work-based learning; collaboration between high schools and postsecondary education; district support; and strong intermediaries to support programs. Challenges are centered in these areas: developing integrated curriculum and deepening our work in the areas above, particularly developing personal supports for students and defining district support. Although we used the core principles to guide our work, most research on these programs lacked

the rigor needed to attribute with confidence any improvement in outcomes to the program itself, rather than to the characteristics of students who chose to enroll. I now describe the key factors and outcomes for programs that have been identified and supported by evidence.

Key factors and outcomes. The size of the high school matters most for students who come from low-income households, size influences the degree of personalized support from a small group of teachers. However, implementing instructional changes is a vital component that contributes to the effectiveness of SLCs (Stern & Hoachlander, 2011). Annual reports the analysis of data from multiple studies of state-funded academies in California continue to show strong performance by academy students as of the late 1990s (Dayton, Hester, & Stern, 2011). Extensive research studying the outcomes on career academies over 40 years, revealing some promises outcomes in the report by Career Academy Support Network (Stern et al., 2010). Academy participation improved high school dropout rates by 7 or 8% higher three years - about half the rate in the general population of California students, even though state-funded academies are required to recruit many students who are economically or educationally disadvantaged. An analysis of Bradby et al. (2005, 2007) compared performance by academy students with statewide totals. Academy 10th graders were more likely to have passed both sections of the California High School Exit Examination, which was required for graduation until 2017; academy 12th graders were more likely to graduate at the end of the year; and academy graduates were more likely to have completed the 15 "A-G" courses required for admission to the University of California or California State University.

Although these findings from the annual reports do not use matched comparison groups, they are consistent with the comparison-group evaluations. One study raises two issues -- test scores and school-wide effects; students in academies did not perform better on the standardized

tests in math and English (Kemple & Snipes, 2000). However, Jaschik (2014) asserts that grades are better indicator of student performance in post-secondary education, rather than test scores. In addition, the long-term benefits were more focused on reducing dropout rates and increased attendance and less on test scores. However, the results do raise questions about what kind of instructional improvement, if any, occurs in career academies. Poglinco (1998) analyzed interviews with students, teachers, and administrators from three of the academies in the MDRC study to see whether academies were supporting students' college goals. One theme consistent in student comments was the atmosphere of trust and encouragement created within the academy and with workplace mentors that bolstered their general self-confidence. College aspirations were seldom mentioned as a reason for entering the academy in grade nine or ten, but they became more explicit by junior year (Stern et al., 2010). The qualitative evidence amplified results from surveys in which academy students reported more academic support from teachers and peers than the control group (Kemple, 1997). However, none of these findings indicate whether the level of instruction in academies was more rigorous than in non-academy classes, or whether academy students learned more than the control group. A limitation to consider is the dates of the studies and the need for more recent studies as well as a deeper understanding of the pedagogical approaches in the classroom.

Career technical education: Benefits and issues. As schools across the nation are being asked to prepare students for the knowledge, skills, and values necessary to be successful citizens of the 21st century, interest in CTE has grown (Association for Career and Technical Education [ACTE], 2006) and was described in the history of Career Technical Education in the prior section. The often-low achievement among many students, particularly students of color, and low-income students (Education Trust, 2007), stirred interest in CTE as a vehicle for offering

opportunities and promoting equity and excellence. Support for CTE came largely from the body of evidence that students are more likely to be engaged in learning and stay in school if they find relevance in the courses they take in high school (Borrero, Yeh, Cruz, & Suda, 2012).

Although CTE has a long history in the US, it has resurfaced a way to measure student success in high schools and broaden the thinking of what success looks like beyond the traditional programs. Early studies indicated that CTE potentially offers students the chance to gain skills, placing more emphasis on career-oriented curriculum, knowledge, and opportunities to interact with community members and potential employers who share their vocational interest (Castellano, Stringfield, & Stone, 2003). Students who were placed at risk for not succeeding in high school demonstrated greater success if they enroll in school-to-career and other CTE programs (Brown, 2003). A critical time for high school completion is ninth grade, as the transition to high school and passing ninth grade is an indicator for high school graduation. A more recent study on three cohorts of students in the Early College High Schools (ECHS), totaling 2,458 found positive impacts on high school graduation (86% compared with 71% for the control group counterparts) and on postsecondary credentials (22% compared with 2%), although it is possible that the control group students would catch up over time (Berger, Song, Zeiser, Haxton, & Turk-Bicakci, 2016). Another study of ECHS used an RCT and found positive impacts on ninth-grade outcomes, most notably on the proportion of students taking core college prep courses and succeeding in them (Edmunds, Willise, Arshavsky, & Dallas, 2013).

A series of studies examine high school graduation rates. A study conducted by the College & Career Academy Support Network (CCASN) at the University of California, Berkeley, compared outcomes for students enrolled in California Partnership Academies (CPAs) with statewide outcomes for all public high schools (Dayton et al., 2011). They found that 95%

of academy seniors in 2009-2010 graduated at the end of the school year, compared with 85% of all California public high school seniors. Among academy graduates, 57% reportedly completed the full set of courses required for admission to California State University or the University of California, compared with only 36% of graduates statewide. The last result emphasizes that career-themed pathways can, in fact, give students the option of attending college. Moreover, the law governing CPAs requires that at least half the students entering an academy in tenth grade must meet specified "at risk" criteria, including having low family income, low grades and test scores, and a record of poor attendance.

A longitudinal study examined the impact of Programs of Study — a type of career pathway promoted by the Office of Vocational and Adult Education (now Career, Technical, and Adult Education) in the U.S. Department of Education — on high school academic and technical achievement in two districts that participated in experimental and quasi-experimental strands of the study (Castellano, Sundell, Overman, & Aliaga, 2011). Few differences existed across groups in ninth grade, but by the end of tenth grade, students' test scores, grade point averages, and progress to graduation tended to be better for the students in Programs of Study than for control/comparison students.

However, the issue of rigor in the curriculum for the community experiences and the community college classes is of concern. The National Center on Education and the Economy (2008) lends support for CTE but notes the importance of embedding it within an academically rigorous curriculum. It calls for a transformation of education including a change in the structure of education. Given the new technological demands of 21st century and the fact that we know that 'college for all' has not been a success, it is imperative to offer career readiness and

preparation, along with rigorous academics in successfully graduating students from high school with options for post-secondary education.

Principal Leadership: Roles and Responsibilities

In this second section of the literature review, I examine principal leadership because principals have many roles to play to ensure that high schools are places of success and students are prepared for college, career and civic engagement. Besides working on day-to-day management of the school, they serve as formal leaders responsible for the success of the school. In the literature on leadership in schools, and challenges with high schools, there are only generic elements of change, not always addressing the challenges specific to high schools. Given the widespread belief in the power of principals, evidence-based research about the principal role in addressing high schools creating multiple pathways or small learning communities, is nearly absent; clearly, the leadership challenge requires different characteristics of leaders. In this section, I review key roles and responsibilities of principals that are relevant to the principal leadership in small learning communities and generic characteristics of strong principal leadership: a leader for equity, instructional leadership, distributed leadership, and organizational management. I then examine general practices for principals that are important for the successful implementation of (SLCs) as vehicle for change.

Leader for Equity

Regardless of any implementation or school reform in high schools, a group of students have historically and systematically been denied access to quality programs. Leaders need to be guided by a deep commitment to equity if are going to change the trajectory for the students who are most marginalized and vulnerable. Rigby and Tredway (2015) define equity as "conditions for learning that interrupt historically discriminatory practices, support democratic schooling,

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and achieve fair, inclusive, and just outcomes" (p. 6). School leaders who operate with an equity frame "advocate, lead, and keep at the center of their practice and vision issues of race, class, gender, disability, sexual orientation, and other historically and currently marginalizing conditions in the United States" (Theoharis, 2007, p. 222). Further, leadership for equity is acting on those beliefs and understandings intentionally, regularly, and systematically. In this approach, equity needs to be the guiding light for the more then 40 leadership actions (i.e., school schedule, classroom observations, parent meetings, disciplinary meetings, teacher professional development, and providing supervision in halls and cafeterias) that principals enact each day (Horng, Klasik, & Loeb, 2009). Clearly, an equity frame for principal decision-making is critical to the success of SLCs.

Instructional Leadership

Principals are called upon to be instructional leaders, that is to know teaching and learning and to lead data-driven inquiry (Grubb, Cheung, & Liao, 2014). The high school leaders and teachers collaborate around instruction and learning, take joint responsibility for the complex forms of inequality, and cultivate nonacademic supports that students need. Instructional leadership traditionally holds the principal as a source of educational expertise, responsible for maintaining high expectations for teachers, coordinating curriculum, supervising instruction and monitoring student progress (Grissom et al., 2013; Heck & Hallinger, 2014; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005; Supovitz et al., 2010). The focus on instruction requires a baseline competence in instructional practice. School leadership that integrates aspects of the transformational leadership and instructional leadership has the most potent effect on teachers' instructional practices. Instructional leadership has been identified in the literature to be nearly absent in the successful implementation of multiple pathways (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005). Although it is impossible to

statistically link student outcomes to leadership in a causal way (Tredway, Stephens, Hedgspeth, Jimes, & Rubio, 2012), student learning outcomes are a key concern to leaders and do depend on leadership capacities (Grubb et al., 2014). Despite the challenges of isolating which of the many emphases of principal practice best support improvements in teaching and learning, analysis of the evidence points to three factors that seem to be commonly referenced across the literature. Two factors include: focusing the mission and goals of the organization and encouraging an environment of collaboration and trust in the building (Supovitz et al., 2010). The third factor is improving teaching and learning by actively supporting instructional improvements; in a study of nearly 300 principals in Dade County, leaders spend insufficient time on instruction and the most important part of the instructional work is using the evidence from classrooms to inform conversations with teachers and professional learning content (Grissom et al., 2013).

Improving the quality of instruction in high schools is crucial to prepare students for college, career and civic engagement. For SLCs, the lesson is that leaders need to remember that restructuring can only do so much, and that improving instruction requires specific attention; fortunately, the conditions in pathways such as teachers in a cohort and serving the same group of students makes improving instruction easier (Grubb, 2015). The implication is that improving instruction in high schools is more difficult in high schools as leaders have less time to devote to instruction because of the complexity of the high school and the multiple demands on their attention. Linked Learning recognizes the reform was focused on structural and cultural changes, but not as an instructional reform effort and, therefore, did not improve the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom (Hoachlander et al., 2008). One such effort to address instruction more deeply is use of pathway coaches who are able to integrate work-based learning experiences into the classroom units and develop integrated units across disciplines. Improving

instruction requires that principals work directly with teachers, teacher-leaders and instructional coaches in distributed leadership model to improve the instructional core.

Distributed Leadership

The time when leaders are seen as lonesome heroes, managing and fulfilling different tasks by simply 'ruling' and spreading commands has been displaced by a wider understanding of leadership. Because SLCs have teacher leaders, it is foundational to the work of principals and principal supervisors to actively foster a distributed leadership model for the successful implementation of SLCs. The distributed leadership view that leadership is a function in the school not a person, and effective leadership practice is a product of the interactions of administrators, teachers, counselors, and other staff interacting in their situation and demonstrating situational awareness (Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005; Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 2004). In this project, I argue that we have multiple organizational actors in the situation and need to identify the practices by which principals lead within the distributed leadership model. Teachers are critical to the success of SLCs as they bring knowledge and skills that are not necessarily offered by others. "Leadership is distributed not delegating it or giving it away, but by weaving together people, materials and organizational structures in a common cause" (Spillane et al., p. 5). Structures were in place to weave people together and it served as an asset to the work as we will identify the role of principals in settings with SLC leads.

As Elmore (2000) asserts, a strong plan, even with thoughtful curricular strategies and a bold leader, does not succeed, much less go to scale, if leadership is limited to a few individuals. Both the quality of the change and its ability to endure have proven to be tenuous; but reforms have been successfully sustained through a model of distributed leadership. Different organizational actors bring diverse insight, knowledge and skills needed to address some of the

challenging issues in high schools. Lieberman and Miller (2004) note the profound impact

teacher leadership can have on the school culture, creating an environment that transforms a

school into a learning community. Teacher leaders are crucial to a school, particularly when

principals establish decision-making bodies such as leadership teams and site-based budgeting.

Teacher leaders are important in SLCs because they are coordinated by a teacher, who in turn,

collaborates more closely with other teachers to implement instruction and support for students.

Distributed leadership supported by the format of a community of practice using learning

exchange pedagogies provide an avenue to empower essential team members in the initiative

(Lave & Wenger, 2003; Guajardo et al., 2016); these efforts are discussed in depth in the next

section. The leadership model creates infrastructures that foster the sustainability often lacking in

reform initiatives, minimizing the impact of the inevitable migration of individual champions

within the school or district.

Organizational Management

Knowing your organization is critical to being able to change it to meet the needs of the

students. The ability to build coherence within a school is essential and contend that

organizational leadership will provide the necessary systems for change. Elmore's (2014)

internal coherence protocol and developmental framework for building capacity identified

practices designed to help practitioners foster the organizational conditions required for whole-

school instructional improvement. Hubbard and McDonald (2014) examined the Linked

Learning approach and indicate the multiple complexities that reform-minded educators face

because there are considerable structural and cultural challenges posed by the multiple contexts

in which high schools' educators and students are embedded. Reform demands the adoption of a

broader system-wide approach to change.

When school leaders attempted to change, or improve their schools, they worked against cultural challenges. Often school leaders have to confront teachers' beliefs, and in some cases administrators' beliefs, values, and norms on such controversial topics as the placement of teachers, the nature of intelligence, and its distribution across race, ethnicity, class, and gender undermined reform efforts (Bryk et al., 2015). Successful implementation of Linked Learning necessitated a cultural change—a change that principals were not always prepared to lead. In addition, creating the classes required for admission to the California university system, accommodating students' desires to take AP classes, blending CTE courses with college-preparatory classes, and establishing supportive career internships could not always be accomplished because of a school's limited capacity (Stern & Hoachlander, 2011). For effective pathways, Connected California findings state that school leaders must develop the shared vision and make important decisions about staffing, scheduling, recruitment and enrollment, support services, curriculum and instruction, resources and facilities and work-based learning (Dougherty & Lombardi, 2016; Hoffman, 2015; Hubbard & McDonald, 2014; Saunders, 2013).

These organizational challenges are present in any reform effort but changing the grammar of schooling associated with high school use of Carnegie units, grade levels attached to age instead of mastery, and the tracking patterns of students according to ability all influence the implementation of models that seek to upset the usual working of the high school (Grubb, 2015; Tyack & Cuban, 1995). Add to that the challenges of providing equitable education for students for whom English is a second language and inclusion for students with disabilities, and the complex picture of how to manage these variables in a small learning community is a real barrier to full implementation of small learning communities. That is why the collaboration of all the staff in the school is necessary, and the focus on distributed leadership is important.

In summary, abundant research is found on the general role of instructional leader for the school principal (Darling-Hammond, 2005; Darling-Hammond et al., 2007; Grissom et al., 2013; Knapp et al., 2003; Knapp et al., 2010; Louis et al., 2010; Leithwood & Louis, 2012; Leithwood et al., 2004; Leithwood, 2010; Wallace Foundation, 2012; Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2003; Rigby, 2014) and discussed in the section on principal leadership. However, there is limited research on the specific role of principal leadership in small learning communities as instructional leaders or other roles. The reform initiative in Athena, for example, was initially led by teacher leaders and the role of principals was largely managerial -- creating the master schedule, developing a budget to support SLCs, and building in professional learning for teacher common planning time. Although those are critical to the success of the SLC, these are not seen as an instructional strategy to improve classroom practices, or as leader to champion the vision and use to guide priorities for the school. In a study of ten districts implementing pathways, the centrality of vision emerged (Stanford Redesign Network, 2009), "it is not enough to lead; you have to lead with vision" (p. 3). In evaluating academies over the ten years, there is limited discussion of the principal's role (Hubbard & McDonald, 2014; Visher & Stern, 2015). For example, in 2011, after five years of implementation of SLCs, Athena Unified School District staff hired a consulting firm to evaluate the SLCs and make recommendations (Toussaint, Livesay, & Jurich, 2011), but the only mention of principals in the report was to state they helped build the master schedule so students and teachers would be in cohorts and to create teacher planning time. They were not seen as the visionary leaders of imagining the work differently for the 21st century, or as instructional leaders improving classroom practices and student learning.

Reviewing the key responsibilities for the leader in any school and specifically in a high school in which small learning communities and career pathways exist is an area of leadership

that needs more attention. Because of the nature of high schools as the last leg of the K-12 journey and the importance of high school graduation in the economic prospects for all youth, the role of the principal as a leader for equitable outcomes, instruction, collaboration via distributed leadership, and management is a focus that needs more intentional study. In the next section, I focus on the role of the principal supervisor and how that role needs to support the high school principals and manage the district's participation in the high school SLCs.

Role of Principal Supervisor and District

For the PAR project, I proposed to deeply engage the principals individually and collectively and analyze the ways in which a district leader could support district policy and adapt and contextualize those policies for principals and their schools, so they were coherent and meaningful. In my role, I intended to differentiate support for principals to establish integrative structures and processes such as core values, guiding principles, and decision-making process so the three leaders were able to lead the small learning communities in ways that maximize success for teachers and all students.

While there is emerging literature on the role of the district supervisor, the review of literature is scant on role of principal supervisor as leader of SLCs. The Wallace Foundation reports (Mitgang, 2013; Salzman, 2106) have tackled the role of district supervisor, and these are the key findings: narrow the principal supervisors' responsibilities and span of control; hold principals and principal supervisors accountable for progress of their school by strategically matching principals with supervisors based on needs, skills and expertise; provide professional development for principal supervisors; and clearly communicate throughout the (district) organization the roles and required competencies of principal supervisors (Corcoran et al., 2013).

In examining district leadership, Coburn (2009) found how resource constraints make it difficult to use evidence in substantive ways, as district personnel have less time to search for new or novel solutions and to engage with evidence and each other in ways that encourage and enable them to rethink their assumptions and develop shared understandings of the evidence. The study highlighted the need to develop greater opportunities for individuals in different divisions within school districts to interact in substantive ways with research and data. Due to competing priorities, it is often not the forefront of the leadership team agenda. Honig, Copland, Rainey, Lorton and Newton (2010) identified what can district central office do to support deeper learning in schools by focusing time and resources on building the capacity of principals and ensuring that other district office departments such as human resources and maintenance and operations are meeting the needs of the sites so the principal do not have to spend valuable time chasing down paperwork or ensuring basic services are provided.

In this section, I assert that communities of practice are an effective format for a district supervisor to use in engaging high school principals in co-constructing their leadership roles in the SLCs and that the pedagogies of the learning exchange are useful for our community of practice interactions. In particular, since the high school principals are the co-practitioner researchers (CPR) for this PAR project, it is important to engage the leaders in a community of practice that fosters "long-term, living relations between persons and their place…[by recognizing that each of us has] an identity, knowing and social membership" that affects us as a team and as individuals in our roles (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 53). By fostering learning exchange pedagogies as the foundation of the community of practice, I intended to fortify the principals with useful practices that they could transfer to their work in the high schools. Then, I examine the benefits of using a coaching approach to supervising principals to develop their

individual and collective capacity. Finally, I discuss the role of the district supervisor in managing up and down.

Communities of Practice: Using the Learning Exchange Structures and Pedagogies

In leading high schools, both I and the principals need to model pedagogies and practices that engage others in critical thinking, does not blame or shame, and provides a space for reflection and risk-taking. A strong structure must "hold" the work of creating, implementing, and assessing the effectiveness of the SLCs in high schools is a community of practice. That structure relies on the funds of knowledge that each of us bring to the community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991). In fact, this model is a mirror image of the career pathway approach in that it supports situated learning; we are together engaged in cognitive apprenticeships, learning from each other, the context, and the dilemmas of practice we bring to the communities of practice table in order to solve problems of implementation and understand our leadership roles. We are simultaneously responsible for implementation, and, at the same time we are learning, assessing, and adjusting our leadership in the context of the complexities of small learning community implementation. The process is generative, we are engaged in a praxis of reflection in order to act thoughtfully, mirroring what the principals need to do in their high schools (Freire, 1970). As such, we are fully aware that we have to "make it, produce it, or else it will not come in the form we would more or less wish it to be…True, of course, we have to make it not arbitrarily, but with the materials, with the concrete reality, of which we…project a dream, for which we struggle" (Freire, 1994, p. 101). Thus, we took seriously our roles as leaders of equity and the responsibility we had each day to improve the live trajectories of the young people in our high schools. My responsibility in the community of practice, like the principals in the high schools, was to hold that vision, understand the situated learning we are doing, and direct in such

a way that I engage others and honor Dewey's (1938) criteria of experience – the experiences must be interactive and reciprocal.

To accomplish the goals of the community of practice, we planned to use the learning exchange processes and pedagogies to examine deep issues (Guajardo, Guajardo, Janson, & Militello, 2015). The process is essential for leaders to get uncover the structural and institutional issues of race and class at play in schools using pedagogies that authentically build collaboration and trust among the school community. The learning exchange pedagogy establishes a safe and gracious space for collaborative learning through storytelling and building relationships to co-create a space to explore, imagine and create alternative realities within their context.

Reimagining high schools for students who have been historically marginalized by the school system requires conversation and dialogue, honoring people's stories, and building on assets and hope – all axioms that guide the community learning exchanges. It is essential for leaders to deeply know and articulate their guiding values and beliefs to inform their decisions in leading schools. The ecology of self is the first step for leaders as they must know who they are as leaders and what they represent. It described by Guajardo et al. (2015) as the self is the basis of the world of knowing, the ability to filter information and make decisions in the best interest of self and the organization. Once a person knows self, then he or she can analyze and support the ecology of the organization, and particularly how it reinforces the status quo or breaks barriers. Finally, the ecology of community brings in voices of those most impacted by the conditions of the school. In a program evaluation report on the usefulness of learning exchanges, Fields (2016) analyzed the stories of six participants and identified and provided evidence of what happens when we use these pedagogies and practices in the communities of practice: personal transformation precedes and supports collective work; praxis—the power of dialogue

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and reflection to decide on action is fundamental to individual and collective learning; and translating and embedding the CLE pedagogies in local work requires thoughtful experimentation and adaptation. The communities of practice in the PAR project served as a place and space for authentic dialogue, reflection and transformation.

Developing Capacity of Leaders through Coaching

Leadership coaching is the process used to help school leaders reflect, find power and courage within themselves, and think and act in new ways to bring about permanent and positive change. Given that the quality of school leadership is second only to teacher quality as the most critical school-level factor in student achievement, it is imperative that school districts create conditions that systematically support, develop, and retain highly effective principals (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004). In a review of the literature on leadership coaching, trust was considered to be the most essential element in the successful coaching relationships (Bryk et al., 2010; Wise & Hammak, 2011).

Hargreaves (2008) said that the purpose of having a coach is "to expand an individual's capacity to obtain desired results and to facilitate that individual's organizational development." In education, coaches work to bring about successful teaching and leadership practices that enhance student achievement. Bandura (1982) stated that facilitating the "self-efficacy" of the principal is the primary role of the coach. According to Bandura (1982), "the coach must help the [principal] find the strength within herself to make sometimes difficult decisions" by encouraging the [principal] to believe that he or she is capable of making the right decision and taking the correct action in a given situation" (p. 32).

Coaching conducted by a supervisor or evaluator, although essential to moving a school leader's practice forward, has noted limitations, particularly in relation to establishing and

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maintaining trust. The literature on coaching teams suggests that if we are to assist school leaders in moving to a higher level of competence, confidence, performance, and insight in their role, we must be very clear that the intentions of leadership coaching are not training in a program or curriculum, therapy, or evaluation and supervision (Aguilar, 2016). "When coaches are evaluators, there is the tendency to identify deficiencies and then specify coaching as a remediation strategy, which turns coaching into a consequence of a poor evaluation and termination into a consequence of failed coaching" (Tschannen-Moran & Tschannen-Moran, 2011, p. 13). I remained the supervisor and evaluator as well as coach throughout the project, at times, this due role caused tensions.

However, differentiated coaching was necessary to the success of this project as the three principals were at different stages of their careers and had substantially different experiences and contexts, thus, blended coaching; a model that offers skills and strategies for supporting principal development, focuses primarily on instructional and facilitative coaching to support leaders in their ways of doing and ways of being (Bloom, Castagna, Moir, & Warren, 2005). The model suggests that coaching be responsive to the needs of the principal. As I supported the individual needs by active listening, and asking good questions, I modeled the kind of coaching principals should use with teachers. Glickman (2002) offers analysis tools for school improvement and can be used to analyze the levels of the leader commitment and abstract thinking; the tool provided an opportunity and the capacity for growth and development of leaders in the coaching partnership. He suggests that coaching is dependent upon the supervisor assessment of the coaching needs of the principal, and that may include assessing the zone of proximal development of the coachee and making adjustments; he cites four types of coaching approaches: direct control, direct informational, collaborative, and nondirective or professional collaboration.

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This compares to the instructional, facilitative or transformative levels of Bloom et al. (2005). Making assessments of the interactions of the principals in general and the level of knowledge and ability for leading SLCs required a level of coaching knowledge and skill that was critical to develop their abilities to improve or change their practices. At the same time, I had to manage and coach persons in central office who influenced the project.

District Office Role: Managing Up and Managing Down

The AUSD central office played a vital role in sustaining the reform effort. Darling-Hammond (2005) states, "Much reform in U.S. schools has been an add-on enterprise. Although many change initiatives begin with a focus on how schools should change, few have considered how central-office operations, district resource allocations, and management structures must also change" (Darling-Hammond, 2005, p. 44). During a 2009 District Leadership Residency facilitated by the School Redesign Network at Stanford University and ConnectEd office of The California Center for College and Career, Long Beach Unified School District (LBUSD) introduced network participants to their efforts to plan, implement, and sustain their district reform through a distributed leadership model applied across many levels (Coburn et al., 2009). LBUSD approached the reform from both a "top-down" and "bottom-up" perspective, based on evidence that demonstrated successful reform incorporates voices and leadership from all levels. LBUSD leadership modeled the approach by de-emphasizing traditional hierarchy in favor or a more distributed, inclusive model (LBUSD & ConnectEd, 2010).

Full district engagement is necessary to build on the assets and address the issues. By monitoring and correcting the inequities among the pathways, district administrators can guide schools to avoid low status and traditional vocational themes for academically unmotivated students. Districts allocate resources to support the SLC model: funding for courses, identifying

well prepared teachers and principals, facilities, professional learning opportunities, and support for work-based learning and post-secondary institutions, and managing the multiple grants. The districts should be concerned with effectiveness rather than efficiency, more with instructional improvement than with uniformity, more with capacity building than with accountability and control, and more with collaboration between district and school than with a hierarchical relationship (Dougherty & Lombardi, 2016).

District central offices appeared mainly in the background of studies that focused on schools and mainly as impediments to school improvement (Berends et al., 2002; Malen et al., 1990; Purkey & Smith, 1985). Visher and Stern (2015) focused on central offices by investigating what went on within central offices by using available datasets to identify a handful of district-level characteristics that appeared to be statistically associated with positive school outcomes. The characteristics identified for the district level support role included selecting pathways that are tied to growing sectors in the local economy; communicating to parents and the community what college and career pathways are all about; coaching and other assistance to pathway lead teachers, counselors, and other school site leaders; updating the curriculum and aligning it with new standards; ensuring that the evaluation of principals includes how well they manage the complexity of pathway implementation; helping to recruit and organize employer partners; and handling logistical issues around work-based learning (Visher & Stern, 2015, p. 10). These characteristics of district level support inform the project in determining role of district office.

Many foundations and state and federal policymakers have chosen to bypass central offices altogether and work directly with schools, as was the case with both the small school's movement and school improvement grants (Busch et al., 2004; Yatsko et al., 2012). When

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district central office leaders do not shift their roles to support ambitious teaching and learning, the misalignment of central office resources, data, and other systems to those demands can frustrate efforts. For one, competition and lack of coordination within central office units impedes their support for teaching and learning improvement. As Honig et al. (2010) report, central office staff who supervise principals have rarely provided them with the kinds of intensive supports that can help them lead for instructional improvement. In many districts, principal supervisors devote much of their time to monitoring principals' compliance with various central office directives instead of actually seeing their role as a support to the schools. Or, the supervisors serve as all-purpose liaisons between the central office and schools, following up on requests from either party and filling in for non-responsive central office staff (Honig & Hatch, 2004).

What is largely missing from the research is evidence about how the principal supervisor is a bridge and buffer for school leaders in helping them co-construct a community of practice with their colleagues, giving an opportunity to problem solve real-time challenges, consider some of unintended consequences, and coach them to shape shared mission and goals (PLI, 2010). Much of what is found is normative and practical literature, peer reports and blogs that suggest strategies to build and sustain a trusting community in service of college, career and community readiness for all, but more research is needed in this area. If we do not address the relationships and improved 21st century instruction, we get stuck in the technical work of implementing policy and not see the needed gains in student outcomes.

Honig (2013) claims that a new wave of research has begun to fill the gap on role of principal supervisor and district office staff. The new role entails a genuine commitment from all organizational actors, in everyday practice to performance alignment; in other words, the

supervisor and district office staff should continuously scrutinize everything they do to ensure they are spending their time and other resources on the right work --work that helps principals support teachers so that all students realize ambitious learning goals (Heller et al., 2017). Attention to districts has increased somewhat, with researchers using qualitative and mixed-methods approaches to study their effectiveness. However, most describe the influence of the "district" as a whole, and not on the role of principal supervisor or in broad categories of district action and not to the internal workings of the school (Honig, 2013). Thus, the PAR project focused on the principals as members of a distributed leadership team both at the district level as I facilitate the group of principals and with teams at their schools. One outcome of the research was to examine how my role as principal supervisor and liaison to other district support staff can make the work meaningful and utilize leadership and learning exchange pedagogies as we engage in the work.

Emerging Framework

The purpose of the participatory action research (PAR) project was to investigate how I supported the high school principals and other leaders so that they more deeply engage in the transformation of high schools using Small Learning Communities as vehicle for change. The essential elements were principals as co participants researchers (CPRs); as organizational and collaborative actors, we examined the work of improving schools through the use of communities of practice, coaching, equity principles, and learning exchange pedagogy to prepare students for college, career and civic engagement. My role as co-participant and researcher was to ensure a robust planning and implementation process so students, particularly students who have been historically marginalized, were engaged in the core components of rigorous academics, career technical education, exposure to real-world workplaces, and civic engagement.

When we reimagine high schools, they need to be different; without limits for certain populations of students, those who have not benefitted from the many reform efforts. The term reimagine has become generic and part of the 21st century jargon, and does not call out with intentionality the students we need to serve. Everyone deserves an education without limits, uncontained. The current model causes some learners to succeed and others to fail, predictably. Racism, classism, gender bias, and adult-dominated schools are by design. Secondly, the high school has been contained in the school building, and the Linked Learning and CTE approach brings different persons into the schoolhouse as career mentors and encourages work-based learning on site in the community as well as service-learning and stronger community awareness. The wall-to-wall academies have a deliberate reach into the community, and the boundaries we have relied on need to be more fluid. The emerging framework addresses the equity issues as part of the design for the co-practitioner researchers and other actors who interact with our project. I examined and identified some of the critical leadership practices that promote equity and excellence, and we continued to add to the literature throughout the PAR project by understanding the roles of principal and principal supervisor in the context of small learning community implementation and how we might better use research to inform practice. As a result, we address the larger impact, graduating students with the skills and confidence to succeed in college, career and civic participation. Because of the literature review and conceptual thinking about the role of principal and principal supervisor as participants in the PAR project, a framework has emerged (see Figure 5).

Conclusion

Preparing high school students to be college, career and to be community ready is deeply-rooted in our national, state and local agendas with measures on students' outcomes and
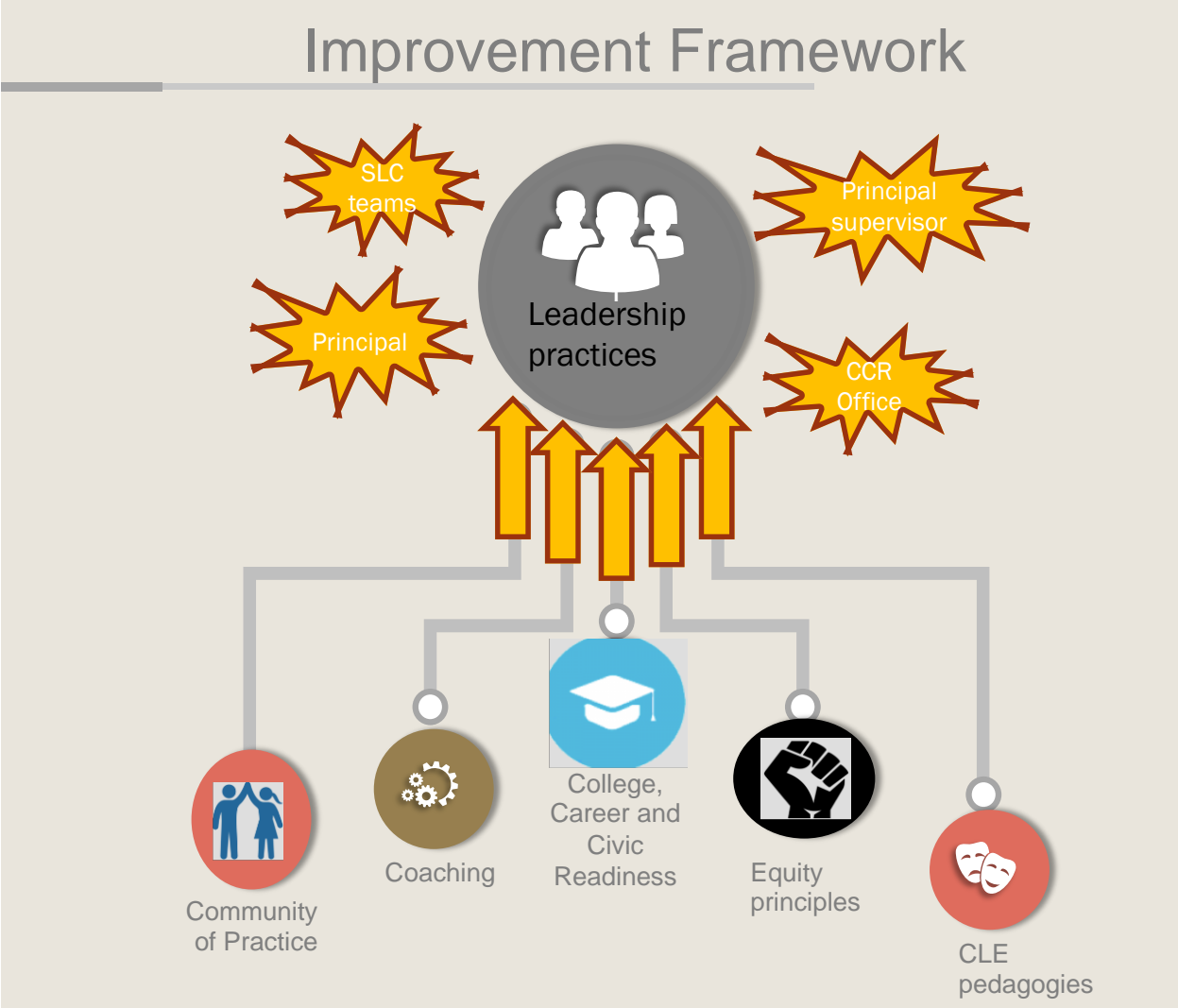
Figure 5. Improvement framework.

therefore "good" schools. The policy-driven agenda has a strong moral and ethical foundation that addresses the needs of students who have been historically pushed out or underserved by the current educational system. Compelling data establishes SLCs as a replicable model for high schools to prepare all students for college and career. However, the data have limitations in how well-prepared students are for digital age and instructional improvements in high school classrooms. Studies do not include deeply looking at classroom practices and student learning and rely almost solely on student outcome data. Another limitation is that the role of the principal is rarely mentioned in the studies, concluding that the SLCs are teacher-driven. I contended at the start of the project that the role of the school leadership would be a linchpin to the success of the organization in implementing effective SLCs. The current research has not highlighted the role of the principal as leader of the SLCs as instructional leader. In Athena, that was a clear dilemma. The role of instructional leader in partnership with the lead teachers was a vital component of a successful high school SLC model.

The research discussed the critical importance and benefits of College and Career readiness and SLCs as vehicle to get there, but not the more complex formal and informal work that is required by leaders of the school, their guiding principles and how decisions are made. The research provided strong evidence on the qualities of a successful leader such as ability to develop mission and goals of the organization, build trusting relationships and collaboration, and attention to instructional improvements. Bryk et al. (2010) work highlighted those efforts, and we applied that to high schools in the small learning community based on career pathways. Another important aspect critical to the work is that the leader ensure that structures and designs do not further the inequities of the current school system and interrogate the systems and structure in place, so our most vulnerable students - students of color, students in poverty and

with disabilities, were prepared for post-secondary education. That is the essential role of the principal to raise those questions in creating multiple pathways for students.

The role of the principal supervisor was a second question that drove the project. In identifying roles of the principal supervisor, I was fully aware that classroom practices needed to improve. Setting up a community of practice structure and using the learning exchange pedagogies was designed to support equity-minded leaders and model how the principals could achieve distributed leadership at the building sites. Finally, my role was to rally the district office leadership around common vision and collaborate on creating benchmarks all for constituents.

If the purposes and goals of secondary education are to implement rigorous academics for college readiness, create stronger college, community and business partnerships and smoother transitions between high school and post-secondary education, create incentives for employers and school systems to focus on work based learning and career readiness, give equal weight to civic engagement. and provide supports that all students need to learn deeply (Heller et al., 2017), then, we need to critically examine how the roles of the principal and principal supervisor contribute to creating conditions for success. The PAR project focused on my role as principal supervisor and how I established conditions and modeled for the principals the use of evidence, provided time to engage in dialogue, promoted learning about self as equity leader to develop guiding principles and decision making in furthering the good work of small learning communities. We expected that the PAR project could add to the research literature, particularly in the areas of small learning communities and the immediate community of the linked learning approach in California. By examining the current leadership practices in the schools and district leadership and bringing learning experiences that were liberating and responsive to today's youth, the equity issues were fundamental to our leadership work and to developing high

schools that are uncontained, without limits, for those who have been underserved. We need

to reimagining high schools by disrupting the current models of schooling and the predictive

power of failure. Understanding the role of the school leader and the district helped to inform

leaders about their work with the teacher leaders and teachers who, in collaboration, continued to

strive for high schools of equity and excellence -- places where our youth are excited to learn and

become prepared for college, career, and civic engagement.

CHAPTER THREE: CONTEXT FOR FOCUS OF PRACTICE

The Principals and I collaborated as Co-Practitioner Researchers (CPR) to develop a deeper understanding of the benefits of the linked learning approach, co-constructed challenges for Small Learning Communities (SLCs). For the PAR project, we partnered closely with the SLC lead teachers for equity and excellence by developing coherent pathway for leaders and teachers to work collaboratively to prepare students for college, career and community in the 21st century. I continued to work closely with the College and Career Coordinator and Work-Based Learning Specialist in district office to systematize work-based learning experiences with a clear vision and goals to ensure that all students had more robust field experiences relevant to their SLC experience. The three principals responsible for the implementation at the high schools were at different points in their careers and understanding of the ways in which their schools could further develop effective pathways providing access and success to all students, particularly students who have been historically marginalized by the system. In this chapter on the context of the PAR, I present an overview of the situation when I came to the district. Then, I provide the history of SLCs in Athena, describe the place of the study as well as the people engaged in the study, share findings from the diagnostic assessment, and conclude with a discussion of the way best intentions are often thwarted by political contexts.

Overview: History

SLCs began in 2007 through grant funding to forward ambition to create wall-to-wall SLCs at the two comprehensive high schools and were evaluated in 2011 with results highlighting the need to build on strengths and continue leading high schools through pathways as way to increase college and career readiness. The SLC creation was considered a "bottom-up" process, meaning that teachers proposed and created the implementation plan for the initiation of

an SLC. The superintendent then teamed up with teachers to develop the plans. While groups of teachers worked together to form SLCs, the only role administrators played was to provide technical assistance; provide common prep periods and to adjust schedules to double common planning time to twice monthly. These activities enhanced a collaborative culture and were the foundation for a professional learning community – but mainly for teachers. Teachers led SLCs with little counselor or administrative input. The principal was not seen as "owning the SLC vision" and leading the instructional reform effort; rather SLCs became more of containers for addressing student discipline (referrals and suspensions) and attendance. The SLCs were re-evaluated in 2016 through the recommendation of the board to create more equitable programs for students.

When I arrived in Athena Unified School District in Fall 2014, I was responsible for the supervision of four high schools; therefore, my goal was to learn the breadth and depth of high schools, particularly the role of the small learning communities and the quality of instruction that was occurring in the classrooms. The focus of the SLCs, a huge investment in high schools, was on a parallel track to improve the quality of instruction through academic discourse; however, there were rarely conversations about how to integrate these two work strands. After observing classrooms and talking with teachers and leaders, my focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning and consider ways to integrate the two focus areas was apparent because I know teaching and learning more deeply, and had five talented content area specialists, I began to work closely with the principals to deepen their knowledge, pedagogy and leadership in quality instructional practices.

In Fall 2015, when the Superintendent asked me to make a recommendation on the closure of one small high school, I seriously began to interrogate the SLCs and identify the

inequities in all the high schools. I wanted to understand why they were not at their optimal performance in terms of preparing all students, particularly students of color, for college, career and community. I reviewed the data, interviewed staff, and worked closely with the principal of the small school and presented to the board of education for consideration of closure. The principal had worked at the site for seventeen years and was tired of being neglected by district leadership and tired of seeing the school slowly dismantle. She said, "let's either invest in the school or close it down. "I am okay either way but tired of leading a school with an unknown future." Looking at one school helped me to understand the structures and conditions for all the SLCs in Athena. I began to understand why that even though we had a graduation rate of 89% only 39% of students were meeting the requirements to attend a California four-year public university. That number was lower for students of color: 30% for Latino's and 19% for African Americans and 1.2% for students receiving special education services. I wanted to know the shared vision for SLCs and why principals were not the key leaders in moving SLCs forward. I wanted to act strategically by effectively differentiating support for each principal so each of the three principals so each could thoughtfully and effectively partner with SLC teacher leaders in the improvement effort. The principals demonstrated a commitment to supporting all teachers in achieving college, career and community readiness for Athena students through a career themed pathway approach and agreed to join the CPR group.

Place

Athena is small district of approximately 11,000 students, and 3,552 high school students. While Athena has a school district and an elected Board of Education, the city is unincorporated and does not have its own municipal government. Many of our students come from working class families and stay in Athena most of their lives. The economy in Athena has been

economically depressed as an unincorporated area, not being part of any city and not having any major industry. Figures 6-9 show the ethnicities, home language and free/reduced lunch information for high school students in Athena.

In 2007-08, Athena Unified School District received a five-year grant from the U.S. Department of Education to fund the Athena Smaller Learning Communities (SLCs) Initiative, thereby allowing the district to move forward on their ambition to create wall-to-wall SLCs connected to a career theme in the district's two comprehensive high schools – Duckpond High School (DHS) and Railside High School (RHS), and one specialized school – Kennedy High School (KHS). A continuation high school, Royal Sunset shares the campus with Kennedy. We offered eight SLCs spread across three different campuses. Athena 8th grade students chose the high school pathway that best suited their personal talents and career interests, regardless of the neighborhood they live. The reform initiative was designed to address "the Hesperian divide" a common metaphor used to talk about the economic divisions in the unincorporated area of Athena. The rail road tracks located on Hesperian Boulevard, divide the city where one neighborhood has more homeowners and higher real estate than the other. One example of addressing the Hesperian divide was to move one of the highly successful SLCs, Bay Area Digital Arts at Railside High School (known as flagship high school) to Athena High School (reputation as low performing school) to create an equalizer and attract students to attend Athena HS who would not otherwise attend. Each large high school offers a comprehensive athletics program, music program, visual arts program and the traditional activities of a large high school such as rallies, proms, spirit weeks, and many clubs, some of which are unrelated to the SLCs. One example of a program that requires leadership and support is the Law, Leadership and Culture SLC. They offer a Sherriff Cadet program in partnership with the County Sheriff's office
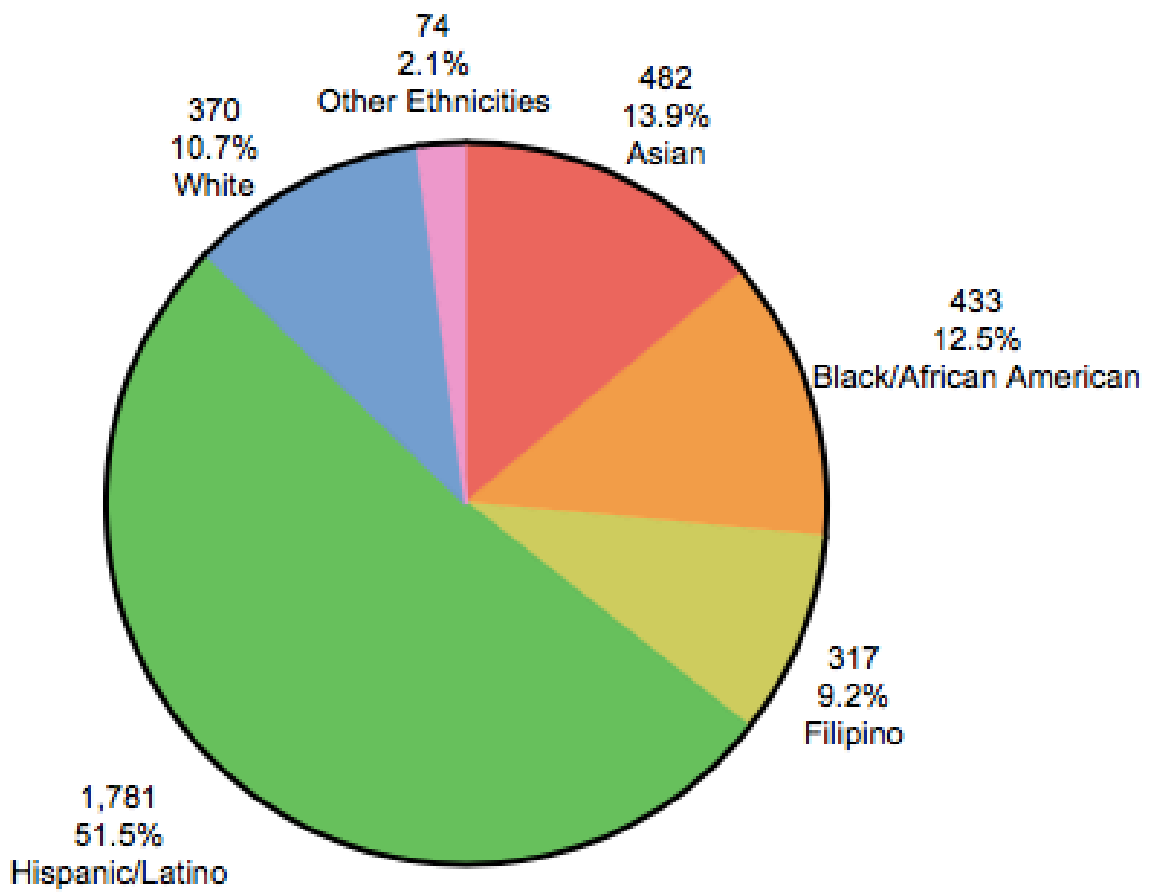
Figure 6. Athena demographics.

0.9%
30
Arabic

3.5%
121
Other Non-English

2.8%
97
Vietnamese

5.5%
190
Pilipino (Tagalog)

7.8%
268
Cantonese/Mandarin

41.4%
1,431
English

38.2%
1,320
Spanish
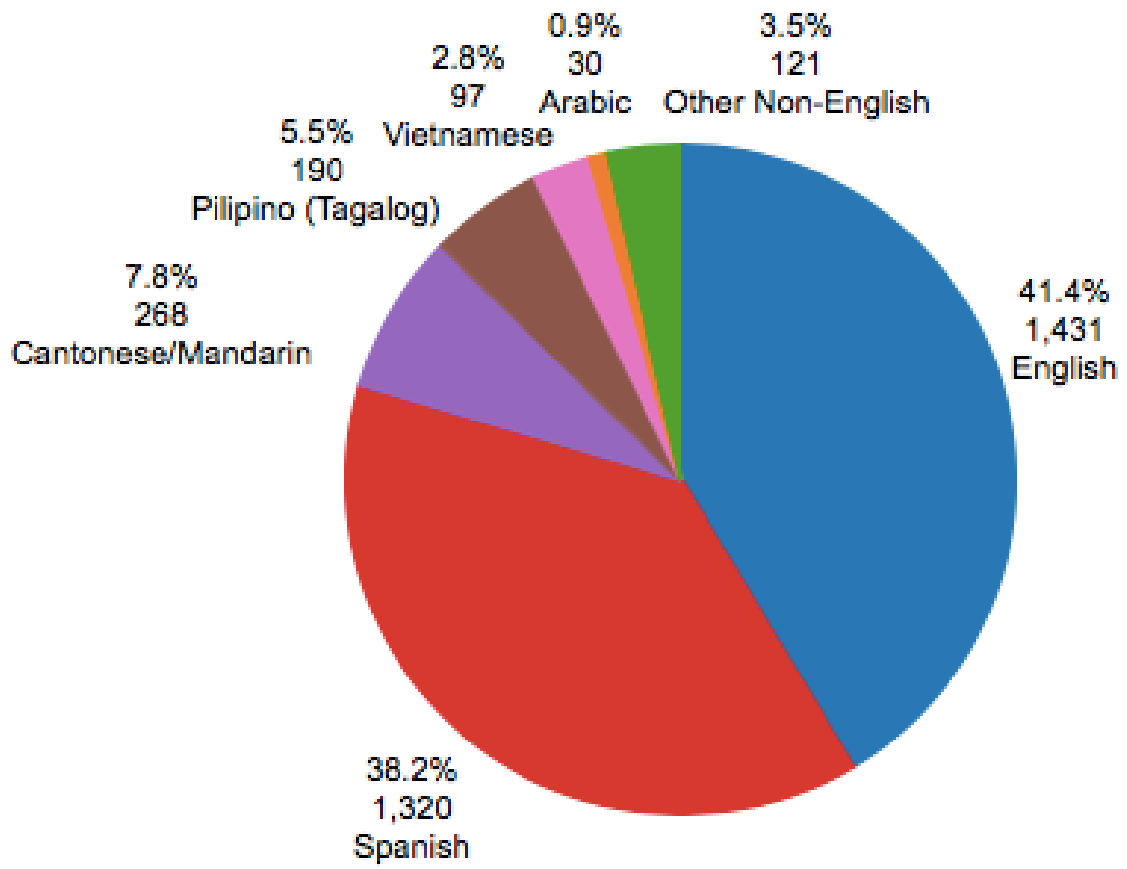
Figure 7. Athena languages.
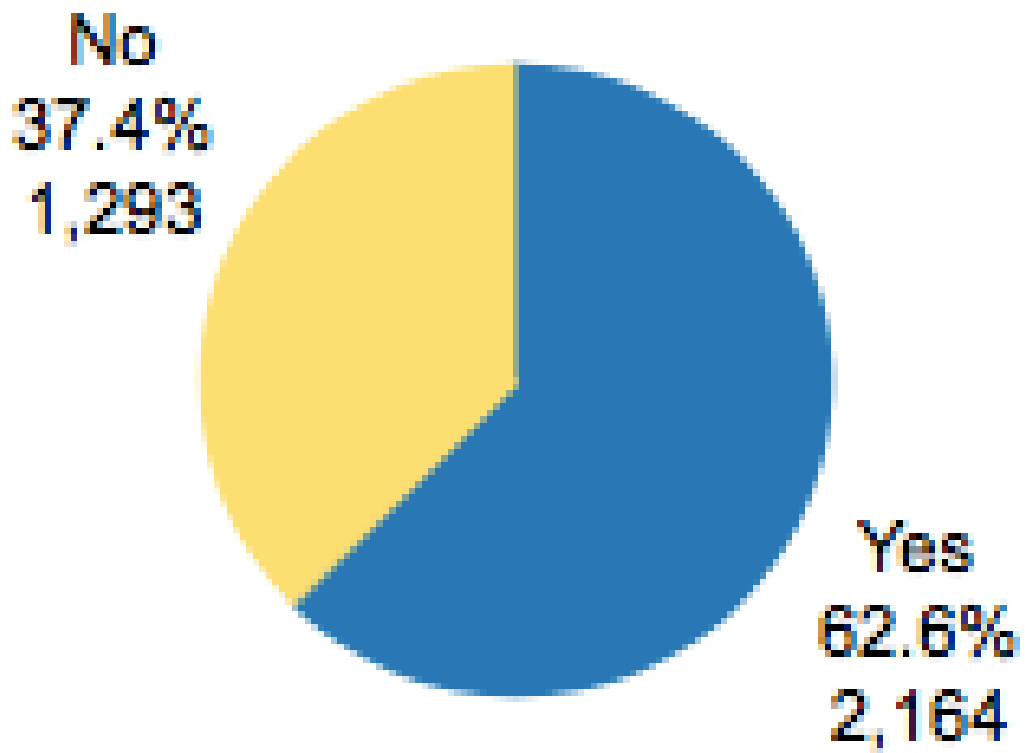
Figure 8. Athena school lunch program.
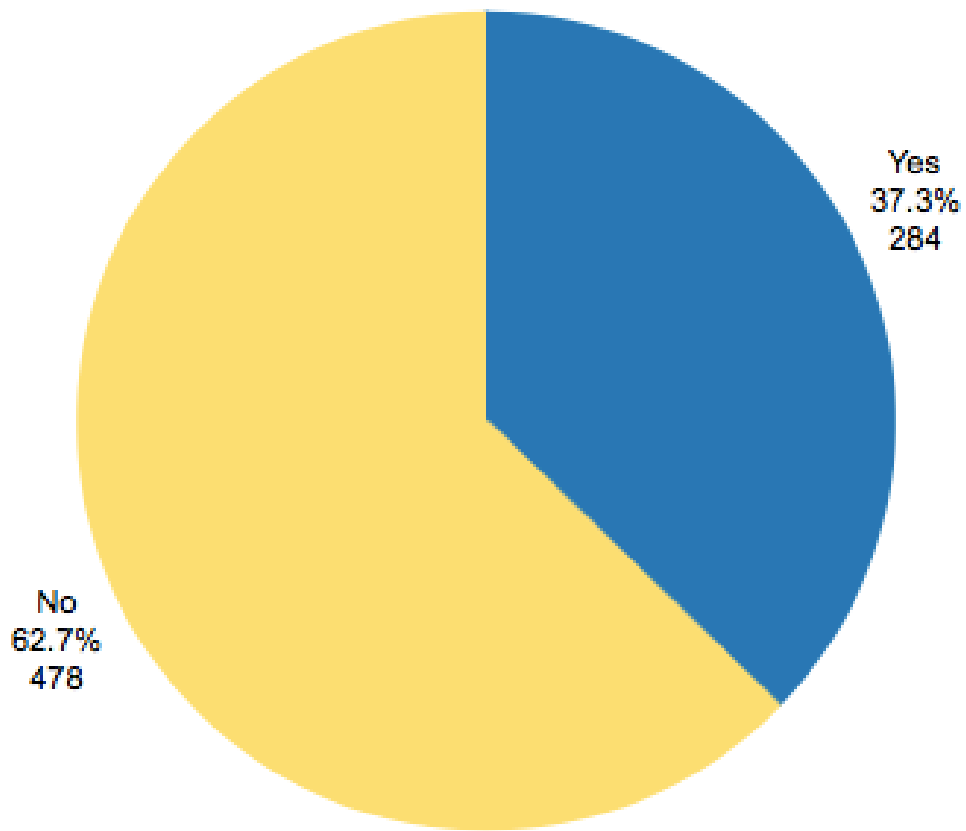
Figure 9. California A-G eligibility.

and serve approximately 100 students, but the perception that the SLC is for students who want to be police officers, often forgetting to focus on other careers in law and leadership through public service.

After working with two of the three leaders for two years, and knowing the strengths and challenges of each site, I had conducted a preliminary inquiry of the possible issues that were identified as barriers to student success. One key barrier was that improved classroom practices has not been a focus of reform, rather increasing student attendance and reducing suspensions in school were. Another barrier was the ability to offer integrated units that are related to the workforce or industries so students could develop career awareness. A further barrier was access for English Learners and students receiving special education services having access to CTE courses as electives during the school day, qualifying them a CTE certificate or apprenticeship upon graduation. In this next section, I describe each of the three high schools in the district.

Duckpond High School

Duckpond is a diverse school that serves 1798 students. The student demographics are 49% Latino, 8% African American, 20% Asian, 13% white and 13% Filipino. 15% of students are English learners. Approximately 52% of students qualify for free and reduced lunch. In attending celebrations and competitions most students receiving awards are Asian and Filipino students, although they represent 33% of students on campus. Of the 842 students who graduated in 2016, only 2 of the 37 African American students met the college going requirements. They offer comprehensive program for students with disabilities serving about 12% of the student population. The demographics have changed over the last 20 years where the white population dropped from 50% of students in 1994 to 12% in 2015. All students select from one of four career themed, small learning communities when entering high school. The career themes are:

Engineering, health and medicine, leadership for social justice, business and computer science. Students stay together all four years and are encouraged to complete the career technical education courses as part of their high school experience, including at least one work-based learning experience a year. Three of four SLCs have strong, willing and committed teachers who collaborate to better serve the students. Each of the SLCs were teacher created except one SLC, which became a "de facto" SLC with the teachers who did not want to be in a SLC.

Duckpond is seen in the community as the flagship high school on the homeowner side of the Hesperian divide, with high teacher retention rates, and about 1/3 have less than five years teaching experience and 1/3 have been there twenty or more years. There is one African American teacher at the site and the only Latino teachers are the Spanish language teachers. The school has a long history of being a safe environment and college going culture for those who do well in school. Many Advanced placement courses are offered at Duckpond and those courses can compete with the SLC elective, career technical education courses or work-based learning experiences.

The school offers all the extracurricular activities of a large comprehensive high school, has low suspension rate, high attendance rate and graduation rate of 93.4%. The more veteran teachers in general, want to be "left on their own" and rely on administration to remove obstacles, resolve conflicts and for technical support, the number of teacher leaders has increased wanting to be a part of "rebranding" the school. The counselors were not integral to the SLCs and serve in traditional roles, focusing on college going rather than considering career options as well for students. One counselor narrowly focused on getting students to college and hosts many events to prepare students for college including financial aid seminars and college essay writing

nights. The counselors and teachers did not hold a shared vision on role of SLCs and had conflict over student course placement which continued to play out during the PAR project.

Railside High School

The school serves 1,323 students. The student demographics are 61% Latino, 16% African American, 8% Asian, 6% Filipino, and 7% white. Approxmately12% of the students receive special education services and 23% of students are English learners and do not participate in the SLC experiences due to special classes they are required to take. There had been a history of high turnover at the school; 60% of teachers changed between 2012-2017. The English department had a long history of teacher leadership and integral to decision making and developed an advisory class on college and career readiness for all students. The students choose one of three small learning communities as entering 9th graders into a career themed SLC: digital arts, law, or engineering. One of three SLCs receives much notoriety for its program and teacher leadership and the other two had leadership issues and teacher turnover. Teachers often are more committed to their traditional departments rather than to SLCs. One SLC manages a career partnership academy (specialized courses that earn CTE certificate) that serves 70 out of 450 students within the SLC, denying many students access to the state-of-the-art facility and expertise.

Students and teachers are not put in "pure" cohorts, causing a lack of collaboration and coherence for students and teachers. The counselors collaborated with the SLC leads and supported the work of college and career. Site funds are prioritized to hire an extra counselor to focus on supporting first generation college going students and a career specialist to partner on dual enrollment and work-based learning experiences. At the onset of the PAR project, the SLCs

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was a fragmented program with lack of commitment on the staff to use SLC as a way to improve the quality of the student experience at the school.

Kennedy High School

Kennedy, located in another city, within the unincorporated area and district boundaries, and nearby one of the middle schools, is a small specialized school focused on the Arts serving 225 students, 25% of students whom identify as LGBTQ, and have expressed feeling of safety and acceptance. The school was recommended to the Board of Education for closure in 2016 due to low student enrollment, low student retention rate, and mediocre academic program offerings yet remained open due to the outpouring of community advocacy. Kennedy dedicated their efforts to improving the instructional program and offers integrated projects four times a year, increased their community partnerships, increase number of advanced placement courses and dual enrollment, and focuses on social justice. There is a strong teacher commitment to the program and personalized learning to support students socially and emotionally. Teacher turnover has been high over many years and stabilized since 2016. Students receiving special education services comprise 18%; there are students who attend Kennedy who are not necessarily interested in the arts but desire a small school. However, this at times, caused tension and lack of focus to the program. Sunset shares a campus with Kennedy.

In 2016, we collaboratively addressed the diagnostic work necessary for implementing the SLC. As a component of leverage, we were required by the State to engage in a self-study process during the 2016-17 school year in all of the high schools. The principals were expected to use the Western Accreditation of Schools and Colleges self-study process as a vehicle for examining the schools and highlighting the strengths and identifying challenges of each SLC to promote equity and excellence. I report on the results later in this chapter.

People

The co-practitioner researcher (CPR) team for the PAR project included the three

principals. We worked together to improve the quality of the SLCs and strengthen their roles as

leaders of the school. We met as a high school community of practice to engage in problem

solving process. Two principals at the large high schools were new to SLCs at the outset of the

PAR. Each leader has an entirely different context, demographics, teacher attitudes toward SLCs,

willingness and capacity to improve the SLCs. As indicated, the SLC lead teachers have had

primary responsibility for implementing the SLCS. The role of the counselor is at times in

conflict at two of the schools. First, I provide a brief description of each leader and then present

the findings from the diagnostic assessment. I engaged all leaders in sharing and learning with

each other and met individually with each leader to differentiate he support and work with each

person's needs in their context given their level of knowledge and skill. I generally visited each

leader at the site two times per month, and we met one time as a group. In our monthly time

together, we participated in a community of practice, facilitated by an outside provider. Given

our commitment to the linked learning approach, we were invited to participate in a group that

promotes leadership development and support for successful pathway implementation through a

grant with the Stuart Foundation. The role of facilitator was to assist us in identifying high

leverage problems and solve these problems as a group.

Duckpond HS: Apollo

The Duckpond high school principal is African-American male and was previously

middle school principal of feeder middle school for five years in Athena. By 2018-19, he had

served five years as principal. He also served as high school principal in another district before

coming to Athena and is a passionate educator always looking for opportunities to engage

families and partners in the work. He demonstrated a commitment to increasing career

opportunities through work-based learning and increasing college access through programs. He

is exceptional at building relationships, observed classrooms on a regular basis, and provided

teachers feedback. Apollo likes to act, gets excited about new initiatives and is always thinking

of ways to build on the new ideas. He deeply believes in SLCs as pathway to college and career

and never gives up on figuring out ways to improve. In Figure 9, the principal described the

current state of his SLCs in one of our community of practices. He identified the four SLCs as

key houses in the school and other programs to support the SLCs and wanting to bring in more

career awareness and work-based learning opportunities to the students. He identified electives

other than CTE courses and advanced placement courses as challenges to keeping the SLCs in

cohorts and students having more career experiences. He sees his role to problem-solve and

support teachers, yet sometimes finds it challenging to make decisions when there are competing

priorities. He tends to be transactional and often negotiates solutions. The goal was to assess his

current reality at the start of the project and leverage his leadership to build more external

partnerships to support the college and career experience. Figure 10 indicates the ways that

Apollo initially diagrammed SLCs at Duckpond HS. He noted the interconnections of the SLC

and the goal of partnering with the community and businesses to achieve results.

Railside HS: Bianca

Bianca as principal at Railside High School is white female who arrived as new leader in

August 2016. She previously served as high school principal for five years; two years in a high

performing high school district, and three years at a bi-modal school on the seaside. She is

passionate about students and committed to improving the culture and climate of the school

community and hungers to get things done. New to SLCs, she was committed to learning about
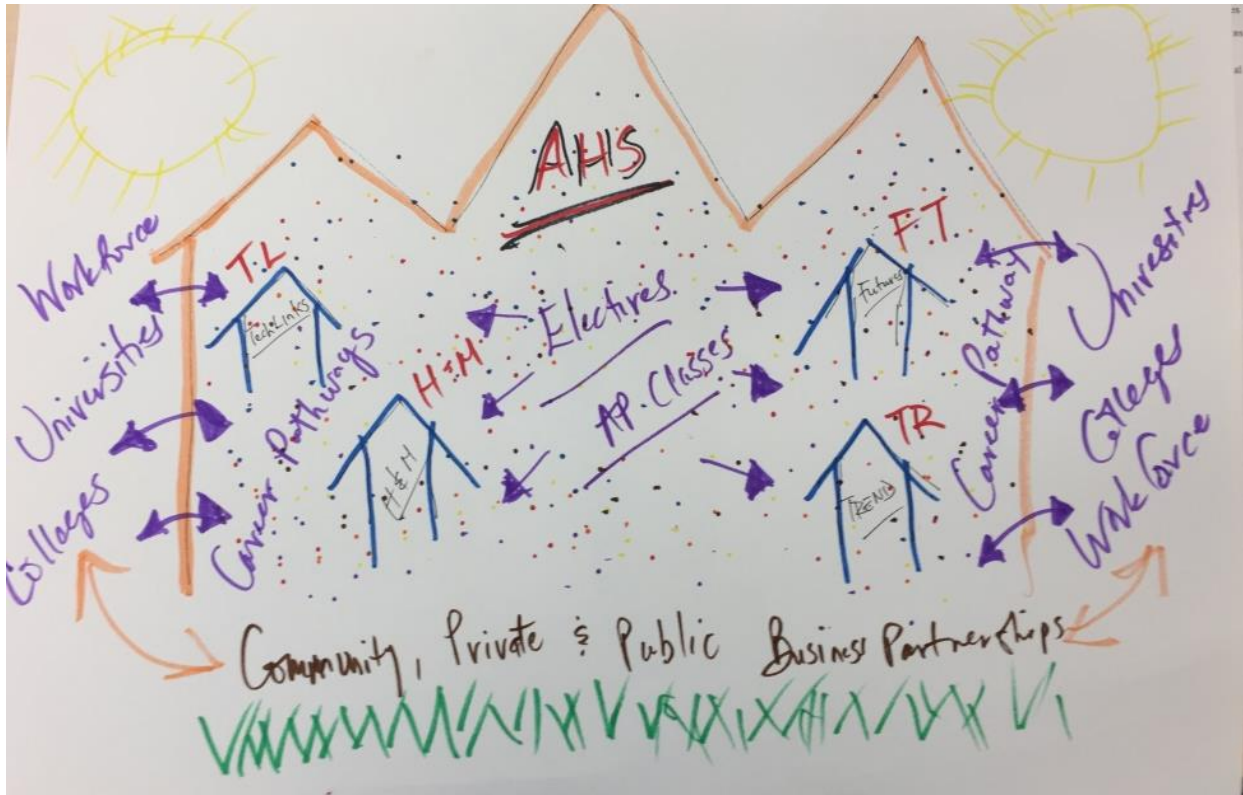
Figure 10. SLCs at Duckpond High School.

SLCs and making them successful. She was new to working in a school with high poverty rates and a majority population of children of color. However, she is a learner and open to new ideas, yet addresses most challenges as technical and looking for rapid solutions. She spent the first year taking care of basic needs of the campus, cleaning up unfinished work, building relationships with staff and the community, and committed to improving the sports program. She hired an AP from her previous school, giving her a colleague that already has a trusting relationship. In Figure 11, the principal described the SLCs at the start of the PAR and viewed them as isolated programs that lacked coherence and served students with many different needs, however she put herself at the center of the SLC connection. She sees herself as solving the problems that get in the way of running the school. As previously stated, the Railside SLCs are not "pure" as teachers and students move between SLCs.

Kennedy and Sunset HS: Callie

Callie is white female principal who served the last seven years as principal of Kennedy and Sunset continuation school, seven years as AP, and teacher for two years at the school. She co-authored the proposal for Kennedy to become a SLC and was a part of the recession when funding cut programs, teachers and began to dismantle her program. She has responsibilities for the continuation high school, preschool special education programs, and independent study program. The leader has a strong social justice lens and is committed to serving her students and their families. She is well respected on her campus and listens to her staff yet makes hard decisions when needed. She led the inquiry into possible closure of Kennedy in 2016; during the Board of Education study sessions she had to take a leave of absence to attend to her dying father, the school community stepped up to clearly articulate their passion and desire to keep Kennedy open and serve some of the most vulnerable populations. In the small specialized

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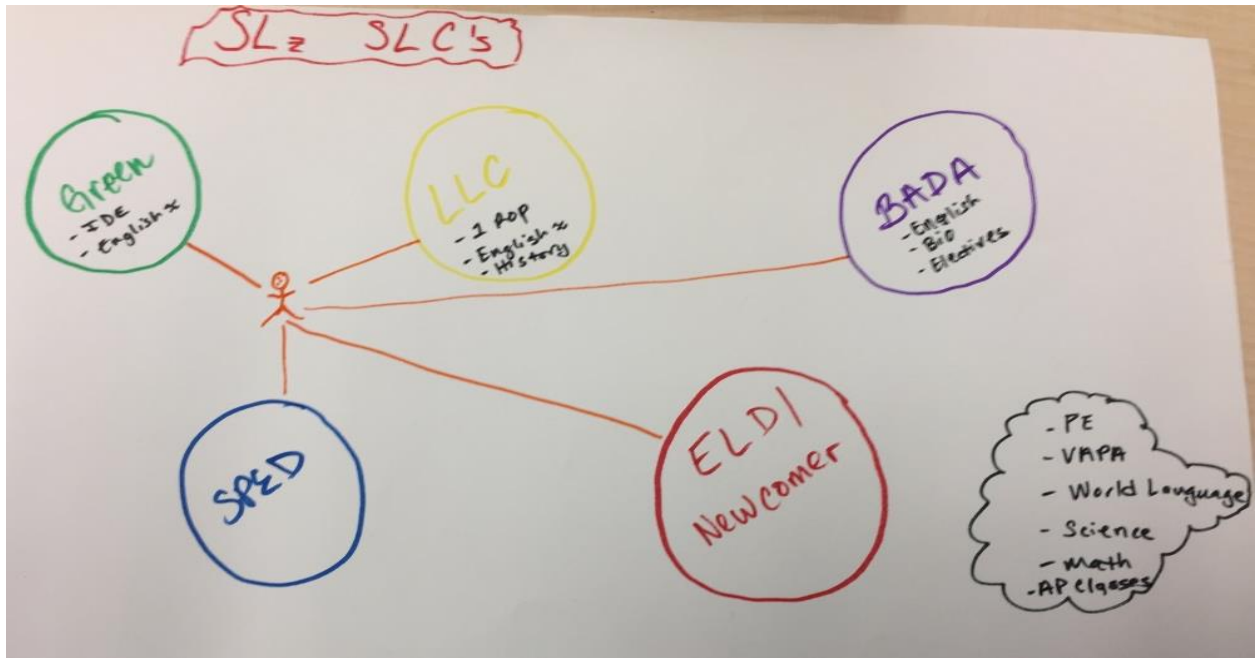
Figure 11. SLCs at Railside High School.

school of 250 students, the principal is active in improving the integrated projects across the school, a focus on the arts. Sunset serves approximately 150 students and was recently awarded a state funded three-year grant to create career themed pathways and elevate career options for students who have been pushed out the school system. The leader was absent the day we created the diagrams describing the SLCs, so she did not have one, but because this is a small school with only one pathway- the arts-she views herself at the center of that work.

In conclusion, high school principals have tricky jobs; the history of high school -- including the responsibility for Carnegie units, the history of tracking, preparing students for adulthood, and the demands of problem-solving the daily interactions of large numbers of students and teachers --provide a context that is complicated. Our ability as a CPR group to carve out time each month to meet in a community of practice and learn together how to slow down and think about problems of practice was useful; we made progress during the PAR together on how leadership can be different in the high school and we continue to think about how our roles can better serve our communities and students.

My Role as Researcher

In taking the position as Director of Secondary Education, I undertook the role of supervising high schools, and in particular, small learning communities. When I arrived, there was a strong College and Career Coordinator who worked at one of the high schools for fifteen years as English teacher and gave birth to one of the SLCs. Within two months in my new role, she transitioned into a new role with the community college, so I was left finding someone to fill her shoes. Before she took the role, the person leading the work was also a SLC Lead at another strong SLC. I was learning about the work and dove deeply into improving classroom instruction in the high school, often not paying much attention to the work of the SLCs as a main driver for

change. It was not until the superintendent wanted to close one of the SLCs that I begin to learn about their history, review data and identify the inequities among the SLCs. Figure 12 describes my initial idea of wall-to-wall SLCs at one of our community of practices that I shared with the principals. We had structured pathway for students, but as we get closer to college and career options, fewer students were able to access the college and career-related experiences.

During the PAR Cycles One, Two, and Three, as the lead researcher, I supported the principals to be equity-centered leaders and lead SLCs in a meaningful and impactful ways. I differentiated support for principals, reinforced their core values, and worked with them to slow down their decision-making processes so they did not act precipitously. As we progressed, we found the adaptive leadership framework (Heifetz, 2009) useful for reflection. My role was to model asking the right questions so they can ask questions when teachers approach them with requests that may or may not align to the goals of SLCs. I continued to develop strong relationships with the leaders, listened to their needs and differentiated support so they were equipped to lead effective small learning communities and produce students who are prepared for post-secondary education and a career that is fulfilling and economically viable. I relied on expertise to support our work such as facilitation of communities of practice and hiring individual coaches for two of the principals. Because I served on district cabinet and reported to the superintendent, I had been given latitude to create and rebuild programs that better serve our students. The superintendent trusted my judgement and asked for updates, provided valuable feedback and set the direction for the work. My role with the district office was to address the obstacles in the district policies that impeded progress. As a result, I worked closely with the Directors of Special Education, Student Services, Assessment and Inquiry.
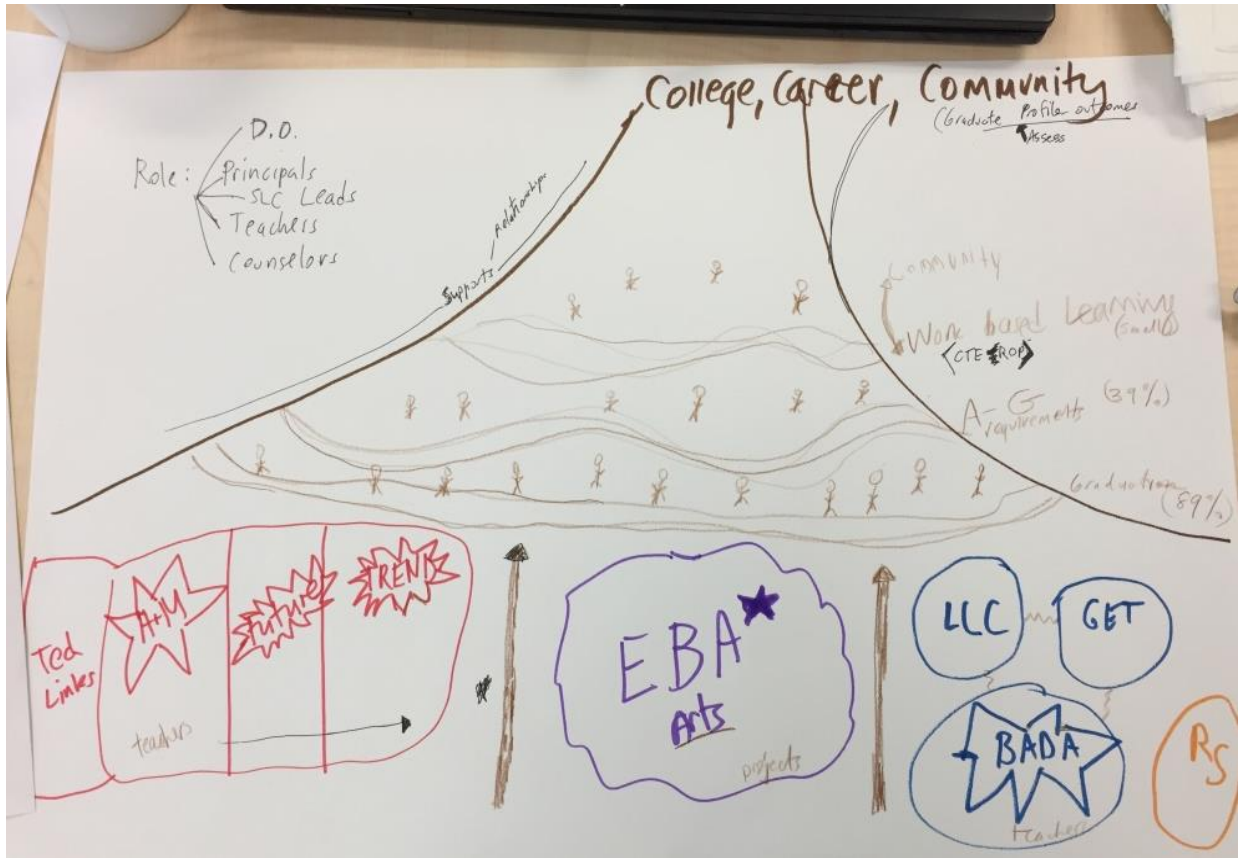
Figure 12. District wide small learning communities.

Diagnostic Assessment: Findings

I began with a diagnostic assessment in September 2017 to gather input from the principals and to identify some assets and challenges with the implementation of SLCs, described in chapter one. The assets from the analysis a macro, meso, and macro level provided a starting place for the PAR project. The diagnostic was considered a pre-cycle for the participant action research and included principals, SLC teacher leads, and district office staff. I gathered insights by memoing my reflections after each time we met, whether in SLC monthly meetings, communities of practice, or site visits. One insight was that teacher leaders were an integral part of the work of implementing SLCs, and that principals must partner with them for improved outcomes. I listened intently to the principals' needs as we worked to revitalize and improve each SLC.

Most SLC teacher leaders are passionate, bright, open-minded, and looking for guidance and direction. They want to be valued as partners in the work. However, in the case of two SLCs, the teacher leaders seemed burned-out and may feel like there are too many challenges in their way to develop a successful program. The teachers have expressed to me that the SLCs have become grant-driven rather than being teacher driven and focused on student needs.

The graduate profile that was created and vetted with principals, teachers and families, required an engagement strategy to integrate into the existing work and validate the work happening in schools (see Appendix A). The Board of Education approved the vision for students that graduate from Athena schools. The graduate profile guided what we wanted to achieve. We began the engagement by having SLC leads and principals create a metaphor for each attribute of the graduate profile and used a strength-based lens to identify existing classroom practices and what we hoped to achieve (see Appendix B). The teacher leaders and

principals shared with their colleagues the expectations and intentionality of the work needed to prepare students to meet the expectations of the graduate profile.

A one-day retreat in which we used pedagogies from the Community Learning Exchange took place May 2017 (Guajardo, Guajardo, Janson, & Militello, 2015) with all SLC leads, principals, counselors and district office staff came together on the inquiry question: How can we collectively analyze work-based learning to inform our decisions about principles and pedagogy for Athena small learning communities? Participants engaged in learning of about self and learning about organization; they conducted an analysis of those experiences to inform our work in the schools. As a result, many expressed the desire to reinvest in our students in meaningful ways and work to create structures and support to make it happen. We conducted an inventory of practices happening to support work-based learning as a starting place, and one group of SLC leads wanted to use the CLE pedagogies at their next full staff meeting. Creating a political environment was critical in considering in furthering how to further the work of SLCs and the PAR project.

Political Environment

At the start of the PAR process, SLCs in Athena had become a political football. The key role of the district office had been to oversee the grants for the sites and ensure students were receiving some work-based learning experiences. When I arrived, the SLC Teacher Leaders or known as SLC leads did not want any oversight which conflicted with my vision to unify the group around a common mission and vision. However, the students were still choosing the high school based on neighborhood rather than career-themed pathway of interest. From the outside looking in, we were the envy of other districts because we had wall-to-wall SLCs. Looking from the inside, we had structures in place, but did not offer an equitable and consistent high-quality

program across the eight SLCs. The Board of Education asked for a revitalization of the SLCs, a self-study and recommendations to improve the SLCs, particularly after being in existence for eight years. We offered career pathway academies (CPAs), state funded academies within an SLC that provided funding for career technical education courses for about 90 students. The low number of students actually served by CTE caused tension due to inequity and lack of access for many students.

Another mitigating factor to our work arose during PAR Cycle Two and Three and seriously impacts our work. A conflict between the Athena Board of Education and the Superintendent resulted in the resignation of the superintendent in Fall 2018. The distractions caused by the Board of Education seriously hampered our efforts as the principals, and I were inevitably caught up in the micropolitical fallout from the conflict. I discuss this in Chapter 7.

I entered the PAR project to examine the leadership practices that could ensure a partnership and transparency in the process and promote more equitable access and outcomes for students. I thought at the onset that principal leadership was the linchpin for progressing toward that goal. To some degree, that became verified in the PAR cycles; in other ways, at the conclusion of the project, some of the same questions I started with present issues that we have not fully resolved.

Conclusion

The (PAR) project had a clear purpose: to investigate how I could support the high school principals and other leaders so that they more deeply engage in the transformation of high schools using Small Learning Communities as vehicle for change. To do that, equity and excellence were and remain at the center piece to our work; we were committed to a shared vision and shared decision-making process; I supported the principals to be focused on the larger

goal and purposefully directed them to stay focused. However, context plays a large role in whether we are able to achieve our goals, and the Athena context as well as high school contexts in general were and are complex micropolitical realities that often thwarted our best efforts.

CHAPTER FOUR: METHODOLOGY

As previously indicated, the work of leading high schools is complex and given the changing demands and expectations for success for the 21st century, it is critical to reimagine innovative ways for students to be prepared for success in college and career and as community members (Grubb, 2011). In the PAR project, I zeroed in on the roles of principal and principal supervisor as critical to creating a new vision of high schools that produces positive outcomes, particularly for students who have been historically marginalized by the system. The overarching aim is to better understand how to differentiate support to the three principals and guide their school site leadership – particularly in effectively implementing small learning communities. I introduce a theory *of* action and logic model for the project before proceeding with the methodology. I outline the design and methodology of the PAR project, that included the selection of participants, cycles of inquiry, data collection tools and data analysis methods. Finally, I describe my role and study limitations. By the conclusion of the project, as discussed in Chapter 8, we arrived at theory *in* action that continues to guide our work.

Theory of Action

The operating theory of action was: if the principals and I form a community of practice to engage in supporting how we reimagine high schools for the 21st century, agree on the vision for career-themed SLCs, develop guiding principles for decision-making, and identify resources, then school principals can better collaborate with the SLC lead teachers to support classroom learning and meaningful school experiences for students. I intended that the community of practice become a place to listen, teach each other, be open to possibilities, ask good questions, and engage in collective meaning making and problem-solving process. As a result, I identified structures that would support principals and would be most useful to SLC lead teams (teachers,

principal and counselor). The intended impact was that students would experience relevance, rigor, and relationships in their core classes and complete CTE courses that prepare them for college, career and civic engagement.

In addition, I continued to work closely with persons in the district office who supervised implementation of different parts of the SLCs: graduate profile, coordination of career readiness goals, and partnerships with the local colleges, community organizations, and industry partners. I continued to work closely with the College and Career Coordinator and Work-Based Learning Specialist as part of my work to coalesce district leadership to implement the vision of the graduate profile, strengthen SLC student placement process, and systematize the work-based learning so students have deeper experiences relevant to their career-themed SLC. The logic model of the PAR project was particularly well-suited to this context as we engaged in three successive cycles of inquiry.

Logic Model

In the PAR methodology, the purpose is to design a process to undertake cycles of inquiry. The logic model presents long-term and short-term outcomes; it served as a timeline for the PAR cycles (see Appendix D). The logic model is based on the improvement sciences PDSA (Plan Do Study Act) cycles of inquiry in which we make plans in the community of practice, analyze or study data in the community of practice, and then make group decisions about how to act in concert in SLC implementation. The logic model in Figure 13 served as a guide for the project and follows a qualitative research design.
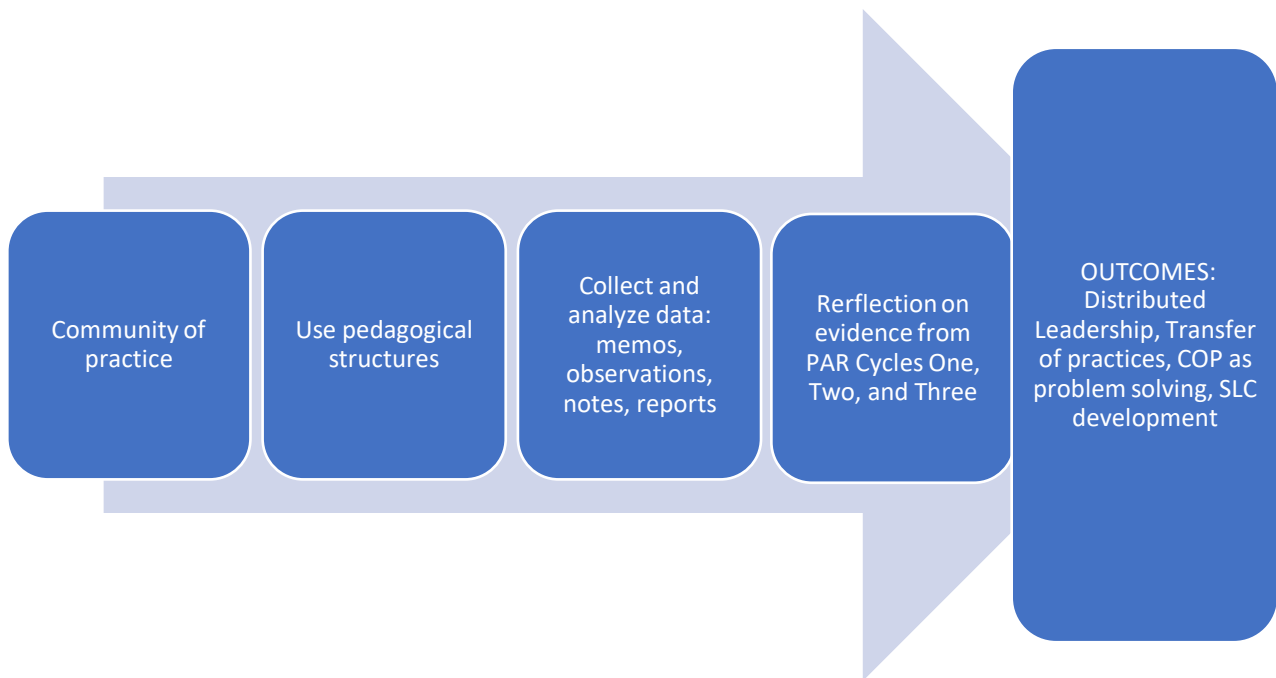
Figure 13. Logic model of cycles of inquiry.

Research Design

The research methodology is qualitative research, an approach for exploring and understanding a social problem, that involves allowing for emerging questions and procedures, data collected in situ (in the setting), and interpreting the meaning of the data. This form of inquiry honors an inductive style and the complexity of a situation. The philosophical worldview or paradigm is "a basic set of beliefs that guide action" (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, p. 80) and the one proposed in the PAR project is constructivism. The CPR team and I constructed meaning as we collectively engaged with each other and other participants, seeking to understand the context and interpret what is found. The meaning was social, arising in and out of interaction within a community. I planned to rely as much as possible on the participants' views of the situation and the role of lead researcher was to generate meaning from the data collected. Because I had trusting relationships with the CPR members, they were honest of the challenges at their sites and helped me to identify and remove barriers to success. In the next portion of the chapter, I do the following: outline and describe the study participant selection; provide a detailed account of the PAR cycles; discuss the data collection tools used to answer the research questions; describe the data analysis; detail the researcher's role; and (6) conclude with study limitations and ethical considerations.

Participants

In the participant action research, I served as the co-participant observer, co-researcher and co-participant with three high school principals. We worked together to co-construct leadership actions that supported decisions we needed to make regarding SLC implementation as well as their full roles as high school principals. I act as an insider in collaboration with other

insiders (Gordon, 2008; Heron, 1996; Saavedra, 1996). Schön (1984) described the reflective practitioner as practitioners who "learn to learn together."

I continued to ask myself how I could listen and reserve judgement so principals can openly share their challenges. My actions and beliefs guided the work, and I analyzed reflective memos and fishbowl conversations. While the PAR project is aimed at the larger goal and impact of students, it is focused first on my role as their supervisor. I wanted to understand and act strategically by effectively differentiating support for each principal so each can thoughtfully and effectively undertake the SLC design and implementation at his or her school.

Purposeful sampling is the methodology for selecting the co-participants and is widely used in qualitative research for the identification and selection of information-rich cases related to the phenomenon of interest (Palinkas et al., 2015). Although there are several different purposeful sampling strategies, criterion sampling appears to be used most commonly in similar implementation research. The principals were at different points in their careers and understanding of the ways in which their schools could further develop effective pathways providing access and success to all students, particularly students who have been historically marginalized by the system. Chapter 3 provided a more thorough account of their backgrounds and experiences as leaders.

As participant and observer in the action research, my role I attended to what Mintrop (2016) offers as challenges for an administrator/leader: having authority over the participants in the study, which could distort how both parties communicate with each other. In an early memo analysis, I noticed that "I now find myself leading two groups, the principals and the SLC leads. I wanted the principals to lead the SLC leads and currently they sit back quietly and let the teachers do all the talking and at times, complaining. They are not standing up to the teachers

and take bold action" (memo, November, 2017). This was important evidence I observed in early SLC core meetings. An insider, but supervisor, collaborating with other insiders, the principals might have viewed me in the CoP meetings as the leader and supervisor. For that reason, the monthly community of practice (CoP) was facilitated by an outside person; thus, I could be a full participant because power relations in a setting operate even when the insiders think they are being collaborative. They shared their concerns, but rather than deeply interrogate an issue my role was to slow them down yet support when it seemed each might be initially too quick to act. I acknowledged my positionality and the implications my role might have on fostering open dialogue.

After working with two of the three leaders for three years, and one leader for one year, I recognize the strengths and challenges of each site and leader. I had a preliminary sense of the issues I might confront as barriers to student success. One key barrier is that the principals of the two large high schools were not necessarily viewed as the visionary at the start of the process by the teacher-leaders as the leaders. Yet, all principals participated in all the PAR cycles which I describe next.

Action Research Cycles

Action research presumes the work of schools and districts is ongoing. For the purposes of the PAR project and the dissertation, we chose to improve innovation that was already in progress. As such, we used diagnostic evidence to inform the PAR project. The actual project timeline of the dissertation occurred in the Fall 2017 (PAR Cycle One), Spring 2018 (PAR Cycle Two), and Fall 2018 (PAR Cycle Three). However, the SLC implementation continues to use the evidence from the PAR cycles to make improvements. The Carnegie Foundation's (2013) report on continuous improvement argued that schools and districts are not organized in ways that

promote continuous learning for work is often done in silos; policy demands push for quick results; formative and useful data maybe collected, but not analyzed in a useful way; data is not provided frequently or quickly enough for it to meaningfully inform and change practice, and poor outcomes are viewed as individual failures rather than a by-product of a misaligned system. 'Silver bullets' and high-stakes accountability remain the prevailing levers for improving school, teacher, and, ultimately, student performance (Park, Hironaka, Carver, & Nordstrum, 2013). Thus, our process was designed to mitigate some of these issues.

Shojania and Grimshaw (2005) describe the goal of a research process is ensuring that quality improvement efforts made by organizations are based on a high warrant of evidence. In other words, strategies for the utilization and adaptation of evidence-based quality improvement methods should themselves be based on a foundation of evidence. In this sense, improvement science seeks to discern what works for addressing a particular problem, for whom, and under what set of specific conditions (Berwick, 2008; Bryk, Gomez, Grunow, & LeMaheu, 2015). Given the press for improved student and teacher performance amid severe budget cutbacks, schools and districts have begun to recognize the need to 'continuously improve' if they hope to achieve increasingly ambitious outcomes, although definitions of improvement vary widely. The PAR embraces Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) as integral research that offer iterative methods for collecting and analyzing evidence to inform future cycles. The PDSA cycle is a systematic series of steps for gaining valuable learning and knowledge for the continual improvement of a product or process, also known as the Deming cycle (Orsini & Deming, 2012) or the continuous improvement cycle. We conducted three PAR cycles of and describe each one, including the pre-cycle.

During the school year of 2016-17, we had an outside facilitator, who worked for Jobs for the Future (JFF), a national nonprofit that builds educational and economic opportunity for underserved populations in the United States. As a result of the meetings, I revised the focus of practice after listening to the leaders during the communities of practice and included teacher leaders as part of the SLC core team. The lead teachers are thoughtful and offer much insight to the strengths and barriers of SLCs.

We attended the Linked Learning Convention together in January 2017, participating in site visits. We had SLC core team meetings an SLC learning exchange. In addition, principals participated in an accreditation process and received a report to inform their work with SLCs. The instructional focus on academic discourse was being fully implemented across all classrooms and the planning occurred during subject area meetings. The principals were responsible for creating the conditions and accountability measures to ensure full implementation.

Action research pre-cycle. The first of the PDSA cycles was a pre-cycle designed to provide shared experiences with my Co-Practitioner Researchers (CPRs) in the SLCs as communities of practice. The monthly convenings I had with the principals were aimed at developing common understandings, and individualizing site visits for each principal. Since the official PAR process was not approved, I collected and analyzed reflective memos and meetings notes and applied what was relevant to our context. As a result of the pre-cycle principals made initial small changes, for example, they revised the master schedule to allow more opportunities for students to access career opportunities. One principal's goal in developing the master schedule was to put at least three teachers in the same SLC, sharing students for three classes.

PAR Cycle One. The first cycle consisted of participating in the CoP with principals to identify problems of practice, implement learning exchange pedagogies and structures, and engage in coaching at the site to meet specific needs. I interviewed each principal at the beginning of the cycle to identify what they wanted to learn which leadership practices would help them in their role. I wrote a memo after each CoP and coaching visit and analyzed the memos at the end of PAR Cycle One. Part of our work was to create guiding principles for leading SLCs and deepen partnerships with SLC leads toward career readiness. Finally, we worked with the district's College and Career Coordinator and Work Based Learning Specialist to develop benchmarks for the graduate profile, district vision of student success, and finally to implement the work-based learning goals. I differentiated support to the principal. Part of the cycle, the co-practitioner researchers gathered monthly for the CoP, and co-constructed a shared vision for SLCs based on the graduate profile, the vision for student success. We identified focus areas and used data and results from the accreditation report to inform the focus area. Principals partnered with SLC leads and Work Based Learning Specialist to develop matrix of skills taught and areas of need, then develop plans based on the matrix. The memos identified leadership practices that are critical to accomplish this effort and inform cycle two.

PAR Cycle Two. In this cycle, we continued to use CoP to build on strengths such as SLC teacher leaders to improve the school wide implementation of SLCs with principals as leads. The analysis of memos was vital to plan for cycle two with the principals and used the vision as guide for decision making process. We co-constructed the decision-making process and I coached each leader based on their context and needs. I continued to write memos after each CoP and coaching visit. We began to review district office policies and practices that support the SLC vision such as the PE waiver policy.

PAR Cycle Three. I analyzed data from cycle two, reflected with the CPR, and readjusted to identify leadership skills and practices that could be implemented in joint work at their site. I continued to write memos after each CoP and coaching visit and identified patterns throughout the process. A memo check was conducted to validate the leadership practices and skills learned. As a result of the CoP work, the district office policy and practice on high school master schedule expectations was reviewed and revised in collaboration with other district leaders. It served to further the leadership support for SLCs in vision and resource alignment.

Data Collection: Overview and Instruments

Action researchers reflect on their own authority and own desirability up front through self-reflection. Kremmis and Taggart (2014) describe action research as a form of collective, self- reflective inquiry undertaken by participants in social situations to improve the rationality and justice of their own social and educational practices, as well as the understanding of these practices and the situations in which these practices are carried out. When the inquirer reflects on her role in the study and her personal background, culture, and experiences hold potential for shaping their interpretation that's what Creswell (2013) terms reflexivity; that was my role as co-practitioner researcher. Effective principal leadership and principal supervisor leadership could contribute to effective SLC's if the approach to action research was collaborative and was accomplished "with others who have a stake in the problem and agree that a perceived need for change should come from within the setting" (Herr & Anderson, 2014, p. 26). Action research demands some form of intervention and action cycles of plan, act, observe effects, and reflect. The action research also should make knowledge claims that are generalizable, or transferable, beyond the immediate setting.

The PAR project made use of qualitative data collection measures. As the design of this project involved ongoing analysis, the collection strategy emerged (Creswell, 1998). The goal of collecting data was to inform and generate conversations through the collection of artifacts that reveal facts, opinions, and insights (Yin, 1994). The qualitative data that was collected was consistent with the research questions in terms of primary and secondary data sources and is listed in Table 2. Each data tool used in the participatory action research with the co-practitioners researchers and described below: formal and informal observations, interviews, qualitative pubic documents such as district documents and reports, private documents such memos, and qualitative visual materials such as metaphorical visual representations. I describe specific data sources: observations, interviews, documents, memos, and visual representations.

Observations

Formal and informal observations included site visits, "fishbowl" conversations, in which I listened to participants and wrote field notes. These were conducted in situ (in the situation of the actual "happening" so that the observer can see what is resonant in each situation.) At first, I used a wide lens approach to observations to try to record everything or specific to record subject and became more tailored to specific situations. I utilized a field journal to document formal and informal meetings observed and held with principals and SLC lead teachers.

Interviews

At the beginning of cycle one two focus groups were conducted: one with all three principals, the CoP facilitator and university advisor who documented the process and one with the district college and career coordinator and work-based learning specialist. In these focus groups, we gathered baseline gather data on the research questions. At the end of PAR Cycle Three, two of the three principals participated in a member check strategy (Rudestam & Newton,

Table 1

Research Questions and Primary and Secondary Data Sources

Research Questions	Primary Data Source	Secondary Data Source
Given a distributive leadership model, what is the most effective role for principals in an SLC?	• visual representation of principal role • formal and informal observations • fishbowls with SLC teams	• problem of practice analysis • principal evaluation • memos
To what extent is my leadership of the three principals useful and supportive?	• memos of CoP • principal interview • meeting agendas and observations	• monthly memos of site observations
What structures and supports are most useful to SLC lead teams (teachers, principal and counselor)?	• fishbowl with SLC teams • agendas	• tabulation of SLC activities for students • data from instructional rounds
How do I mediate the district leadership in supporting SLC implementation?	• planning session notes with district leaders • analysis of board reports and partnership reports	• memos

2015) verifying the key themes identified from matrix of codes and analysis of evidence. As Patton (1990) stated, "The purpose of interviewing is to find out what is in and on someone else's mind. Qualitative interviewing begins with the assumption that the perspective of others is meaningful, knowable, and able to be made explicit" (p. 278). In addition, this process was reflective and allowed the interviewee to "explore his or her experience in detail and to reveal the many features of that experience that have an effect on the issue investigated," (Stringer, 2014, p. 105). The interview protocol (see Appendix F) focused primarily on questions that addressed the research questions related to voice and changes to perspective and practice in relation to the CLE topic. The semi-structured design ensured for consistency of information obtained but also provides flexibility for follow-up questions (Patton, 2014). The focus groups and memo check were audio-recorded and stored digitally in the researcher's secure Dropbox.

Documents

Public district documents included reports, minutes or notes from meetings. In collecting and analyzing field notes, I used content analysis methodology. I conducted a "broad scan" of public and private documents such as district reports. I first chose articles and reports based on high citations and prominent authors in the field, and then did a snowball sampling from research cited in those articles. I read an equal number of reports from leadership associations (e.g., Wallace Foundation & Deeper Learning series), and government documents, reports and blogs (e.g., WASC, USDOE, district reports on SLCs) (Hoachlander et al., 2008; Toussaint et al., 2011). I selected the reports based on prominence in the field. I took notes while reading the articles, reports, and government documents, including how the concept of college, career and civic engagement was defined and what was highlighted in the document. I paid careful attention to key terms and concepts that emerged in each document.

Memos

Memoing is a central part of my analysis and used in the development of grounded theory, a vehicle to generate 'middle range' or 'substantive' theories through a trustworthy process (Sutcliffe, 2016). Grounded theory methods consist of systematic, yet flexible guidelines for collecting and analyzing qualitative data to construct theories grounded in the data themselves (Charmaz, 2006,). The process helped in deriving strong concepts and categories from the data which explained the phenomena I observed. It enabled me to keep track of emerging theoretical ideas, contributed to comparison over time, ensured no ideas were lost and provided transparency. I generated the journal reflections throughout the PAR project. I wrote notes from the first-person perspective. While the memos are mainly conceptual (Miles & Huberman, 1994), they assisted me in moving from raw data to explanations and meaning-making (Birks, Chapman, & Francis, 2008). Other documents I collected were emails and journey lines.

Visual Representations

I used qualitative visual materials such as metaphorical visual narratives collected from the principals as artifacts throughout the cycles. I analyzed the visual representations using the visual thinking strategies method, analyzing art to make meaning (Yenawine, 2013). I used different leadership frames for each area as I engage in content analysis to keep revisiting the data and comparing through each iteration and cycle.

<div align="center">Data Analysis</div>

I conducted data analysis concurrently with data collection, meaning that the data analysis could inform iterative decisions in the PAR processes. I collaborated with the CPR group to analyze our work together throughout the process. The technique is known as constant

comparative analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Another form of data analysis useful to the PAR project was content analysis (Krippendorff, 2012). It is an unstructured approach and allowed me to understand the phenomena under study. For example, one of the research questions focused on the use of distributive leadership model for principals leading small learning communities and understanding how distributed leadership emerged required frequent and iterative evidence. I could use the evidence I collected to reflect on how distributed leadership was emerging.

The data analysis tools utilized in this project were selected for their ability to help draw meaning within this context because "interpretation is the key aspect of qualitative data analysis" (Gibbs, 2002, p. 37). The memos, and transcribed interviews were analyzed with a general content analysis (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). Themes and patterns that emerged from each type of data source was comparatively analyzed (Creswell, 1998). In order to complete these analyses, I used an open coding technique in which I read each of the transcripts, artifacts and memos and highlighted to denote emerging themes and patterns for each research question (Saldaña, 2016). I then triangulated the themes from artifacts with those from the interviews and vice versa and used the most common themes and patterns to create codes. Next, I purposefully re-read and re-coded the interview transcripts, memos, and artifacts. The emerging themes were shared with the principals to inform their work utilizing a member check strategy. The analysis was conducted using comparative analysis, making contrasts at each cycle with new data sets. By PAR Cycle Three conclusion, the data moved from emergent themes to findings to making claims in response to the research questions.

The Role of the Researcher

My role as researcher as the supervisor interacting with the principals, teacher leaders of the SLCs, and district office personnel had the potential of tension due to my positionality as

district leader. Researcher positionality is important and meant for asking myself repeated questions such as who am I in relation to the participants and the setting? I am an insider researcher who studies my own self/practice (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Herr & Anderson, 2014; Pinnegar, 2001).

I created a foundation for a collaborative and trusting environment and further engaged in a participatory process and continue to use the guiding principles of participatory action research and inquiry: inclusion, relationships, participation, and communication (Herr & Anderson, 2014; Hunter, Emerald, & Gregory, 2013). However, that does not mean this iterative process is tidy: in fact, the work on the inside is messy and complex and often ambiguous (Hunter et al., 2013). It required me to listen without judgment or directing, asking questions to promote deeper thinking, partnering in problem-solving, and holding the vision of the work. To promote inquiry, I utilized learning exchange pedagogies and structures (Guajardo et al., 2015); these processes exemplify experiential learning that values individuals as learners who engage in practices of reflection, dialogue, and action, engage in conversations about race, class and equity, and be co-constructors of knowledge and solutions to their own problems. They are grounded in Freire's (1970) concepts of uncovering generative themes through praxis (self-reflection first and then act). The analysis of the data collections tools as co-participant researchers allowed for me to participate as a researcher throughout this project and study the impact of my role with the principals. As such, researchers can then build a knowledge base that informs the research community about the actions and beliefs of practitioners, a knowledge that is otherwise unavailable (Herr & Anderson, 2014).

Study Limitations

Issues of credibility (internal validity), transferability (external validity), dependability (reliability), confirmability (objectivity), and construct validity were addressed in the PAR (Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Yin, 1994). The construct validity and credibility in the PAR project were addressed by the multiple sources of evidence collected, by a prolonged engagement in the field, through the analysis of patterns in the data, and through the member checks of the findings. Such a design assured that the inquiries reflected the respondents' views and disengaged the research from any bias (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Action research is "generalizable to theoretical propositions and not to populations or universes… and the investigator's goal is to expand and generalize theories" (Yin, 2014, p. 10). The research design attempted to analyze three principals and the principal supervisor's work to understand how leadership plays out in high schools and SLC development. In order to generalize the finding of this work, additional studies, including replication studies, would have to be necessary. Because the project included participant action research, the attention to dependability and confirmability was more vital to this work. The dependability of the work was rooted in the data collection tools. The triangulation of multiple sources of data will collected will be used for triangulation was integral to this work (Merriam, 1988; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Patton, 1990; Yin, 1994). Confirming and comparing what people said and did at different times was vital to this work (Patton, 1990). In the end, the design of multiple sources of data and an in-depth approach preserved the issues of trustworthiness.

Summary

The research design permitted co-participants and co-researchers to deeply engage in high school transformation practices and reimagine and redesign schools for students to experience success and prepare students for jobs of the 21st century. This methodological design

fulfilled Herr and Anderson's (2014) key elements of action research in which co-researchers interrogate their own practices through cycles of inquiry, build a knowledge base, and use it to inform the literature. The multiple iterations of analysis were critical to the findings and informing future work on the role of principals and principal supervisors in leading SLCs for the 21st century that promote equity and excellence so that all students are prepared for college, career and community.

CHAPTER FIVE: PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH CYCLE ONE

During participatory action research (PAR) Cycle One, I fully engaged three high school principals, teacher-leaders, and district office staff (College and Career Coordinator/CCC and Work Based Learning/WBL specialist) in implementing Small Learning Communities (SLCs) as a means for improvement in the high schools within the school district. The four sections in this chapter focus on the interactions among the three principals and myself as the principal supervisor and address the following: (1) leadership actions and activities that supported principals as effective leaders; (2) analysis of evidence to emerging themes; (3) implications of the PAR process for my dual roles as the supervisor and practitioner researcher; and (4) plans for PAR Cycle Two (January-April 2018) that were based on the emergent themes from PAR Cycle One.

Supporting Principals as Effective Leader's Action and Activities

To accomplish the goal of fully supporting high school leaders, district leaders and SLC lead teachers, all groups needed a shared vision. In particular, the principals and I needed a collaborative decision-making process, which we co-developed through our work as community of practice. Our situated and co-constructed learning informed the design and implementation (Wenger, 2010). Thus, PAR Cycle One primarily focused on my role as the supervisor of three high school principals and how I supported the principals as effective leaders in their contexts. In conjunction with my role of supervisor, I coordinated district efforts to ensure a coherent and aligned effort that would complement the principals. To be an effective supervisor, I needed to provide differentiated supports to principals and make certain that they were effective in their role as school leaders. The array of district supports and resources, including district personnel

were aligned to support the principals. In this section, I discuss the key leadership actions, types of evidence, and the key pedagogical approaches that supported the implementation.

Key Leadership Actions

The key leadership actions I took throughout the PAR Cycle One consisted of co-constructing a common vision, differentiating support and coaching, and prioritizing collaborative goals. While the process began with co-constructing the vision with the principals, my role was critical in building of coherence across all settings by acting as a fulcrum for the effort and making the connections among the various organizational actors in the schools and at the district office.

The four organizational structures were the key elements organized and facilitated to intentionally create coherence in implementing the vision and goals: (1) a community of practice (CoP) with the three principals and outside facilitator from an organization that supports the district using community learning exchange pedagogies and inquiry learning; (2) site visits with principals to calibrate classroom observations and engage in coaching conversations; (3) SLC Core Team with SLC teacher leaders and principals, CCC and WBL specialist to co-create district-wide goals and implementation of district vision; and (4) bi-weekly planning sessions with the CCC and WBL specialist to develop strategic external partnerships and review the policies, practices and resources to support SLCs. Figure 14 identifies the four activities.

Types of Evidence

The data collection methods in the first cycle consisted of memos after each Community of practice, SLC core team convening, and site visits, logs written at the end of each week, analysis of diagrams, and transcriptions of two focus group discussions, totaling twenty data sets.

Figure 14. Working across groups to build coherence for implementation.

The descriptions of each data collection protocol were fully defined in Chapter 4. The memos and logs were opportunity to reflect on my leadership actions listed in the table throughout PAR Cycle One. Table 3 identifies the types of meetings, the schedule, and evidence collected from the PAR Cycle One.

Pedagogical Choices Support Implementation

Key pedagogical choices help brought coherence to the effort; this included mindfulness, community of practice, and community learning exchange pedagogies.

For example, each principal convening started with mindfulness because the practice of mindful movement, breathing techniques and centering are techniques for personal stress resilience, professional sustainability and overall well-being (Bose, Ancin, Frank, & Malik, 2016). Practicing mindfulness empowers leaders to enhance their personal sustainability and professional practice and when transferring these practices to their communities, help to transform the culture of their school with stress resilience tools (Theoharis, 2007). The practice became so important to principals that they requested time for mindfulness if I forgot to include in our sessions. They are leading each other in the practice and shared stories of the impact that the practice had on their lives and school community. Each leader takes turns and we practice in our middle and high school convening's and district wide TK-12 convening's. One principal led the group with a mindfulness app on her phone, (Innerexplorer.org) and shared how she used with her father when he was dying and every time, she gets overstressed at work, she goes into her office, closes the door, and plays the app. She also teaches an advisory period at her school and practices every day. The practice helps us pay attention to the wellness of our schools' leaders. While I had anecdotal evidence on mindfulness, in discussion of the structures in the emergent themes, I discuss communities of practice and community learning exchange protocols.

Table 2

Summary of Meetings and Data Collection for PAR C1

	September 20-27	October 9	October 18	October 23	November 13	November 16	Evidence
Community of practice		X			X		Memos, agenda, notes
Site visits (some visits were two in one week)		X			X		Notes
SLC Core Team	X	X			X		Notes, memos
Coaching Conversations	☁	☁			☁		Memos, notes
District Planning	X	X			X		Notes, agendas

PAR Cycle One Emergent Themes: Structures, Differentiation, and Shifting

from Technical to Adaptive Leadership

The aim of PAR Cycle One was to begin an intentional process for connecting the four key elements of the PAR project (CoP, site support, SLC core team support, and district support) to be more intentional and principals in their roles as school leaders in SLC implementation. I identified three emerging themes from the first PAR: (1) I have identified three key emergent themes from the first action research cycle: (1) the importance of structures and processes for successful implementation of the CoP; (2) the necessity of differentiating support for principals; and (3) shifting the principals "go to" leadership strategy from technical to adaptive. In addition, I highlight a possible sighting (McDonald, 1996; Velasco, 2009) that I was cognizant of as I moved into PAR Cycle Two: in order to fully support school leaders, I had to be more collaborative and less directive. I discuss my leadership learning with supporting evidence to inform my role as supervisor and researcher within each theme. I did not yet at this point in the research have sufficient evidence about what it meant to be a leader who was "going against the grain", but I intended to monitor that phenomenon as emerging theme.

Importance of Structures

Each of the three principals brought a unique perspective to the high school experience, his or her strengths, and individual needs for SLC development within each high school. Form and function matter to any change initiative. An emergent finding from PAR Cycle One was the usefulness of the structure and process of our community of practice (CoP). The CoP was an effective format to use in engaging the three high school principals in co-constructing their leadership roles in the SLCs. Secondly, the pedagogies of the community learning exchange (CLE) were useful for our community of practice interactions because we established a gracious

space for collaborative learning to discuss issues race and class play in schools. We were able to build relationships and co-create a space to explore, imagine and create alternative realities within their context.

Community of Practice (CoP). Given the complexity and multiple demands of their jobs, principals appreciated district leadership structures to guide the vision of SLCs and provide targeted attention and support in the form of monthly two-hour professional learning sessions. The CoP was partially facilitated by a consultant funded by the Stuart Foundation and because of using an outside facilitator, I could fully participate in the process. I provide evidence from the facilitator and the principals on the rationale for and value of the structure. Then I discuss two examples of the value of the CoP to make decisions relevant to the SLC implementation: the development of board policy on graduation requirements and dual enrollment.

In an interview with the CoP facilitator, he believed that a CoP format is more effective in engaging leaders to consider adaptive leadership as a framework and could assist them in decision making. Adaptive leadership is the practice of mobilizing people to tackle tough challenges together, take risks, and thrive in their own setting. The objective was to confront difficult problems that require the values clarification and underscore the generative process (Heifetz, 1998). The CoP facilitator indicated that the coaching model does not scale up to advance leadership development without the leaders coming together to collectively advance their own leadership stating "so, the districts that are half in and half out, and have a lot of traditional programs and they're not so focused on this SLC model and CoP as a method of principal support. We need to support our principals and give them the time and space to think about this kind of new way of delivering high school" (interview, September 24, 2017).

Several examples from principals indicate why the CoP structure is useful. Throughout the monthly sessions, all three leaders put away their cell phones and closed their laptops, an established norm at the onset of the CoP. One leader launched the state accreditation process on the same day as one of our CoP meetings; however, she still offered to host at her site so she could attend both meetings. When principals were asked how does their participation in the community of practice enhance their understanding of and appreciation for SLCs? The responses indicated that they embraced the process:

> "I would say these meetings are very targeted. Because as principals, we can't just think about SLCs. We have so many other [things to think about]. It's such a dynamic workplace, especially at the secondary level. Among everything that we do every day, it's just one aspect of it. And so, this is a targeted time when we have the opportunity to really focus just on one facet of the school community. Because there's just so much else going on all the time".

Another principal added, "I would say that this is the opportunity to really be targeted and very focused on one aspect of the structural leadership of a high school with SLCs and it's a district-wide initiative, so I think that we all need to be talking to each other and collaborating with each other to support it." The third principal continued, "It's interesting that SLCs were started here with Arnie Glassberg, the superintendent in 2006; that's 11 years. That's just interesting, how they've been around for a long time and we trying to improve and clarify our role." They are committed to the structure and the process since that the targeted use of time actually helps them focus, they value the time they spend in the SLC. The next section explains in more detail how we co-constructed our sessions to be meaningful and lead to action.

As a CoP, we co-created a list of problems of practice that might support the implementation of SLCs and prioritized this list as a group. Two immediate and important efforts included two board policies offering alternative credits to the physical education requirements and agreement with colleges to offer dual enrollment courses for high school students to earn college credit. I used quotes from the principals to support the emergent themes. These are three the principals and school types; I use pseudonyms to protect identities.

- Apollo is the Principal at Duckpond HS, a comprehensive high school with four SLCs
- Bianca is the Principal at Railside HS, a comprehensive high school with three SLCs
- Callie is the Principal at Kennedy HS, a small self-contained SLC specialized in the arts and principal of the continuation high school on the shared campus.

Developing board policy to provide alternative credits to meet physical education requirements. In brainstorming problems of practice that improve SLCs as pathway to college and career, we identified the need to develop a policy to alter graduation requirements for physical education. The principals have been informally discussing for years but did not have a forum to raise the issue or place to work through in a thoughtful manner and the CoP was able to provide the space, time and thinking. While the revision of the graduation requirements was a technical exercise, the way we approached it collaboratively and made decisions about revising the physical education program requirements. The interchange provides a key example of how the CoP structures were essential to supporting the implementation of SLCs; the process required that we use the principles of adaptive leadership as a way to approach the issue, and requires some of the principles of adaptive leadership. We used a consensus model on developing the rationale for the offering CTE pathway courses as substitute for the PE requirement, and we each had a role on the implementation at the individual high school sites and at the district office.

Because they had time to do the research, reach consensus, and present it effectively as a group, it did not feel like a top-down initiative. In fact, they reported that teachers were excited about the idea of creating more opportunities for students to take CTE pathways courses, in place of PE. The principals and in turn the teachers in the SLCs appreciated the structures set up for problem-solving, consensus-making and planning with the flexibility to lead and adapt to their site with their own SLC teacher leaders. My responsibility was to seek approval from district level cabinet members to move forward and then to vet with the president of the Teacher's Union; then the principals could take the proposal to the SLC core team convening. The board policy was approved, and the superintendent commented on the power of the three principals co-presenting to the board and reflected common vision and practices for the high schools.

In reflecting on the memos written throughout this process, I kept wondering why there was little conflict among the teachers and asked myself: Was this a technical exercise? The response to myself was: How could we make this an adaptive leadership move or does it have to require adaptive leadership? (reflective memo, November 6, 2017). I am glad we sought input from all parties before making the final recommendation to the board. In reflection, it was a positive outcome; a principal said, "I am glad we made this happen together. It shows we are united". The facilitator said: "we needed a victory as a group to validate our work as a CoP" (meeting notes, December 5, 2017).

Dual enrollment. Another example that CoP format and structures supported was the launching of dual enrollment in all the high schools – meaning high school students are enrolled in high school and a community college simultaneously, a cornerstone strategy of supporting SLC goals. The dual enrollment implementation had been fragmented and based on teacher preference; by bringing the topic to the CoP and engaging in co-constructing a response, we

could then formalize the process for all schools. The role of the principals was to work closely with their counselors and SLC leads to identify courses that align to their SLC pathway. One high school identified a course as the senior capstone course and permitted students to complete the CTE pathway and graduate with a CTE certificate. Having a place and structure to bring coherence to our work supported our ability to agree on rationale for dual enrollment and launch the project. Principals were making decisions about the process and getting the necessary support from district office leadership. My role was to collaborate and seek approval from the colleges via board approval, work with the college and career coordinator to develop the course list, and vet with the President of the Teacher's Union to secure an addendum to the teachers' contract.

Community Learning Exchange (CLE) pedagogies. Another emerging theme from the evidence that supports CoPs as supportive and effective was the use the regular use of community learning exchange pedagogies. An important tenet of CLEs is creating a gracious space, a spirit and setting and where we invite the stranger to learn in public. Gracious space is a process that values inclusion and diversity and is an essential racial equity strategy (Grace, 2011). I analyzed eleven memos and coded responses from these data: the emergent findings indicated that the CLE processes provided safe spaces to share ideas and concerns, an opportunity to analyze pivotal moments in leadership, an opportunity for me to fully understand the individual conceptions of leadership in the SLC, and an understanding of how principals were still unclear about the principal role in an SLC.

Safe spaces for sharing. As the principal supervisor, I had worked with two of the principals for three and half years and one principal for one and half years; creating gracious space allowed us to have honest and open conversations about some of the most challenging situations and equity issues. When Callie wanted input on a difficult letter she had to write to the

community, she started by saying, "I am learning in public so be patient with me" (interview, May 16, 2017). My role was not to judge or tell them what to do but listen and ask questions and probe to understand their values and decision-making process of implementing the district vision in preparing all students for success in college, career and civic engagement. Another example of sharing the complexity and typically silent worries of leadership occurred when a principal said, "the scariest thing for me as an administrator; I get a great idea or a teacher comes with a great idea, and I have no way to sustain it beyond the idea" (interview, October 23, 2017). The evidence suggests that they feel safe sharing their hopes and fears with each other.

Pivotal leadership moments. A key CLE pedagogy, journey lines is a form of storytelling to chart leadership journey and tell stories about pivotal leadership moments and how those moments impacted their leadership. The journey line elicits reflection and opportunity to share their personal experiences and get to the core why we do this work. A reflection from an SLC core member after participating in journey lines at SLC retreat was: "the journey graphs gave me a chance look at myself and how my experiences as a child bossing around my siblings have shaped my leadership throughout my life and we need to do this with all our teachers so they can identify those times in their life that shape who they are today" (notes, May 17, 2017). Principals used the protocol back to their site and engaged with the SLC lead teachers; some of the SLC leads engaged with their teacher colleagues in the protocol. Telling stories without judgement allowed us to connect on a personal level and build the relationship needed to do the important work of improving the high schools for all our students. We used the protocol with all middle school educators at a district wide professional learning day. Using a protocol helps to build on local wisdom and stories help to foster trust and dialogue in many settings.

Conceptions of leadership in an SLC high school. At the conclusion of PAR Cycle One, instead of using a formal individual interview process with each principal, I conducted a group discussion with the interview questions as stimuli. The principals made visual representations of responses to guiding questions that I posed. I elicited deeper thinking about their conceptions of leadership as principals who lead SLC implementation. I introduced the guiding process too quickly, however the leaders listened and engaged the initial drawing task without questioning the process or instructions, signaling the trust I have established with them over time. They were willing to participate in the activity about themselves and expose their work.

Figures 14-16 represents each principals' visual representation identifying themselves in leading SLCs and their opening statements describing the diagram. When asked to draw a successful SLC and then draw themselves, the principal supervisor, and other supports in the visual, two responses demonstrated the deepening value of the CLE pedagogical approach I used with principals. My introduction to the process, taken from the transcription, began with,

> "So, the first thing I'm going to do–and as I ask you some questions and do some
> drawing, I want you to think about your leadership. So, I'm thinking about clusters; one
> of the questions is going to be around leadership. One is around collaboration. One is
> around organizational, and then self. The first thing I want you to do is draw a diagram of
> a successful small learning community structure that represents effectiveness and
> success. Each of the questions I'm going to have you add to it. You get to use your right
> side of the brain for a moment".

The key themes indicated that principals did not fully identify themselves at the forefront of SLC work. They saw themselves as responsive to the work when needed; yet, when each principal was challenged about their role, all stated that they play critical roles and provide
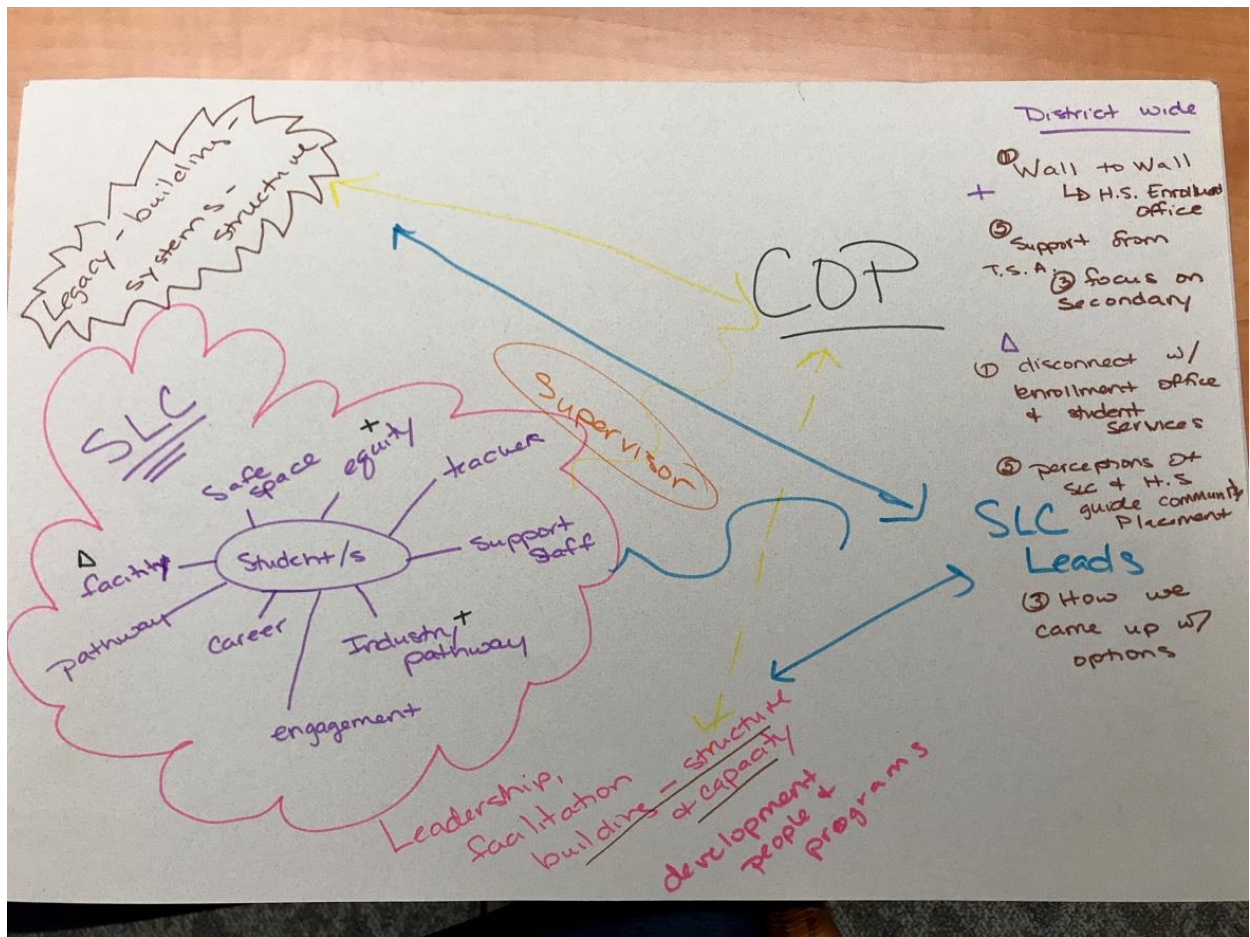
Figure 15. Callie's visual representation describing her role as principal.
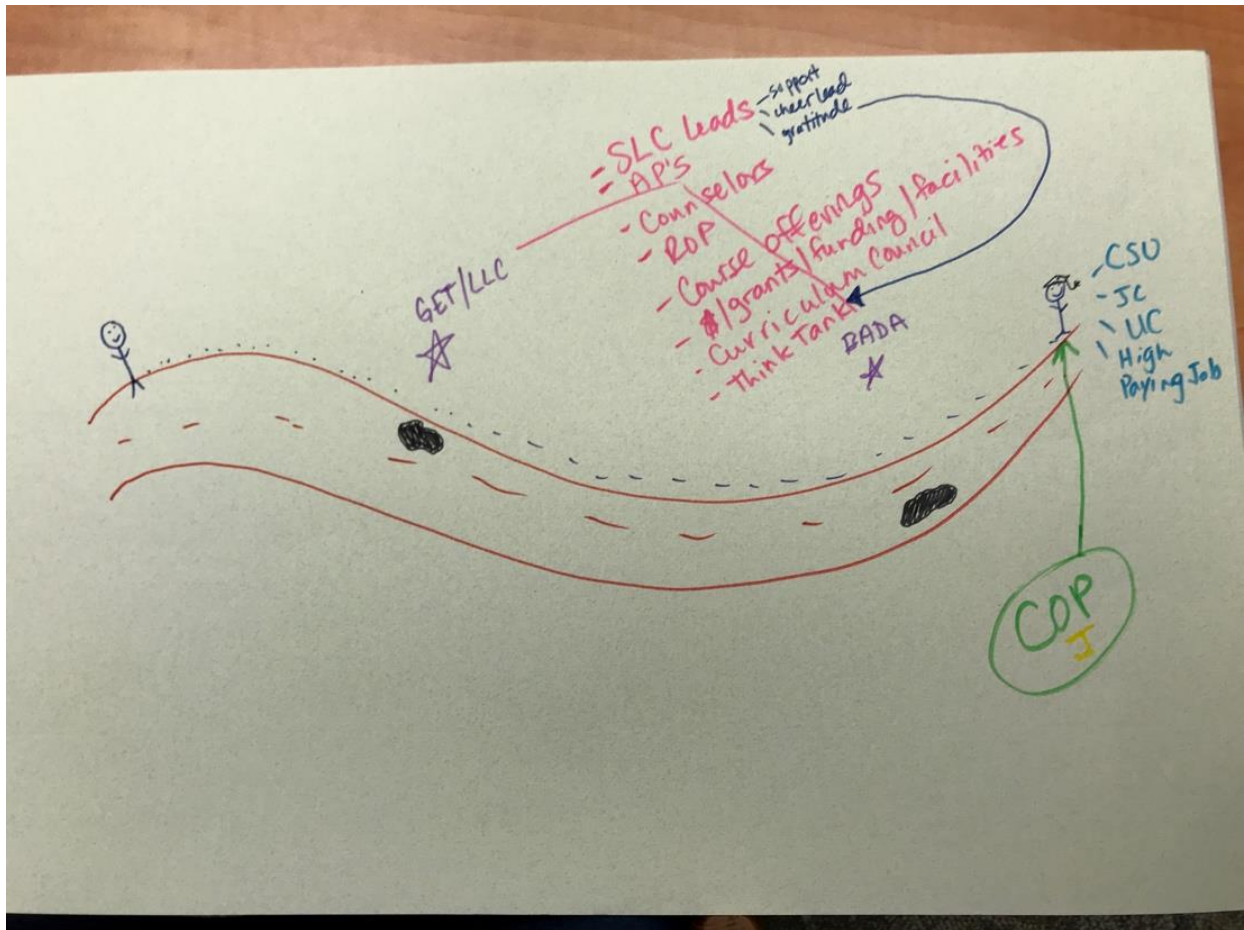
Figure 16. Visual representation describing her role as principal (Bianca).

leadership, particularly in times of important decision making, conflict and supporting new ideas such as career day or building a maker space. However, the drawings indicated that they did not want to take full ownership of the SLCs as vehicle for improvement until pushed to clarify their role. Callie, principal of Kennedy high school describes herself leaving a legacy of the SLC having successful systems and structures as critical to the success of the SLC. The way to accomplish was by facilitating leadership development and building capacity of the people and programs within her school. She describes the asset of the small school being equity focused and the challenge are lack of proper facility needs for a school of the arts. She drew lines connecting her role and development of others to the CoP and identified CoP in the middle of the page, between herself, school and district wide efforts, seeing it as critical space for her own development as a leader and to collaborate with her high school colleagues. Figures 15-17 indicates these reflections.

> Callie's opening statements describing her visual representation:
>
> "I need a little chart because I'm a linear thinker. The student is the center at the SLC, and all these things are around it that make it happen–the pathway, the industry, engagement, the leaders, support staff, teachers, equity, safe space, facility. Facility is big. And then when you asked about the leadership, I just made a bubble around everything. Because the leadership has to touch all of these things in some way or another. So, it's like facilitation, building capacity, building structure, developing people, and programs."

Because Callie's school is small, she understands the importance of her role and positions herself in the leadership role; and clearly asserts what it takes to lead the school and focuses on the bigger picture ideas that sustain leadership and build a strong program.
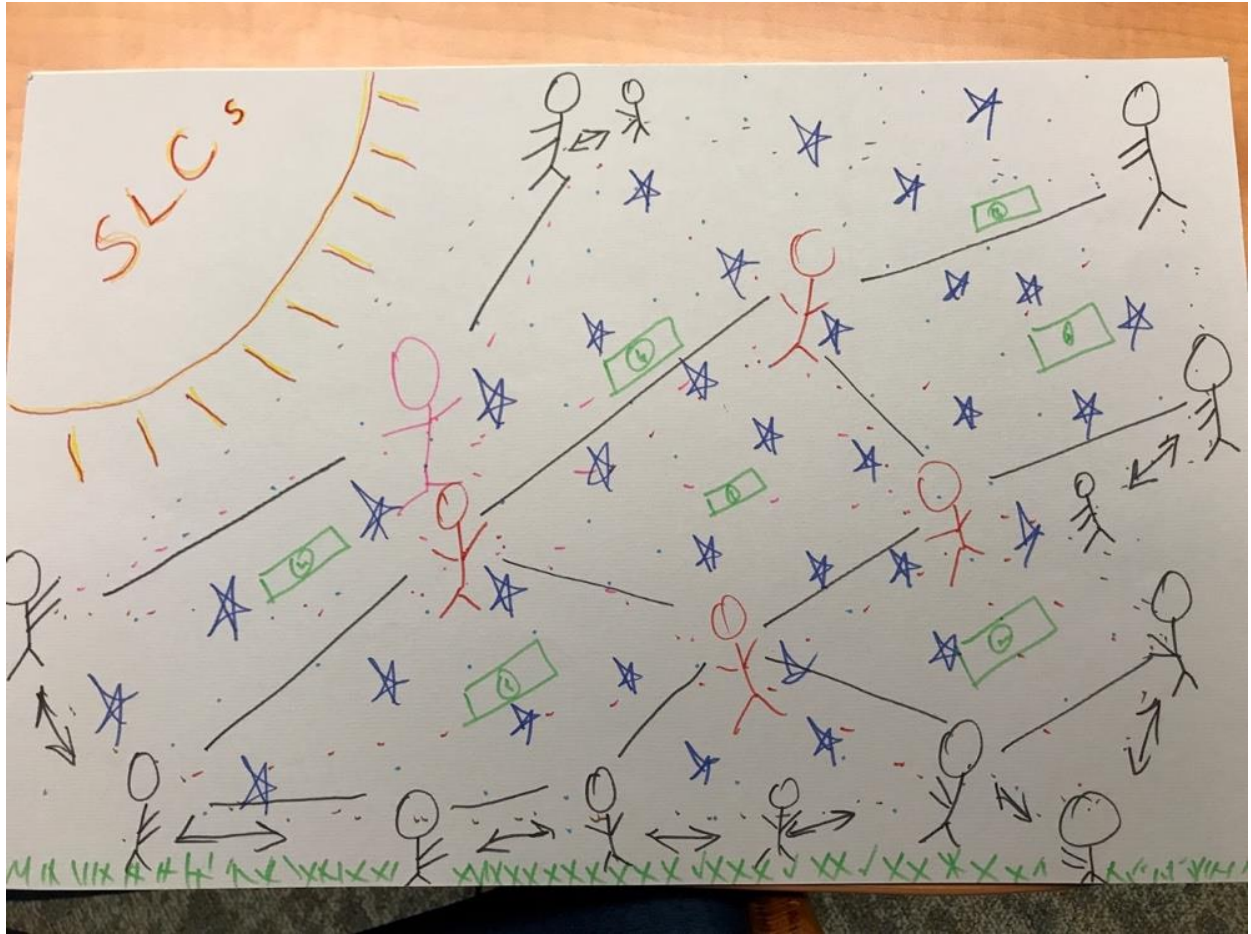
Figure 17. Visual representation describing her role as principal (Apollo).

Bianca, principal of Railside high school, drew a student walking along a path with college at the end of the path. She listed the SLCs along the path as support to get to the end. The list at the top of the page are the people and programs that support the students. She did not draw a picture of herself in the representation and did not describe herself in the vision of her high school. Bianca listed CoP near the end of the path as a support for the principals to collectively achieve their goals, and her supervisor within the CoP. She did not draw herself or her role within the vision of SLCs. See Figure 16 for Bianca's visual conceptions of her leadership in SLCs.

Bianca's opening statement describing her visual representation:

"For me, I just did this in the simplest way; kind of linear. I really highlight college, because we know that if students don't attend and graduate from a four-year college or university, or college in general, the likelihood that they will make a high wage is often less likely. But what are we preparing students for besides graduation from high school? Then I thought about our three SLCs here, and where we're at on the pathway. So, kind of just looking at the spectrum, and where we need to go to get our students there. "Those are potholes *[laughter],* pointing to the dark spots, and the pothole here being that we don't have completed pathways." And I ask: "So, where are you?" and her response: "I would say that … I mean, I'm here supporting the whole pathway, the spectrum. That's my job, is to manage. I'm in different places. I think like Apollo said, we're all over the place. My job is to support." I ask, "Did you draw anything that represents you?" She responds, "I think I am the stars. I'm kind of…, I'm kind of everywhere. We're trying to figure out how to build out those pathways."

Bianca described her main leadership role narrowly focused on ensuring all students go to college and with the belief that they will not be successful unless they graduate from college. She saw herself mainly as a doer, doing everything she can to identify and remove barriers. Bianca described her leadership as being everywhere, yet not as visionary or adaptive leader guiding the people and programs for change.

Apollo, principal at Duckpond HS, and drew the SLCs as the sun, a bright spot for the students and the school. He drew the multiple pathways that students could take, describing different options students have in high school and used many metaphors to describe his vision for the school and his role in achieving the vision. He was articulate and clear about his role and the role of others. Apollo's opening statement describing the visual representation:

"While I see the SLCs, I guess the first thing that popped into my mind is the sun just radiating, making things grow. But then when I started–the more I started drawing, it evolved. And so, the stars represent the students for everywhere. The background is our communities, where we live. I see the grass as the school, because it's the fertilizer or foundation from which things grow and evolve–that's creating some of the oxygen. And then the little dots are just, I guess, the water. Because I thought about–well, you have sunlight. You need water. And so, the stick figures are the principal, because you're everywhere in this process. You're all over; ground floor, SLCs. You're reaching out. You're trying to influence all of this to work systematically. This is just my imaginative thinking of it".

The principal at Duckpond sees his leadership role as developing systems from the work happening on the ground, with the people and the programs. He sees every aspect of the school community essential to success of the students and his role as leaders is to make those systems

function. He recognizes his leadership role is multi-faceted and complex, yet he is enthusiastic about the challenge and brings an asset lens to his work. By having each principal draw a visual representation of their school, their role, and the role of other actors, they had to take a step away from the daily work, imagine and articulate a vision for their school to their colleagues. It was opportunity for them to slow down and reflect on the bigger picture of their leadership and set the tone for our work as a CoP. It served as a barometer for me as their supervisor to learn and understand where they see themselves as leaders of the school and how they lead others. It provided context for my support and differentiation. The next section describes a pattern noticed in each leader's opening statement.

Lack of clarity on role of leaders in SLCs. I anticipated that it would difficult to move the high school leaders to be seen at the schools as pivotal leaders for SLCs because of the history of the implementation with lead teachers taking the prime leadership role. However, if they lack clarity on their roles, then I was concerned about how to shift their beliefs about their roles. In a conversation among the principals in the vignette, they describe the challenges on leading with a clear vision. The vignette points out that they are struggling with holding the vision while validating teachers and finding a clear platform from which to lead this work and able to name using CLE pedagogy where trust and openness are established.

Vignette: CLE Pedagogy Used to Elicit Discussion on Understanding Their Leadership

Apollo added, "one of the things you want to make sure is that when you're talking about vision–and vision for SLCs–that there is alignment and an agreement with leaders. Whether those are teacher leaders, and/or your administrative team that is the liaison and working between, among SLCs–so that you continue to strive, and grow–and look for those areas that can be improved". Callie said: "I wrote about building structures and capacity. And I was thinking

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about what Apollo said about the legacy. Like, if you put a good system in place–and it serves students and the community, it will survive us, and teachers. It's all about systems in place that are manageable. And that's developing people–but it's beyond just the people. Their work is fluid with qualities that mean it is constantly in motion and they must respond with a generative, not a static, presence. I believe that having guiding principles and a vision for the work, allows them to lead with less tension".

The facilitator named what he observed in the group: "the principals argued that 'we kind of see ourselves in all places at all time and that just feels that there is this tension. All the fires come to me'. You guys are expected to do so many different things for these programs. On the other hand, you know intuitively–you guys know–that there needs to be systems and structures, and hierarchy, and sustainability, yet you did not draw yourself in that way on your diagram" (Interview/discussion, October 23, 2017).

By using the CLE pedagogical approaches, I was able to draw out their deeper understanding their work as leaders of SLCs. The use of the drawing, for example, elicited views of their roles in ways I had not heard or experienced in the two years I have been working with them in SLC implementation. Two principals leading multiple SLCs at their site either drew themselves everywhere or not at all, and one principal described as "the stick figures are the principal, because you're everywhere in this process. You're all over; ground floor, SLCs. You're reaching out. You're trying to influence all of this to work systematically. I agree with what the other principals are saying, we are the glue" (Apollo, October 23, 2017). There was head-nodding by the other principals. The principals built on and made connections to each other's ideas, completed each other's sentences, and even professionally challenged each other. I was able to join the conversation with ease and asked this question: "You named some of your

leadership actions there. You said everything, reaching out, on the ground; say more about your leadership". Apollo passionately went on to say,

"Hmm-hmm [yes]. Because it's how you create a system in which this diagram shows, because I don't think any of us get into this for altruistic reasons. I don't think it's about us, It's bigger than us. So, when you're creating it, you're almost … you're creating it from a point or perspective of legacy. This is going to go beyond us. If it's really good, it's beyond us. It is going to exist well after we have moved on, made a shift, or whatever. It's going to be something that folks can come and build off and make even better."

Having a shared vision was an important step to address and engaging in drawing visual representations was powerful in allowing them to be open, honest and collaborative as they articulated exactly how their espoused vision is enacted. The structure and process of collecting information were critical and shed light on how they see themselves as leaders. The CoP created the gracious space to engage in collective problems solving common to high schools and develop common agreements and solutions with district support. Through the processes I put in place in the CoP and use the CLE pedagogies, I heard a frank self-assessment of their leadership. That informs my work in helping them develop leadership actions that reflect their vision and values. Based on the self-analyses, I am even clearer about the necessity and responsibility for differentiating support.

Necessity of Differentiating Support for Principals

Developing leadership is the accumulated result of multiple interactions between each principal and me. In differentiating principal support, I had to pay attention to individual principal experience, needs, strengths, passions and patterns of behavior. The memos and logs

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written after each site visit provided examples of the leadership practices that were critical to implementing effective and successful SLCs. The leadership actions on my part were building trust by listening without judgement or being reactive, modeling transparency by being explicit in my expectations and raising difficult issues, and participating in honest communication, even in the most difficult times. "The memos have been reflections of conversations around my daily work with the principals, but not explicit around my SLC implementation" (reflective memo #4, October 6, 2017). At the beginning of the PAR Cycle One, I spent time building relationships, laying the groundwork and getting a "feel" for the research environment, a measured approach that would hopefully pay off later. I provided a set of evidence for each of the three leaders to clarify how I differentiated support in developing their leadership capacity as leaders -- not always specific to the work of SLCs, but critical to the implementation success. Table 4 summarizes the evidence used to differentiate support for each leader. All conversations required that I listen without judgement and provide coaching through effective questioning.

Differentiating for Apollo required me to navigate a complicated relationship while remaining culturally responsive, honest and transparent. I developed my ability to capitalize on positivity and reinforce strengths as a passionate, imaginative, and charismatic personality for the goal setting conference. Apollo facilitated the conversation and spoke to two goals and leadership actions. He was thoughtful and clear about the work; I praised and gave suggestions for consideration, such as digging deeper into anti-bias practices with the staff of 80 teachers. That was a stretch goal, but the principal was willing to take on the work and identified allies on the staff to help lead the work. While this is not directly related to my PAR as we did not talk a lot about SLCs, he was developing a cohesive professional culture at the site, and this

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Table 3

Evidence for Differentiated Support to Principals

Principal	Evidence	Differentiated Support
Apollo	Goal-setting conference and follow-up on difficult conversations	Navigate a complicated relationship while remaining culturally responsive, honest and transparent; listening without judgement, honoring and building on strengths.
Bianca	Planning CTE experiences for students receiving special education services and resolving parent issues	Modeling open-mindedness and honest conversations, providing guidance on difficult situations, listening, honoring strengths.
Callie	Support to establish an advisory board and goal-setting conference	Asking probing questions and providing clarity on expectations. Honest conversations without judgement.

conversation was foundational to furthering the SLC work. Thirdly, in honoring the principal's passion about developing partnerships with the workforce and colleges to provide career experiences to the students related to their SLC, I supported him in using his strengths to take on this responsibility. However, a question still surfaced: How do I set up a system or structure to further access as an adaptive leader? Apollo seems to vacillate between vision of equity and transactional leadership. After agreeing to be in the PAR study, he said: "I want to meet with you and the Superintendent about the inequities between the two large high schools." This seemed to be a transactional interaction that may imply tit for tat. I responded: "Gather your data to show the inequities and we will meet with you to discuss". At this point in the PAR project, I wondered how to navigate the relationship while honoring his leadership in a large high school that requires differentiated support and respect for his leadership.

In providing differentiated support with Bianca, I focused on modeling non-confrontational conversations. The conversations occurred when we met with the district office special education department leaders and site special education department to develop ways to ensure students with disabilities were part of the SLC cohort of students, were able to take CTE courses, and could participate in work-based learning experiences. I gave the principal feedback about not giving up on students with IEPs despite the obstacles and instead suggested developing small win as a starting place to change the system and ensure access for all students with special needs. She then said, "let's make the English teachers of students with disabilities part of the English department planning for SLCs and aware of all career exploration activities" (site visit, May, 2017). Through this conversation, Bianca realized that not all English teachers in the school were collaborating and students receiving special education services were missing out. It became a small win, but a larger shift in principal's thinking because she began to include

special education teachers in the SLC lead team planning sessions where decisions were made, and professional learning was crafted.

Another example is not related to implementation of SLCs but was foundational to her role as leader of the school. She received five parent complaints during school year 2017-18, and the pattern of those complaints indicated that parents felt the principal was not willing to listen to them. I shared the parent comments as objectively as possible with her; obviously, it was one side of the story, and she seemed surprised. We discussed what are some possibilities for this response, and I honored her passion and bravery with implementing new programs yet being flexible and open were also required. Bianca listened, and we practiced some responses that she could use when parents became upset. The principal responded by saying: "thank you for being honest and giving me feedback". It was a difficult, but essential, conversation to supporting Bianca adapt to other opinions. In a last example, Bianca called me to ask if the "think tank" could rethink the master schedule and disrupt the traditional six-period day with new and innovative ways of meeting students' needs, the teachers were worried that the district office might block their ideas. It was exciting to me to consider the possibilities, at the same time, sobering that teachers think district office wants to maintain the status quo.

Finally, I worked with Callie to establish an advisory board. At the goal-setting conference, I said that I expected improvements in the teaching and learning, establishing partnerships, and increasing student enrollment this year. Callie accepted it as a challenge. Being supportive sometimes means directly stating what you expected. The goal-setting was insightful because the leader picked the two goals I would have identified. We are on the same page as far as focus areas, and Callie see that crisis mode leadership is not effective leadership.

These examples of differentiating support for principals indicated in PAR Cycle One that the role of principal supervisor was critical to moving the principals toward being effective leaders. Much of the work is not directly related to the implementation of SLCs, but helping leaders think strategically is. In the next cycle, I intended to build in opportunities for learning and reflection at the end of each visit and CoP. I used the opportunity to reflect on our roles as adaptive leader and what is required in the implementation of a policy. This plan, like many others, required us to lead in both ways, but not let the technical aspects take over the work. The key learning from these interactions are the importance of vision, clarifying role, and importance of relationships. The next section describes the third key theme found in cycle one.

Shifting the Leadership Strategy: From Technical to Adaptive

In the final emergent theme of the PAR Cycle One, I argue that principals have a "go-to strategy" of being good at solving problems for others, particularly technical problems, and that has implications for coherence. Since they sometimes make decisions quickly that hold unintended consequences and were incoherent within the SLC implementation, I challenged them and asked them to challenge each other to address issues that require adaptive leadership. They have assumed roles as vision keepers and validators, but sometimes lack clarity as the key leaders in the school of the SLC process. Because they are fluid in their leadership, managing and leading in a complex setting, they have initial attributes of adaptive leadership, but we all probably needed to develop those attributes more fully. Finally, I shifted my leadership as a district leader to match the leadership I need to model for them.

The principals tended to be supportive of SLC teacher leaders but were not always clear on their role as visionaries of SLCs. Strong and effective teacher leaders need principal and

district guidance. The vignette describes a conversation between a principal and the leadership team. The principal identifies as a support to the teachers.

Vignette: Principal Describing School Leadership Team

      Role of principal. Bianca describes the leadership team as a think tank. "My think tank is what I call the leadership group that I meet with every week. It takes a lot of people, definitely, to even consider making this happen". My job is to support and cheerlead them but also have such gratitude for the work they do."

      Reflections at a CoP. Bianca values the work and stated: "We all get together to problem-solve or talk out larger questions and issues. Just like last time, when we talked about should schools all have the same SLCs?

      Apollo reflected, "I think the first step is to validate the ideas, and the thinking–and to support it so that it's continued. And everyone put people in a position where even the strangest of ideas is welcomed as a thought process. The scariest thing for me as an administrator [is] I get a great idea, and I have no way to sustain it beyond the idea, particularly if there is no funding to support it" (CoP, October, 2017).

      The sentiment indicates that Bianca wants to validate teacher ideas but sees the big picture and has not clear idea of how to move that idea forward. All the principals clearly respect the SLC leads who are strong and thoughtful leaders yet struggle with managing the multiple demands. They were keen on moving forward with the revised PE policy as they clearly outlined the steps, they would take to make it successful, which included seeking input and buy in from the teacher leaders. They acted cautiously with the teachers because they knew teachers could help make things happen. Callie stated that "I want to be sure there is alignment and an agreement with leaders. Whether those are teacher leaders, and/or your administrative team, the

liaison working among SLCs–so that you continue to strive and grow–and look for those areas that can be improved." Apollo stated: "Given my culture on my campus, I want to be behind the scenes. I want everybody out front receiving the accolades, the celebration. But I also know that I have to foster or facilitate the initial celebration so that folks know it's okay to celebrate your work." Principals know the importance of structures and systems to move the system and live in them but were not sure yet how to slow down to ensure the systems are sustainable and making growth. However, they still were not completely clear about their roles, as the reflective drawings indicated. While they could identify times, their leadership was critical to the development of the school. Callie said, "if any decision is difficult, that's when they want it to be me. What you have to build is trust. What is the most important thing is that they trust that I'm going to have the big picture in my head and make the right judgment. And when the people on the campus don't trust that judgment things fall apart. Apollo responded: "It's because we're vision keepers. I guess we're paid to see the bigger picture, the whole piece. Then our job is to kind of find out where does that thinking fit in this whole puzzle". They see their roles as dynamic, thus they had to use situational awareness to be able to navigate the multiple demands and competing priorities (Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2003). Apollo continued with, "that there the competing priorities within the system, within sites. And there is no cookie-cutter approach to managing that successfully, because the priorities are usually established based on student need; student request or student need" (CoP, October, 2017). The tension lies in the daily work and the holding of the vision, but beyond the vision, principals need authoritatively support teachers with clarity, consistency, and daily reminders of how the daily actions contribute to long term goals.

Going Against the Grain: A Different Model of District Leadership

I am seeing a connection between my leadership and what the emergent themes of practice for principals. Based on PAR Cycle One, my leadership could be termed "going against the grain" because it represents a different model for district leadership than is generally used and certainly a difference in this district. At the moment, I classify this as a sighting, what MacDonald (1996) calls the confluence of observing how actions intersect with beliefs and appear to help me "see and understand the beliefs that animate the behaviors and policies of a school" (Tredway, Stephens, Leader-Picone, & Hernandez, 2010, p. 81). I understand deeply how emotional this work is and am trying to construct ways for principals to explore their values and emotions without the emotions derailing focus. I used memos to understand and examine how I need to be balance values and beliefs with analysis and action.

What was evident in analyzing the data sets, particularly the memos were the intense emotion represented by these data, and the necessary process of stepping back from the emotion to analyze the data for understanding and themes. For example, after the first CoP, I wrote about the negativity of the group and needing to find ways to make the next session positive. We were a small group, and one person's mood could impact the group emotions. I was aware of how I needed to adjust by validating each person's strengths. The intense emotion influenced the particular situation or meeting if I was not clear on the outcomes and process, I needed to model coherence and consistency. In a memo reflecting on one of our CoPs, I wrote:

"Wow, what a day….It is difficult to start the session when principals come with complaints about HR and facilities. We let them gripe about burning issues and the three items that came up where equity, HR and facilities. I emailed different department managers to seek some support for individual concerns before we moved on to the

problems of practice, to be responsive to their immediate needs. I am not sure the effectiveness of a gripe session when our time is so limited. I will speak with the facilitator about it. Two of the three people were engaged. One leader was quite negative and even said his contract states that his day ends at 4 pm. I also noticed the other two leaders taking more initiative in the group and not responding to the negativity. I need to figure out a way to highlight each leaders' strengths, so they stay engaged in the work." In analyzing the memo, I needed to adjust, recalibrate my work with others in the moment and consider ways to structure the future sessions. My positional power alone does not get me the traction I need to make meaningful and lasting change, so the protocols and strategies are important to establishing the tone and efficacy of the work" (reflective memo, December, 2017).

The reflection reminded me of the processes necessary for having courageous conversations (Singleton & Linton, 2006). In turn, this helped me understand how important my leadership is in facilitating the conversation, being aware of self and others, and guiding the conversations productively. The compass of courageous conversations asks leaders to understand if a response is mostly emotional, moral, intellectual or social and the importance of knowing how we respond to issues of equity, particularly racial equity. Singleton (2014) uses the compass as a condition to navigate courageous conversations and the tool has been essential to engage with others (see Appendix E). My leadership was often too emotionally-based and connected to a moral belief about equity; I needed to balance that with analysis (intellectual) and a focus on actions that could result (social) in stronger outcomes.

Like the principals, I struggled with maintaining a role as leader that redefined what it meant to be a district supervisor who believed in and tried to practice the tenets of distributed

leadership. As well, that did it means to be in authoritative leader who assumed clear role but slowed down to model adaptive leadership. In response to the continuing challenge of being a middle manager in the role of the principal supervisor, I found the role demanding, complex, and at times intensive. It required that I engaged with people in thoughtful pedagogies, which goes against the grain of typical district leadership practices typically hierarchical decision-maker. By modeling CoP developed learning exchange pedagogies, and co-construction of learning, I was challenging the hierarchical model of leadership in favor of moral authority (Sergiovanni, 1990). At the same time, I had to be authoritative so that people have confidence in my leadership. As the project unfolded, this was an area of importance as I am understanding how my role as researcher and practitioner intersect and provide direction. Finally, I needed to provide district level leadership that fully engaged others in co-constructing the path forward.

Implications

Although I rely on various frames that guided my analysis, three main frameworks that guided the work moving forward were: adaptive leadership (Heifetz, 2009), communities of practice (Wenger, 2010) and community learning exchange pedagogies (Guajardo, Guajardo, Janson, & Militello, 2015). Heifetz (2009) and his colleagues argue that adaptive leadership is a practice not a theory, defining it as the "practice of mobilizing people to tackle tough challenges and thrive" (p. 14). In our communities of practice, we defined problems of practice to tackle tough challenges (Wenger & Lave, 1991). Finally, we continued to use CLE pedagogies that offered space for authentic dialogue and reflection. This means that adaptive challenges require a different form of leadership behavior: adaptive leaders do not provide the answers (and do not equate leadership with expertise) and accept that a degree of disequilibrium is needed to sustain

adaptive change (rather than minimizing conflict and discomfort. Next, I discuss the emergent findings in relation to the key literature that is emerging as critical to the PAR.

Transfer from Technical to Adaptive Leadership

To speak to the major implications, I focus on moving from technical to adaptive leadership. Then I discuss my emerging understanding as practitioner researcher. Principals were most comfortable in using CoP time to solve technical problems and are not fully moving toward adaptive leadership (Heifetz, 1998). While they experienced agency in the changes for the PE requirement and the dual enrollment, their comfort level is still within technical and does not yet indicate adaptive leadership. The authors (Heifetz, Linsky, & Grashow, 2001) said that "The most common cause of failure in leadership is produced by treating adaptive challenges as if they were technical problems" (p. 27). They describe adaptive challenges as complex, systemic, murky problems that require: changes in people's priorities, beliefs, habits, and loyalties; organizations to clarify their values, develop new strategies, and learn new ways of operating, and the mobilization of others in collective problem solving (Linsky et al., 2009). They have become effective at solving problems and managing the day-to-day dilemmas, but without some of the fundamental leadership behaviors of leading with vision and guiding principles. Principals are managing many complexities of the school, and my role is to guide them to lead the high leverage work. For example, I gave feedback to the SLC leads on the professional learning day agenda but did not ensure principals were also involved in the input. Because we sat in the SLC core team planning together, I assumed they were giving input. From the interactions and evidence from the first cycle, principals could dedicate time to leading the SLCs when in our monthly CoP and SLC core team, two structures I established. I realized that CoP did not fully embed CLE pedagogies and, while the structures are not enough, the CLE pedagogies for deeper

learning are a tool for shifting from being technical to adaptive leadership. The community learning exchange pedagogies in the communities of practice are: (1) personal transformation precedes and supports collective work; (2) praxis—the power of dialogue and reflection to decide on action is fundamental to individual and collective learning; (3) translating and embedding the CLE pedagogies in local work requires thoughtful experimentation and adaptation. The communities of practice have served as a place and space for authentic dialogue, reflection and transformation and will allow us to build stronger trust and practice adaptive leadership.

Understanding our leadership roles by reflecting on adaptive leadership practices and leading with CLE structures for discussion is my role as principal supervisor, something that goes against the grain of what is expected of how district leaders lead principals and how high school principals lead their SLCs. It will important to provide opportunity to reflect on the leadership actions after an important decision is made and use evidence of leadership against an adaptive leadership framework. Then the leaders can visually identify the actions they took and then name and analyze as a collective group and reflect on their own growth. Reflection and action, not often done, are part of the next cycle of inquiry.

Role as Practitioner Researcher

In my role as practitioner and researcher and based on my knowledge of research and my experience as a practitioner, I found these key elements vital to supporting the principals: relying on funds of knowledge, promoting relational trust, and supporting visionary leadership.

Funds of knowledge. A strong structure is necessary for holding the work of creating, implementing, and assessing the effectiveness of principals. The community of practice that relied on the funds of knowledge that each of us brought to the community of practice (Wenger,

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2010). In fact, the model is a mirror image of the career pathway approach because it supports situated learning; we were together engaged in cognitive apprenticeships, learning from each other, the context, and the dilemmas of practice we bring to the communities of practice table to solve problems of implementation and understand our leadership roles. The structures and format for communities of practice were conducive to solving problems and understanding our leadership roles. The group discussion provided an opportunity to draw on their current knowledge and experience base in their roles and see that they see themselves everywhere, but often not at the center of the work. They were still somewhat confused about their roles in leadership SLCs while we modeled distributed leadership with each other and in the schools. They value the SLC teacher leaders, but they were not fully understanding how to operate in that context (Spillane et al., 2001; Spillane & Diamond, 2007). We needed to do a better job of using evidence from the iterative conversations and cycles of inquiry to diagnose and determine what next to do (Spillane, 2005). They are building knowledge and skill with each other, but still needed to transfer to school sites.

Relational trust. During PAR Cycle One, we deepened relational trust through the structures of the CoP and in my coaching relationship at the sites. "Trust was considered to be the most essential element in the successful coaching relationships" (Wise & Hammak, 2011, p. 3). I was aware that I had to continue to listen carefully to the principal voices, respect their processes and ask probing questions. At the last CoP, they got excited about the discussion and lingered after the CoP ended, suggested a need for more meeting time, and walked out to the parking lot together continuing the conversations. It was an indicator of having the relational trust needed for deeper work. However, based on the evidence of differentiated coaching, some

of the relationships I had with them were still transactional. To move them to transformative through deeper trusting relationships was an area of growth for me.

Supporting visionary leadership. Supporting each principals' vision was central to success, but I needed to help them translate the vision to action. Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, and Wahlstrom (2004), concurred with the importance of the role of school leaders: "To date we have not found a single case of a school improving its student achievement record in the absence of talented leadership. Why is leadership crucial? One explanation is that leaders have the potential to unleash latent capacities in organizations" (Leithwood et al., 2004, p. 9). When I set up the structure for a discussion on their roles as leaders of SLCs, they articulated the dual and dichotomous roles they played. The dialogue of their roles as visionary was robust as indicated in the evidence in Section II of this chapter; however, I needed to continue to push their thinking in formal and informal setting. As a researcher practitioner, I saw the importance of creating the conditions and providing more useful opportunities to engage in the conversations of what it means to be a visionary leader. The foundations for trust with me as their supervisor and with each other were established and the work of clarifying their roles as visionary leaders positioned them for the PAR Cycle Two, but I needed to find ways to differentially coach principals to act on their vision.

The final section of the paper provides a brief discussion of how the findings and reflections generated revisions for the next cycle of inquiry. As I planned for PAR Cycle Two, I needed to go deepen the conversations with principals from technical to adaptive leadership. Secondly, I wanted to understand the shift how to "go against the grain" as a district leader.

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Plans for PAR Cycle Two (January-April 2018)

The action research plan continued to inform my leadership, the role of principals as leaders of effective SLCs, and how we were using SLCs as the vehicle for preparing all students for college, career and civic engagement. The schedule of meetings continued on a monthly basis of CoP, SLC core team, site visits and district planning. The leadership actions focused on applying the adaptive leadership framework to the problems of practice and differentiate support and coaching for the principals. The evidence collected were reflective memos, reflection statements, agendas and meeting notes and as well as new created documents and were analyzed to support further findings.

The adaptive leadership framework of Heifetz (2009) required me to engage more systematically in collective sense-making by creating scenarios and case studies that helped us use the framework. In the process, I needed to reflect on my role in the leadership practices. Going against the grain as a leadership choice has not been viewed as a traditional central office role; however, I wanted to interrogate more deeply what that looked like and what that might mean for my leadership and the principals as they assumed more intentional roles in the SLC leadership in the schools. In this section, I review what I will continue to do and how I intended to change.

The community of practice convenings continued because the principals appreciated the time and structures for addressing problems of practice. The use of CLE pedagogies were important to create opportunities for deeper dialogue in a safe space. The use of these protocols requires me to continue to be a culturally responsive leader who goes against the grain of district leadership practices and interrogate more closely how the larger system can reinforces the beliefs of one principal.

However, the question arose from my reflection and findings: What is my next move to adjust the structures to get to the adaptive problems? I brought the following questions to the CPR group: We have addressed some technical problems, but how do we challenge each other to address some of the adaptive problems? More specifically, what was adaptive about the PE issue? I intended to address the leadership issues through the adaptive leadership framework and use communities of practice and site visits structures and systems that existed. The CLE pedagogies would continue to benefit going deeper and building relational trust. We needed to gain more clarity on their visions for SLC leadership and guiding principles for leading SLCs. The decisions made at the sites in the next cycle should reflect their leadership shifts. In addition, I was committed to addressing how a distributed leadership model for maximizing resources and developing trusting relationships could work (Supovitz et al., 2010). This included bringing in the College and Career Coordinator and the Work-based Learning Specialist more deliberately into our work as a support and resource to the work.

In conclusion, I realized that as principal supervisor I need to continue to model the leadership I expected from each principal, create opportunities for reflection, be intentional in calling out adaptive leadership practices in our different monthly gatherings, establish conditions for using a distributed leadership model at the site and district level.

CHAPTER SIX: PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH CYCLE TWO

During participatory action research (PAR) Cycle Two, and based on evidence from PAR Cycle One, I focused on shifting my strategy was working with three high schools principals in the CPR team to two areas: deepening principal practice by engaging them in using adaptive leadership to make decisions and examining what it means and looks like to for me as a district leader to "go against the grain" of typical district level leadership. PAR Cycle Two occurred primarily in three settings: the monthly principal community of practice (CoP), small learning community (SLC) core team meetings, in which I engaged the principals in coaching conversations. We also engaged in phone coaching conversations. The evidence in PAR Cycle Two supports two findings about leadership development: (1) The adaptive leadership framework promoted the importance of reflection before acting and different ways of examining the work that principals could translate to actions (Freire, 1970) and (2) the community of practice (CoP) structure emerged as a crucial time for the three principals and myself as the principal supervisor; however, this process goes is not typical in district supervisor-principal relationships. Table 5 identifies the types of meetings, participants, leadership actions, and evidence from the PAR Cycle Two. I collected and analyzed data from reflective memos and meeting notes after each CoP, SLC core team meeting, and transcriptions of conversations and discussions. The reflective memos were opportunity to reflect on my leadership actions.

In the PAR Cycle One summary, I argued that principals have a "go-to strategy" of being good at solving problems in the context of their work in the schools– often precipitously and particularly with a technical problem-solving lens. That tendency to look for immediate solutions had implications and caused incoherent SLC implementation. In PAR Cycle Two, I challenged

Table 4

Summary of Meetings and Data Collection for PAR C2

	January	February	March	April	May	Evidence
Community of Practice	X	X	X	X	X	Reflective memos, notes, and agendas
Site visits (some visits were two in one week)	X	X	X	X	X	Notes
SLC Core Team		X	X	X	X	Notes, reflective memos, transcription
Coaching Conversations (formal and informal)	♣	♣	♣	♣	♣	Reflective memos, notes
District Planning	X	X	X	X	X	Notes, agendas

them, and they challenged each other to address the issues through an adaptive leadership framework and do so in a setting of gracious space and CLE pedagogies.

The six sections in this chapter focus on the interactions among the three principals and myself as the principal supervisor and address the following: (1) three key leadership actions and activities that provided the principals opportunities to be reflective leaders; (2) two findings that surfaced from the leadership actions; (3) implications of my role as leader; (4) analysis of evidence using organizational theory for analysis; and (5) transitioning to PAR Cycle Three.

Leadership Actions: Toward Reflective Opportunities

In traditional district office leadership models, the roles of the district office and the principal supervisor are too often to ensure compliance with policies and practices, and lean on other departments, such as facilities and business office, to service the schools in a timely manner. This often takes time away from focusing on leadership support and growth model that the literature on principal supervisor relationships with principals is recommending for stronger principal development Leadership development (Corcoran et al., 2013; Goldring, Grissom, Rubin, Rogers, & Neel, 2018; Honig, 2013) includes providing the conditions for leaders to be reflective and make equity-centered decisions. Using an adaptive leadership framework, helps leaders to consider complex issues, be reflective, and take thoughtful action. I viewed my role as the principal supervisor as creating the conditions for adaptive leadership. This section identifies three key leadership actions in the PAR Cycle Two describing how we used metacognitive and meta-affective processes with the adaptive leadership framework as a conceptual framework. The intention was to shift the principals' thinking from technical leadership to adaptive leadership. As a result, they would come to decipher which decisions required technical

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responses and which decisions required more thoughtful and transformational leadership. These are three the principals and school types; I used pseudonyms to protect their identities.

- Principal of Duckpond high school is Apollo; a comprehensive high school with four SLCs

- Principal of Railside school is Bianca; a comprehensive high school with three SLCs.

- Principal of Kennedy high school is Callie; a small self-contained SLC specialized in the arts and principal of the continuation high school on the shared campus.

The Adaptive Leadership Framework shown in Figure 18, helps individuals and organizations adapt and thrive in challenging environments. It is being able, both individually and collectively, to take on the gradual but meaningful process of change. The practice of leadership takes place in an authority structure. In an adaptive challenge, the authority structure—the people in charge—can contribute, but others must participate as well. All people involved are part of the problem, and their shared ownership of that problem becomes part of the solution itself. It provides opportunity to analyze the situations, identify the adaptive challenges and collectively develop meaningful and innovative solutions. We utilized the framework in CoP to address problems of practice and intention was for principals to transfer to their site teams. It was a way to introduce the principals to a realm of possibility, aspiration beyond technique or theoretical knowledge.

Key Leadership Action One: Facilitating Principal Decisions

We know that principals make many decisions each day and have to shift their tone and stance many times a day, depending on the situation. The key is how principals respond to those decisions and knowing when a quick decision is necessary such as what colors to paint the school walls or a student who requires medical attention to a decision that requires much more

A common leadership framework – adaptive leadership (Heifitz)

Get on the Balcony

- A place from which to observe the patterns in the wider environment as well as what is over the horizon (prerequisite for the following six principles)

Identify the Adaptive Challenge

- A challenge for which there is no ready made technical answer
- A challenge requiring the gap between values, beliefs, attitudes and behaviours to be addressed

Create the Holding Environment

- May be a physical space in which adaptive work can be done
- The relationship or wider social space in which adaptive work can be accomplished

Cook the Conflict	Maintain Disciplined Attention	Give back the work
• Create the heat • Sequence & pace the work • Regulate the distress	• Work avoidance • Use conflict positively • Keep people focussed	• Resume responsibility • Use their knowledge • Support their efforts

Protect the voices of Leadership from below

- Ensuring everyone's voice is heard is essential for willingness to experiment and learn
- Leaders have to provide cover to staff who point to the internal contradictions of the organisation

Figure 18. Adaptive leadership framework: Leading in complexity.

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thought and has more variables to consider such as developing the master schedule to ensure equity and access to all students in school-wide goals. I describe two examples of using the adaptive leadership framework to reflect on decisions. The first situation was the process of seeking board approval and implementation of a physical education (PE) policy that provides alternative avenues for completing the PE graduation requirements. The second situation was the proposal presentation concerning the newcomer program for English language learners that required moving the program from one high school site to another

The principals and I spent two months researching, developing and seeking input on a board policy to permit school athletics and dance as physical education activities that could qualify for physical education credits. This meant students did not have to take the required PE credits during the school day. As a result, they could choose special classes in SLC. Alternatives to graduation policy required school board approval. On some level this was a technical change as most policy changes are; we identified how this was an adaptive challenge because there was no ready-made answer (Heifetz, 2009; Grubb & Tredway, 2010). We all commented how on smoothly the process went because it did not create conflict, until near the end of the process when we had to vet with the high school PE teachers. Once the policy was approved by the school board, I wanted to debrief the situation with the principals using the adaptive leadership framework, analyzing the situation and how it applied to the adaptive leadership framework. I was curious because the role of the CoP was to examine problems of practice and together try to arrive at novel solutions. Because the process and the resulting policies were considered, engaging in reflection and identification of the differences between technical and adaptive provided an opportunity for us to understand the differences and start to name and understand our collaborative work. In the next section of findings, I further discuss how we used the

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framework. two principals, the facilitator and I debriefed the communication with the teachers about the newcomer program proposal to support English language learners. The proposal was designed to support ELL students both academically and emotionally by immersing them in a program that integrates creativity and arts-based projects into their teaching. It was designed to provide English language learners more access to courses meeting the California college system requirements (a-g requirements), performing arts pathway experiences, and more individualized support in a smaller setting. However, the proposal required a programmatic relocation from Railside HS to Kennedy HS. A key compelling reason for the transition was that students in the current program had low graduation rates from high school and were not experiencing high quality learning experiences due to being in low level classes; finally, arts integration was essential for English learners for three reasons: art is universal language, art expresses culture, and art experiments with identity (Oh, 2017). As part of the debrief process, we read a blog post on adaptive leadership, and applied the framework to our situation (Carlton, 2016). We identified quotes from the post that resonated with their experience:

- "An adaptive problem is something that requires educators to give up something they love for a love they have never experienced,
- "What people resist is what people love,"
- "For most people, changes equate to loss."

Because the feedback from the teachers at Railside presented a highly charged situation, it was important to maintain disciplined attention and stay focused despite the conflict, examine some underlying causes of their reactions, and keep principals unified in this effort. I discuss in detail the analysis of the evidence, using the organizational theory section of this chapter.

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Key Leadership Action Two: Asking Questions

Another key leadership action that I chose to analyze are the site visits and individual coaching sessions. In particular, I committed to asking questions of leaders rather than telling them what to do. This change in my leadership has helped them to make thoughtful decisions and consider multiple perspectives. Principals sought support in these types of situations: thinking of creative ways to fund SLC lead positions; planning and co-facilitating a difficult meeting among teachers and counselors; brainstorming new ideas to infuse into a struggling SLC; and reimagining the master schedule for students to have fewer classes in one day.

Key Leadership Action Three: Principal Fishbowl

A third leadership action that merited analysis is a principal fishbowl during a SLC core team meeting (February 21, 2018). The three principals sat in a circle in the middle of the room, and the rest of the participants listened to the principal discussion I facilitated. The three principals planned with the SLC leads for 30 minutes and talked in the fishbowl about ways to create benchmarks for the graduate profile and what they learned from the site group discussion/planning time. I facilitated the fishbowl.

<div align="center">

Key Findings

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While their work as leaders of SLCs was important, we observed in PAR Cycle One that focusing on processes for making thoughtful decisions, both daily and for the long term, was critical for their leadership in general and leadership moving away from traditional schooling; of SLCs in specific. The goal was to translate their learning to the more complex challenges that impacted SLCs. That metacognitive and meta-affective reflective lens is transferring to other environments such as site visits and coaching conversations that were candid and non-

judgmental. I discuss in detail each finding and evidence to support the claim starting with the first finding.

Adaptive Leadership Framework: Promoting Reflection to Action

The use of adaptive leadership framework adds a dimension to typical reflection that promotes different ways of examining the work so that principals act with a more informed lens. (Linsky, Grashow, & Heifetz, 2009; Schon, 1984). To "get on the balcony" to more deeply analyze and gain perspective it is both metacognitive and meta-affective process. Secondly, it provides a process to enact Freire's praxis to reflect to act (Freire, 1970). I describe the two leadership actions and use evidence to support the finding. In a debrief of the PE policy, Apollo stated: "Next year is about changing the hearts and minds of people to see value in the board policy; seek investment of others such as counselors and then roll out the implementation plan" (CoP discussion, February, 2018). Even though seeking the approval of the alternatives to graduation board policy was technical or administrative work the process to make the decision was not. The adaptive leadership framework provided principals the ability to recognize it might be a problem with a ready solution; however, it required us to consider the adaptive challenge when PE teachers were not fully in agreement. We took a step back and considered those conflicts even though we knew what was best for students; we knew the students needed more opportunities to take a CTE pathway course and changing PE possibilities offered a way to do that. The adaptive leadership frame was the right approach for sustaining improvement. In the individual conversations, I noted the following comments from principals:

- Apollo: "We should do this with more site scenarios at next CoP to help us better understand our work".

- Callie started thinking of difficult situations she recently experienced and in which she could apply to the framework.

Due to the individual feedback, I brought out the framework the February 2018 CoP meeting, I asked each principal to share an example of how the framework applied to their current situation. The dynamics of the conversation changed when one principal was not present. The conversation provided an opportunity to go deeply into their issues. Bianca shared her struggles with the master schedule: "We needed to change beliefs and talk about what's best for students. We should be listing guiding principles and value statements on how we use time and space. We know that relationships with counselors are important and building trust is critical to building the schedule". She posed a question to the group about how all principals needed to be united about the important decisions. The principal identified that CoP is a place to seek common agreements and work through challenges.

For example, Callie discussed the change of roles in the office at her school and wondered how to address this with staff. When I asked her how the issue was an adaptive challenge, she stated that the work is being redistributed and people would have difficulty adjusting if they did not understand the rationale. "I must think about how to frame the change and people need to understand why it is happening as I leverage new positions. It was more about thinking through the process and communication as a leader rather than it being a technical vs. adaptive challenge. The technical part is the new roles and responsibilities, the adaptive part is the communication and seeking of input when the office has been status quo for the last twelve years". This shift in how to reflect on a decision, maintain transparency, "get out in front of an issue" and think through the challenge demonstrates an understanding of how the adaptive leadership theory moves into practice.

A second example was about the newcomer program. I reflected in a memo: "I wonder if I treated the newcomer program proposal as a technical rather than an adaptive leadership challenge and what it meant to those impacted by the change? Also, how do I engage the right folks at the right time so they are part of the solution? I wonder if I lost professional capital and trust because I did not engage the teachers in the process." Those were questions I asked myself as metacognitive process. The Principals and I engaged in a reflective process during a CoP and discussed similar questions (CoP, March 21, 2018). The shift was reflecting on a decision that did not have favorable outcomes and understanding from the adaptive leadership frame, and finally using the learning to continue planning.

Community of Practice Promotes Gracious Space and Trusting Relationships.

The CoP structure offered time for principals and principal supervisor to use CLE pedagogies, including gracious space which promoted trusting relationships. The structures we used at CoP were used in other settings and reinforced the necessity of coaching conversations that are honest and non-judgmental. Apollo called me one evening and talked about many issues at his school site (personal conversation, March, 2018). He finally said, "I haven't talked to anyone in a while and have been thinking of so many things at work and wanted to talk and hope that is okay with you". We went through his list and I helped him problem solve some of the issues. He shared his frustration with the master schedule and particularly teachers being pushy with the new AP, who is now developing the master schedule. He mentioned that he wanted to cut the funding for the SLC leads. My internal reaction was one of concern and rather than state an opinion, I asked him if he knew what the leads do and how the time is spent? He then said: "yes, I will talk to them and find out what they do before I am make a decision". I suggested he talk a district lead for SLCs about using some of the SLC equity allocation to fund teachers. He

was going to follow up. That relationship has taken time to build. He is the principal of the school and I felt it was important to empower him to lead the work at the site and make principled decisions. I wanted him to be more thoughtful, particularly when he is put in a difficult situation. He wanted to talk about the bigger issues at his site and seeking my input to resolve some of the issues. In another conversation with Apollo we had a conversation about the conflict between the math teachers and counselors. He said, "I feel powerless as principal because I can't change grades. I must be professional and not be ugly and try to resolve the situation." In confiding his frustration and looking for support, he reorganized how lonely the position can be and started to value that he could talk with someone. In a further conversation with Apollo I emailed him an article about equity and wrote: "let's talk about the math work". He called me on the way home from work that evening. We talked about the math conflict, and I suggested he facilitate a meeting among the counselors and math teachers. He said, "okay" with some trepidation so I offered to help him facilitate the meeting and he jumped on it (coaching conversation, March 26, 2018).

Being invited to be a thought partner at two schools on two big issues, enrollment and struggling SLC, was called not just to solve technical issues, but think through more challenging issues as well as seek approval to move forward. With Bianca, we discussed ways to reimagine a SLC because the current model was not working due to lack of leadership and teacher buy in. Principals were inviting me to become engaged in problem solving and being thought partner for addressing challenging areas (reflective memo, January 17, 2018). The shift from principals calling to solve technical problems in their daily management to calling to get on the balcony with their supervisor and identify the adaptive challenge was due to the adaptive leadership framework applied in the CoP and their ability to transfer to individual site issues. Because we

were practiced learning in public and inviting the stranger, principles of gracious space, during our monthly CoP, at times they continued when we were not together, and challenges arose at their site. We formed trusting relationships, foundational to engaging in the adaptive leadership framework.

The two findings of reflection and action using the adaptive leadership framework and using CLE pedagogies in the community of practice proved effective for bringing the high school principals together around a common mission to get on the balcony, identify complex challenges that we could collectively solve in a safe space, and maintain disciplined attention to the challenge. We were able to learn in public (risk taking) and invite the stranger (listen to diverse opinions) as a collective group yet ran up against obstacles when the principals returned to their sites, due to the competing priorities of the school and being pulled to be managers and not relying on the distributed model of leadership.

Analysis of the Evidence Vis-à-vis Organizational Theory

In this section, I describe an organizational within the context of the participatory action two conceptual understandings help to explain the organizational dynamics of the context. Two theories about the organizational dynamics are that I applied to the phenomenon are: (1) the human resource frame, a frame or lens from which people view their world (Bolman & Deal, 2017); and (2) multiple three-perspective theory of culture, a theory that draws attention to aspects of organizational life that historically have been ignored (Martin, 2002). The human resource frame, a perspective that places more emphasis on people's needs, and advocates for understanding the relationships between people and organization and primarily focuses on giving employees the power and opportunity to perform their jobs well, while at the same time, addressing their needs for human contact, personal growth, and job satisfaction (Bolman & Deal,

2017, p. 19). The second theory referenced is the three-perspective theory of culture and it was most useful in interpreting the data and studying the organizational dynamics and examine the organization from a cultural viewpoint such as how things are done, storytelling, and relationships among people and make meaning of those manifestations. In order to analyze using two theories, I first describe the context and the phenomena, a pivotal story that is emblematic of the dynamics of the subcultures in the high school communities. Then, I examine how the principals and I approached the phenomenon.

Context

In working with the three high school principals, we created a structure, community of practice, facilitated by an outside support provider, to guide the discussion and use community learning exchange (CLE) pedagogies and more recently in PAR Cycle Two, to analyze our work through the adaptive leadership framework. The group identified problems of practice common to all three principals that block deeper learning for students.

One goal of the CoP was to recognize adaptive challenges to addressing problems of practice. We named the technical challenges to our work that require a different set of leadership practices. During the CoPs, we read articles on adaptive leadership and applied to the problems of practice. As discussed, we debriefed regarding a newcomer program proposal, a proposal to improve the quality of services for students and moving the program from one site to another, Railside HS to Kennedy HS. The goal was to prepare more students for college and career while accelerating their English skills and offer the following: complete courses that meet UC/CSU requirements and Career Technical Education (CTE), offer performing arts program, and integrated project-based learning. In describing a phenomena related to the newcomer proposal,

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and the reflection and analysis in which the principals and I engaged, and apply these two organizational theories to additional lenses to understand the phenomena.

Phenomena

The current newcomer program located at a high school was housed at Railside HS. The program serves students who are newly arrived in the United States. In the program at Railside, the students had limited access to rigorous core academic courses, work-based learning opportunities, and SLC pathway experiences. The proposal was to move the newcomer program to the performing arts high school, Kennedy high school was met with resistance. I assisted the site team in developing the proposal and presented to district leadership further input and approval. Then, I vetted the proposal with the principal of the current newcomer program, who enthusiastically supported the proposal. The proposal was then presented to the teacher who coordinates the newcomer program Railside HS and the teacher invited three additional teachers to the meeting; I invited the district English Learner coordinator and Principal of Kennedy high school.

We had not realized how deeply the teachers of Railside high school were resistant to the change. A teacher who has worked at the school for 24 years said she would leave the school if the program was moved; they viewed the proposal as a personal attack on their teaching. After the meeting, I checked in with the principal of Railside high school, and she said she had no idea they were so passionate and committed to the program and the students. She said, "I read the tea leaves wrong in this situation and thought they would be relieved to move a program with high need and required so much of their attention". She was shocked by their response and lack of professionalism during the meeting. She then met with a group of teachers afterschool and called me to express their deep concern. After listening to their concerns, I decided to delay the move

from Fall 2018 until a later date and spend more time to fully discuss the program needs and current outcomes. What I realized is that we did not clearly present a need for the change and they did not understand why we wanted to move the program. One teacher said, "why fix what is working well." They wanted more input, which was a point worth considering. Muhammad (2017) explains that fundamentalists are educators who are comfortable with status quo and they organize and work against any viable form of change. I was not sure if we had presented this as a problem of practice that they would have been open to problem solving. But, nor had we tried.

The teachers reacted with vehement disapproval to the proposal. For example, one teacher emailed the board members stating that I was trying to take away a program from their site that was working well and if the proposal moved forward, they would come and publicly oppose at a board meeting. One teacher is a member of the small learning community (SLC) core team at the school; she approached the principal of Kennedy high school, and questioned whether that school had the staff to successfully implement the program. Finally, two teachers emailed two district Teachers on Special Assignment to express their disdain and concern for developing a proposal without teacher input. My decision to take a step back, withdraw the proposal, and evaluate the current newcomer program with input from the teachers had political implications because the teacher who coordinates the program is president of the teacher's union. Her perception of the proposal reinforced the belief that district office staff imposes ideas without direct participation with the site staff. The principal did not serve as a bridge and buffer in this leadership situation and did not exhibit situational awareness (McRel, 2002).

Reflection and Analysis of Phenomena

During the CoP, the principals of the two high schools and I debriefed what transpired with the delivery of the newcomer program proposal. My aim was to develop a shared

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understanding of the process as well not to divide the principals on this issue. They had begun debriefing this issue the previous evening on their way home from work, a practice they have developed since having CoPs. I first asked each leader to identify an issue that had surfaced. The issues discussed were: tracking in the current program, lack of access to English speaking peers; and negative comments made about the performing arts school. This served as way to get out the emotions in dealing with the issues and explicitly name the equity issues. Then, we read an article on adaptive leadership and identified a quote that resonated. Quotes shared were:

- "An adaptive problem is something that requires educators to give up something they love for a love they have never experienced."

- "What people resist is what people love"

- "For most people, change equates to loss"

- "Culture within a school that changes an environment."

We recognized that the proposal represented a loss to the teachers. They were angry and hurt because they care deeply about the students and think no one can take care of them or teach them like they do. We began to realize that the move of the newcomer program represented much more than just moving 30 students to a new school. For them, our decision represented lack of respect; the teachers said: "How can you punish the teachers and the students"? When asked directly to clarify what was punishing, they expressed that we were taking away something important to them without consultation or input. They did not view the proposal presentation as an opportunity for input, but rather "a done deal".

The principals and I talked about how to engage teachers. We identified that experience as "ripping the band aid off rather than slowly pulling it off". It was helpful to reframe the teacher's reaction as "resisting a loss". We discussed that the teachers do not agree with the need

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for the change and do not see any weaknesses in the program. For example, when the district EL coordinator and TSA took them to observe an exemplary program in a nearby district with hopes of bringing back practices to their program, the teachers could only talk about the barriers to implement some of the key practices they observed, or the funding required. However, despite what we may have thought, this phenomenon represented another way to analyze how organizational coherence is fragile (Elmore, 2004) and emergent coherence can be easily interrupted. In addition to the use of the adaptive leadership framework components, two organizational theories are helpful to me as I reflect on my leadership.

This I define as "going against the grain" as I establish the conditions and framework for the meta-cognitive and meta-affective conversations and describe three leadership actions and two key situations in detail in the first section of this chapter. The purpose was to develop the attributes of the adaptive leader more fully through real life scenarios and then transfer that way of working through issues as situations arose at their sites.

Understanding Organizational Dynamics: Human Resource Frame

I was operating against a rigid structure; emblematic of a culture of little flexibility in a rational system (Bolman & Deal, 2017). Although the organizational structure had improved over the last four years with an open-minded superintendent, for many years as a rigid system offered little or no input opportunity for input from school site staff. Leaders worked in an environment that responded to compliance and conformity. Creating a culture that operates differently means that high school principals and principal supervisor identified problems of practice and solved together, rather than requiring compliance to what the district leadership thinks is best for the schools. However, in the case of the phenomenon, we, as leaders trying to change structures, had reverted to a hierarchical decision that not involve teachers. If we had

paid attention to the human resource frame, we might have avoided conflict and had a collaborative solution.

The human resource frame highlights the relationships between people and organizations. The pioneers of the work, Follett (1918) and Mayo (1933, 1945), argued that people's skills, attitudes, energy, and commitment are vital resources that can make or break an enterprise. The human resource frame is built on the core assumption that organizations exist to serve human needs rather than the converse; people and organizations need each other. Organizations need ideas, energy, and talent; people need careers, salaries, and opportunities; individuals find meaningful and satisfying work, and organizations get the talent and energy they need to succeed (Bolman & Deal, 2017). My role has been to develop leadership capacity in principals and make them key decision-makers, through such organizational systems as the CoP, SLC core team, and coaching at site visits. I have been working to disrupt the narrative of being another cog in the wheel (Saranson, 1994) maintaining the status quo of traditional district office protocols. In my work with the leaders, we had created a culture that established shared beliefs and guiding principles and used those to inform important decision making, and to lead with those shared beliefs and principles. Yet, while we had engaged in the process, we had not fully modeled them with the teachers.

However, having a CoP structure provided a space and time to evaluate and reflect on our practices. We were able to understand the wider environment and agreed to pause and assess the situation with transparency. The bigger goal was to support each other in creating successful high schools, particularly small learning communities as vehicle for change. The CoP provided time to read and apply an article to our situation. Because we had a framework and process to use, we actually could do organizational repair work and, as we contend from gracious space, we

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modeled learning in public. Another key organizational theory requires us to examine the cultural perspective of the phenomenon by using the single and multiple perspective-cultural theories (Martin, 2002). More precisely, I focused on the relationships within the high school SLCs to better understand the dynamics and how it influences future relationships and leadership actions.

A Matrix Approach to Understanding Culture

In mapping the cultural terrain of my project, I examined the dynamics and relationships of the key actors as three different subcultures: among the principals and myself, the principals and their SLC core team, and myself and the SLC core team using cultural perspective and more specifically, the views of culture from the three perspective-culture theory (Martin, 2002). Table 6 is a matrix to identify the examples and experiences occurring within the relationships. The columns in the matrix are the types of cultural manifestations (such as rituals or stories) and the rows, linking interpretations of these manifestations, are content specific themes. The matrix was useful to show how culture has been operationalized and it allowed me to explore interpretations of these cultural manifestations such as practices that are formal and informal practices, stories, and rituals. Finally, the cultural manifestations were applied to the three perspective-culture theory: differentiation, interpretation, and fragmentation as views of culture as defined by Martin (2002). Integration meant that some aspect of the culture will be shared by most members, producing consistent, clear interpretations, consistency, collectivity wide and clarity; differentiation shows up in consistencies across manifestations, with consensus and clarity only within subcultures. Subcultures can exist in harmony, conflict, or independently of each other. And, fragmentation as ambiguity with irony, paradox, excluding the clarity implicit in both consistency and inconsistency.

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Table 6

Matrix Approach to Understanding Culture with the PAR Project

Content Themes	Cultural norms	Practices - formal and informal	Stories	Rituals and Jargon	Physical Arrangements
Relationship among Principals with supervisor	Collaborative and support for change. PS served as bridge and buffer to support improvement	*Formal* CoP and SLC core CLE pedagogy *Informal* phone conversations	Compliance oriented "We ask permission" Trusting relationships	Instructional Rounds CoP site visits Phone/ text messages	District Office is 3-5-minute drive to sites
Relationship of Principal with SLC leads	Viewed as supportive, collaborative and technical	Formal Leadership planning; Teachers say, "Support us by letting us lead" Informal Principal is accessible and removes barriers	Competing priorities; Teachers may not know or understand principals' vision; Teacher led effort.	Cohesive staff, promote equity, and current structures do not fully support SLCs	"Hesperian divide" causes racial segregation of students

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Table 6 (continued)

Content Themes	Cultural norms	Practices - formal and informal	Stories	Rituals and Jargon	Physical Arrangements
Relationship of Supervisor with SLC core team	Building coherence across SLCs; Challenge the process	Formal SLC core; engage in monthly meetings, community building Informal teachers voice stronger than principal voice	SLCs require resources to improve; move from grant driven to program driven.	Mistrust of district leadership	

The relationships among the key actors were key to understanding the subcultures that existed within the district and informed the PAR project. The formal practices included modeling collaborative, open and honest relationships during the CoP and site visits using the CLE pedagogies and the adaptive leadership framework. The cultural norm established was that CoP was safe place for collective problem solving on common adaptive challenges. The stories were that when anyone had a high school challenge, they knew it could be addressed at CoP. The principals each had unique relationships with their SLC core team and were generally viewed as supportive of the SLCs and prioritized their concerns when making master schedule decisions. The formal practices included regular leadership meetings and informal practices were the principals provided technical assistance to remove barriers for the SLCs to be successful. The stories told were that SLCs were teacher driven and principals view themselves as cheerleaders, appreciating the leadership of the teachers, yet the teachers were at times, unsure of the role of the principal as moving from vision to action. Finally, the relationship between the principal supervisor and SLC core served to build coherence across the SLCs and co-construct implementation of high school goals. The formal and informal practices included community building, sharing highlights of each SLC, collaborating on implementation of work-based learning and the graduate profile. The stories were about ways to be more programmatic and less compliance driven to improve high schools and that SLC leads are grounded in the needs of the school. There was some mistrust among the different actors so listening at all levels was critical the improving the work. I sought their input on important issues and we modified plans based on feedback. As a result of examining the relationships within in cultural group, we are at a place of differentiation within subcultures and fragmentation as a district, but not yet at a place of integration because we need to produce clear, consistent and collective messages about the

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mission and goals of SLCs as vehicle for change. Within each subculture there were consistencies within the CoP and site teams, but not always within the SLC core team.

The three perspectives of culture were easier to view for those who take a subjectivist approach to the study of culture, arguing in accord with Mumby (1994, p. 158) as detailed in Martin's book, that "theories do not neutrally reflect the world, but rather that they construct it in a particular fashion." They can be viewed by their power to provide insights (Martin, 2002, p. 40). There is clarity among the subcultures for most schools, but we have not yet integrated our practices and established cultural norms about how leadership is distributed and role of principal in moving from vision to action.

Figure 19 describes how subcultures live within the district culture. Each inner circle is a subculture and has its own values, beliefs and behaviors that may be different from the larger organization. The inner circle describes the relationship among the principal and the staff as a subculture. The middle circle describes the principal and supervisor relationship in the CoP, and the outer circle, describes the overall district culture.

I analyzed the culture of the district and the cultural manifestations in the routines and stories. The sub culture with the principals and principal supervisor is one of collaboration, openness and honest conversations. In analyzing the newcomer program proposal, the principal supported the move of the program off her site and cited challenges with the program, particularly of teacher's low expectations of the students, lack of rigor in the classes, no access to career pathway courses, and not enough staff to support the emotional and mental health needs of the students. Bianca provided input on the written proposal and supported the move. She is an action oriented, "doer" type of person so I wonder if she really considered the consequences of
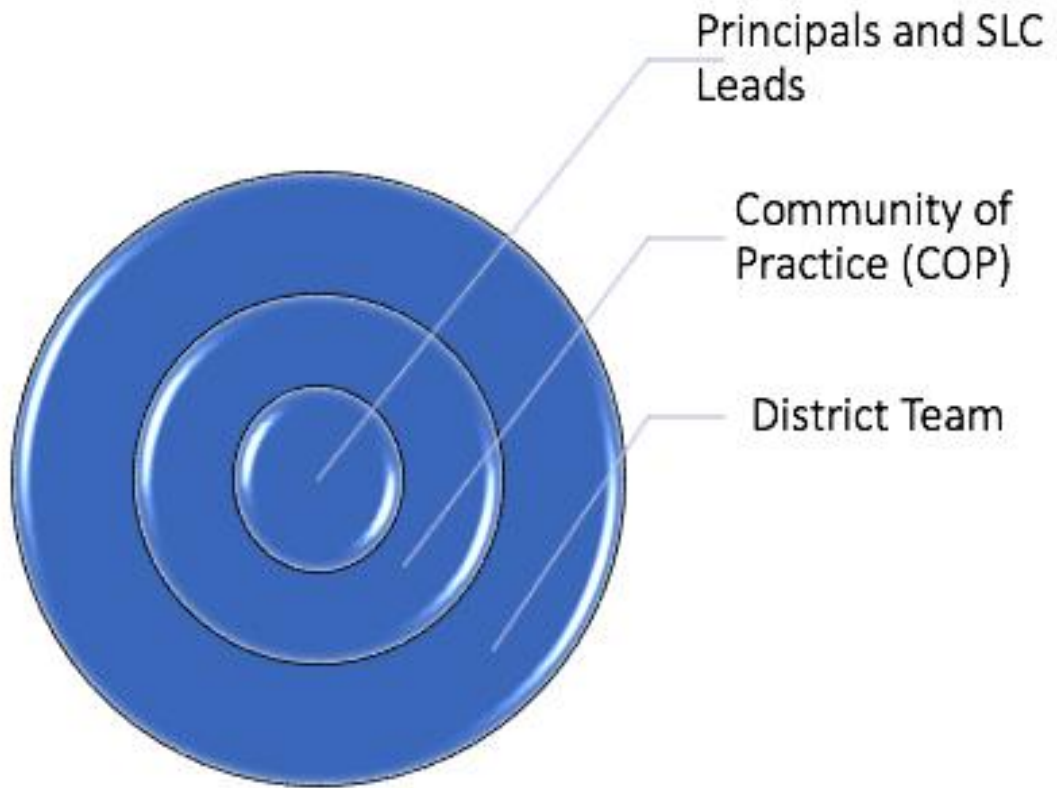
Figure 19. Relationships within each subculture.

the program and why she was taken aback by the resistance to the change. The principal of Kennedy was keen to adopt the new program and knew the arts would benefit the students yet had not considered the culture of the current program. Each sub culture has a sense of community, but it is not integrated with the district wide culture. There is a distinct difference between a principal culture, school culture and district culture. The principal has a subculture at the school and the school is a subculture of the district culture. A teacher approached me about the proposal stated: "I have been in this long enough to know that district office leadership presents an initiative and do not provide resources or time to fully develop and so we feel like it is another thing thrown at us and are expected to do". She did not feel supported by the district leadership and reinforced her feelings of mistrust. The culture of the school site has its own norms, beliefs and values. They see themselves as self-sufficient, unified and deeply caring for the students. Many school staff see the district office as top-down and not inclusive; the traditional, bureaucratic system. The example of the proposal is one where the cultures clashed and were not deeply rooted in district wide values, beliefs and behaviors.

The sub cultures have their own values, beliefs and behaviors that tell stories of collective community and understanding each other and bond by the social glue that holds them together. The differentiation and fragmentation among the subcultural groups and we have to come to a place of integration through each subculture if we are going to make program and the CLE pedagogies and adaptive leadership are two practices that could culturally manifest in bringing a collectivity to the work.

Summary of Application to Organizational Theory

The principals go above and beyond the technical and compliance work in the community of practice; we have created a culture of the learning and disrupting the status quo

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within the SLC, and yet to fully transfer to the site leadership actions. They wanted the CoP to advance their work at the site, achieve more equitable outcomes, and prepare more students for college, career and civic engagement. Interrogating the phenomena through the human resource frame and the cultural perspective allowed me to make a case for the importance of stories and practices [formal and informal] that would individually and collectively improve the leadership actions of myself and the principal. The principals and I are a subculture, and we are shaping a culture of learning and leadership through stories, practices, and relationships. It is differentiated from the district culture and worth the further work to bring us to a place of cultural integration. I have become clearer about how the intentional values-driven work can intersect with the technical work and that guiding principles help in decision making. When we are empathic and acknowledge people, we do not have to abandon or negotiate our values.

Reflection on My Leadership

In reflecting on my leadership, I think we moved too fast and I relied on the principals knowing their culture to guide the change. I was open to the idea of moving the program and did not anticipate the pushback. Students not being served in a rigorous learning environment was a key catalyst for the change. The adaptive leadership frame offered us the ability to step back, analyze the situation and consider other ways to reenter the work. I also wonder how the principal misread her staff and did not anticipate such abhorrence to the change.

In a top down traditional district leadership model, the program would be moved with little or no input and feel justified because it is best for the students. It does not address the impact on culture if that were to happen. In using the adaptive leadership frame, I was analyzing the adaptive challenge and work through it in a manner that keeps people engaged in the process. In going against the grain, I used the adaptive leadership framework with the principals, to get on

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the balcony, take a step back from the dilemma and to name the real issues. Being a reflective leader has allowed me to rethink the process and consider ways to achieve a positive outcome for the students as well as teachers. It is interesting how the principal of Railside HS, a proponent of the change, has come out "smelling like a rose," serving as advocate for her teachers, while serving as both a buffer and bridge with the district office staff. She also knew it would be a barrier to moving her school initiatives forward without resolving this issue. The teachers questioned her if she was going to "fight" them to keep the program at the school. They wanted to know if the principal is on their side and willing to take stand against a district office proposal, not knowing she had input into the proposal. The principal is having to navigate her relationship with her supervisor and her relationship with her staff. We had a phone conversation late into the evening to reflect on what occurred and identify a reasonable next step. The key work for the co-participant researcher project is the reflection and analysis occurring in the community of practice and site visits/coaching conversations, and the leadership actions that follow of the principals and myself as principal supervisor.

Research Questions: Progress in Cycle Two

In addressing the original research questions: To what extent can I differentiate support for three high school principals as they fully implement successful small learning communities.

1. Given a distributive leadership model, what is the most effective role for principals in the successful implementation of Small Learning Communities (SLCs) as vehicle for change?

   - What structures and supports are most useful to SLC teams (teachers, principal and counselor)?

2. To what extent is my leadership of the three principals useful and supportive in implementing effective SLCs?

3. How do I mediate district leadership in supporting SLC vision and implementation?

The implications on the research questions from cycle two are that the principals require differentiated support in providing guidance to address adaptive challenges and utilize the adaptive leadership framework for dilemmas such as redefining struggling SLCs and helping them prioritize SLCs as vehicle for change. The most effective role of principals is to lead the SLCs by engaging in a shared vision and ensuring that all decisions are geared improving the SLC as a vehicle for change. The structures and supports most supportive to the SLC team have been to provide time for the team to plan and engage in professional learning toward a common goal such as the graduate profile and writing of benchmarks. My role has been to guide the implementation of the graduate profile and creation of benchmarks in collaboration with the college and career coordinator and work-based learning specialist. In cycle three I will continue using the adaptive leadership framework in analyzing my own leadership as I realize I did not use that framework in developing the newcomer proposal. Fortunately, the principals and I had opportunity to reflect and be metacognitive about the learning using the adaptive leadership framework.

Plans for PAR Cycle Three (August-November 2018)

The PAR project protocols continue to inform my leadership and the role of principals as leaders of effective SLCs. The adaptive leadership framework informs principals and principal supervisor of the importance of understanding how we view the technical challenges through an adaptive leadership framework. In Table 7, I detailed the proposed schedule of meeting spaces, leadership actions and evidence collection that was analyzed.

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Table 5

Schedule of Meeting Spaces for Data Collection

	August	September	October	November	Evidence
Community of Practice	Apply CLE pedagogies and Adaptive Leadership framework to problems of practice				Memos, agenda, notes
Site visits (1/2 times per month)	Observe classrooms, provide feedback, and engage in joint work				Notes
SLC Core Team	Apply CLE pedagogies, graduate profile rubric development and engage in joint work				Notes, memos
Coaching Conversations	Engage in facilitative, collaborative or consultative coaching				Memos, notes
District Planning	Planning the district events, rubric development, and review of district practices				Notes, agendas

Conclusion

The PAR Cycle Two provided an opportunity to apply the adaptive leadership framework principles to the leadership challenges as a reflective tool, both before and after a difficult situation, serving as a metacognitive and meta-affective tool for leadership development and growth. The CoP served as an important venue to build trusting relationships and problem solve collectively and develop policies and practices to improve SLCs. It also highlighted the need that principals benefit from support at their sites to slow down and be more intentional and resist becoming isomorphic to the often technical and transactional actions known in traditional school leadership. This cycle helped to clarify my role as principal supervisor as I continue to develop leadership capacity as well as develop coherence through accountability. I learned to be more intentional and explicit in my leadership expectations and provided a frame to empower leaders to turn vision into action. The final cycle will provide opportunity to delve more deeply into the framework and support the principals to transfer the learning to their school site leadership. We will engage in joint work at the site so I can provide coaching in the context of their work and be intentional in helping them to slow down and lead while managing the tensions and competing priorities. I will coach them to have stamina, resilience and a willingness to work with others in the heat of change in order to adapt, because "to lead is to live dangerously" (Heifetz, 2002). It will continue to generate a heightened awareness of ourselves, our impact and the systems we are a part of and distinguishing between authority and leadership.

CHAPTER SEVEN: PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH (PAR) CYCLE THREE

During the first two cycles of inquiry in collaboration with the three co-practitioner researchers (CPR), the principals and I established conditions for co-learning in the community of practice. We used the community learning exchange processes and the adaptive leadership framework as a reflection tool to talk about principals' implementation of the small learning communities. Ultimately, we agreed to focus on this question: Can using the adaptive leadership framework support principals to become more thoughtful and equitable leaders in leading high school small learning communities that prepare students for college, career and civic engagement?

In my work as the supervisor, I focused on understanding how our use elements of gracious space in the community of practice, the adaptive leadership framework, coaching conversations during site visits, and the joint work we undertook impacted my role and leadership, and how, in turn, that leadership impacted principals. The primary learning about my role as the supervisor of school leaders responded to this question: How is the focus on the adaptive leadership framework changing my own leadership practice and the conditions for learning? As a result, I learned that the way I approach the supervisor role in "going against the grain" of traditional hierarchical leadership and shifting my role to collaborator had positive results and challenges.

The secondary learning focused on how principals transferred the learning from the CoP and the coaching conversations to their work at the schools. What did the principals learn? How do I know? How did we make time as leaders to change the way we approach challenges as we become more facile in using the framework? Did they transfer equity-centered leadership practices to their sites? As a result, in deciding when to consider applying the frame of a

technical or adaptive challenge to problems of practice, we found that the principals took more responsibility and demonstrated that they were leading differently in certain situations; in particular, they slowed down to be more thoughtful about all their decisions.

The CPR group included three high school principals and me, serving as the Director of Secondary Education. The data collection methods consisted of the agendas and notes from each CoP, notes from the site visits and joint work sessions, and self-reflective memos. The self-reflective memos were an opportunity to reflect on my leadership actions. I included notes from district planning as a key leadership action since I mediated with the college and career coordinator, other district office leaders and the school board throughout cycle three to inform my work with the CPR. I collected, coded and analyzed a total of 28 sets of evidence using the same matrix of codes created in Cycle Two (see Appendix E).

I argue that the process of going against the grain of district office leadership is atypical for district supervisor-principal relationships and, therefore, a learning experience for the supervisor and the principals (Honig et al., 2010). As for principals, the evidence indicates uneven transfer of practice. In section one of the chapter, I present what transpired in PAR Cycle Three: the activities of the PAR cycle, how we collaborated in multiple practice settings, and the evidence of enacting the adaptive leadership framework. In section two, I present two findings about my supervisor role and the principals' impact on their practices. I conclude the chapter by discussing what I further explicate what I mean by "going against the grain" of typical district supervisory practice.

Activities of PAR Cycle Three

Some notable changes occurred in the PAR Cycle Three to address the focus of practice and engage in more joint work. Thessin et al. (2018) indicate that joint work is a crucial factor in

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the principal supervisor-principal relationship. Their research describes examples of joint work in which the principal supervisor approached the work as an equal partner, rather than as a supervisor. Engagement in joint work included planning sessions together, designing and/or providing professional development to school staff and teams, reflecting on and planning next steps together, and at times, divvying up the work to get it done (Thessin & Richardson, 2018). Joint work involved not just the principal and the principal supervisor, but school-based teams and staff critical to the work of school improvement as well. A further quality of productive partnerships includes not only how the pairs engaged in joint work, but how they established joint commitment to and ownership of the work. Each principal and I collaborated on joint work that surfaced organically and served as opportunity to utilize the adaptive leadership framework. Table 8 describes the activities of PAR Cycle Three. Then I describe the types of practice settings, including the individual goals of each principal on which I collaborated and coached individuals, and the evidence of the use of the adaptive leadership framework.

Practice Settings

Before I examine the multiple practice settings of the collaboration of our CPR group, I describe the ways we continued to foster gracious space norms in PAR Cycle Three, which occurs primarily in three settings: monthly community of practice convening with the three principals, coaching conversations during site visits, and joint work on focus of practice. We continued to use the elements of gracious space as our norms (establish the setting, living the spirit, inviting the stranger and learning in public) in all the spaces in which we engaged in the leadership work. In this cycle, we were looking to find ways to transfer the work we had accomplished in the two prior cycles to principal practice at the site.

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Table 6

PAR Cycle Three, Activities with CPR Members and District Leadership, and Collection of Evidence in PAR Cycle Three (August 13 – October 15, 2018)

	WEEK 1 (Aug 13-17)	WEEK 2 (Aug 20-24)	WEEK 3 (Aug 27-31)	WEEK 4 (Sep 3-7)	WEEK 5 (Sep 10-14)	WEEK 6 (Sep 17-21)	WEEK 7 (Sep 24-28)	WEEK 8 (Oct 1-5)	WEEK 9 (Oct 8-12)	WEEK 10 (Oct 15-19)	Evidence
Community of Practice (CoP)	X						X			X	Memos, agenda, notes
Site visits (some visits were two in one week)		X		X		X		X	X		Notes
Joint work on initiative (via phone and face to face)	X	X		X	X	X		X	X	X	Notes
Coaching Conversations (via phone and face to face)	☁	☁		☁	☁	☁	☁	☁	☁	☁	Memos, notes
District Planning	X		X		X		X		X		Notes

Figure 20 identifies the spaces and percentage of time the principals and principal supervisor had for opportunities for collaboration and then transfer in PAR Cycle Three. I listed work with district office leaders to garner their support and leadership from the boardroom to the classroom. Next, I describe each setting, leadership actions and collection of evidence: community of practice, site visits, joint work on focus of practice and coaching conversations.

Community of practice (CoP). We utilized the physical space and time for principals to engage in CoP in September and October. We reviewed the adaptive leadership framework and elements of gracious space a spirit and setting where we invite the stranger and learn in public by taking risks and adjusting to diverse ideas. The focus of practice for the group was to develop district and site norms for creating an equity-centered master schedule. Because each principal used a different way of approaching the master schedule, we needed to align our policies and practices to support equitable outcomes for students. The PAR goal for me was to ascertain transfer of elements of gracious space and the use of the adaptive leadership framework in working through this particular focus of practice. In this case, we were interested in rethinking master schedules in each school to meet the needs of the SLCs, students with special needs, and supporting stronger pathways for students to graduate prepared for college and career.

I was interested in how the working agreements from first two cycles impacted principal practice, particularly in addressing what is largely a managerial issue. Could we be more thoughtful in our planning process to use the opportunity to address equity, student success, and be more creative in our approach? We began the planning process using the master schedule guide (College and Career Academy Support Network, University of California, Berkeley 2015) designed to support schools that are using a Linked Learning approach and/or wall-to-wall or multiple pathways/academies approach to redesign high schools. We reviewed the California

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SETTINGS FOR PAR
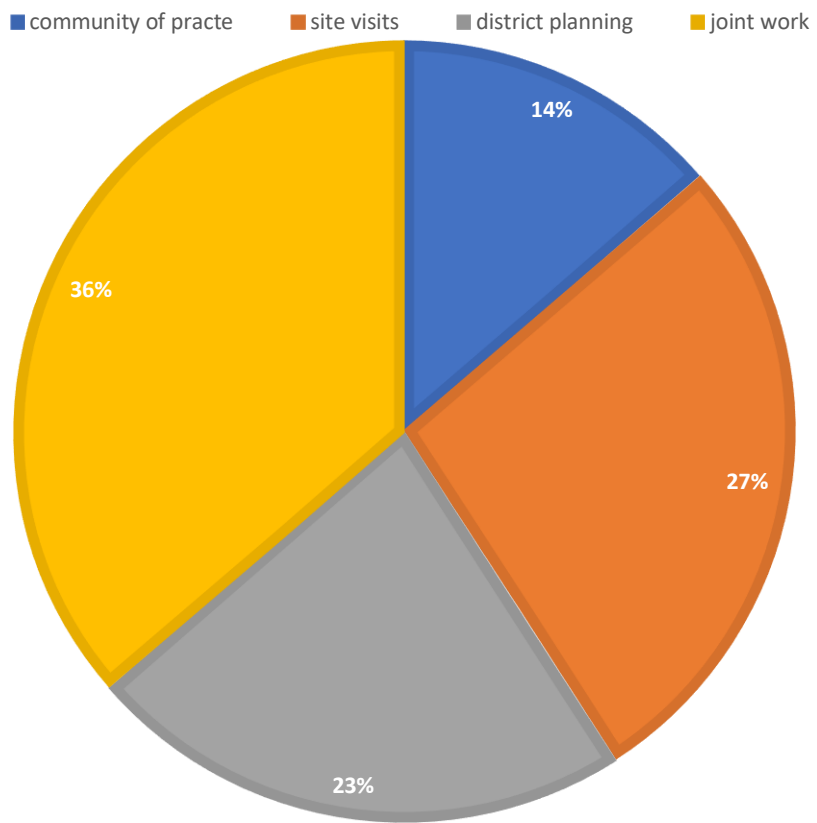
Figure 20. Key settings and opportunities for transfer in cycle three.

College and Career Indicators, new measures imposed by the California Department of Education to evaluate all district high schools using multiple measures of success such as dual enrollment and CTE pathway completion (see Appendix F). Finally, we reviewed the current use of Regional Occupational Program allocations and needs of students receiving special education services. These key data points defined an equity-based master schedule. The process provided an opportunity to get on the balcony and identify the challenge, principles of the adaptive leadership framework. The work of the master schedule shifts became the primary CoP focus in PAR Cycle Three.

Site visits and joint work. I augmented the CoP work with more intentional and systematic site visits and coaching during the cycle. Each principal identified an individual focus of practice and that individual focus of practice became our joint work, in which we partnered at the site; I coached them in the process. We utilized the adaptive leadership principles to guide the joint work at the site. Their individual foci of practice are identified in Figure 21.

Coaching. The purpose of onsite and phone coaching was to encourage principals to slow down and engage in reflection so that they could each become more intentional in their decision-making. I was at each of the three sites at least one time per month for the regularly scheduled meetings; we engaged in the joint work that required my time at their sites as needed, and off-site planning. Texts and phone calls occurred on a regular basis. For example, we had weekly project management meetings to review grant progress and most of the time was initially spent on technical assistance. I asked: "How can we use this time to ensure the grant is compelling and use email to communicate about the technical work?" The rest of the weekly check-ins were used to maintain disciplined attention to operationalizing the work.
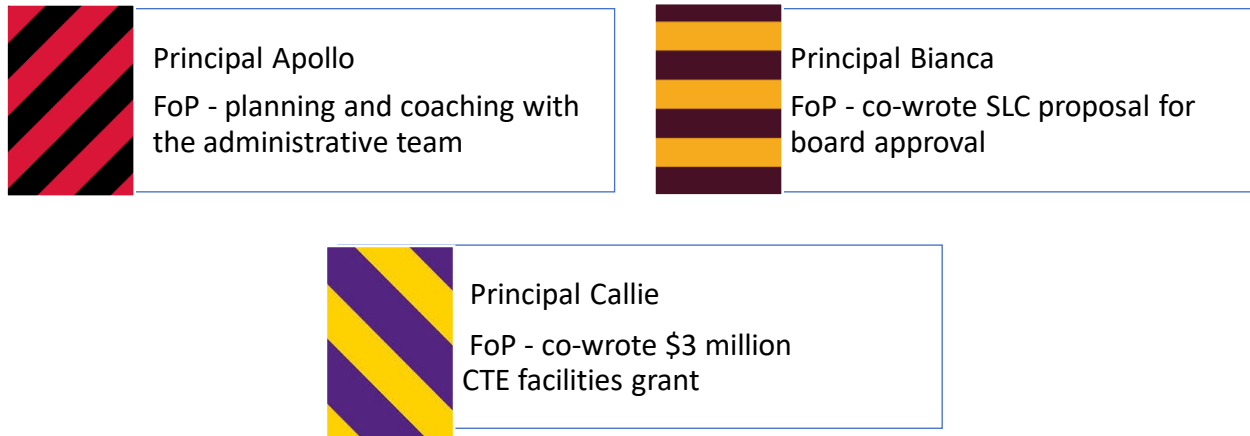
Figure 21. Principals Individual Focus of Practice (FoP).

Evidence of Adaptive Leadership Framework

In understanding and categorizing the evidence of the principals and principal supervisor, I relied on the research of Heifetz (1998). We also utilized elements of gracious space from the Institute of Ethical Leadership (IEL, 2004) and codes derived from the research and documents from others useful documents that helped to describe principal work: Oakland Unified School District leadership evaluation (OUSD, 2014), UC Berkeley Leadership Connection Rubric (UCB, 2015), and Bloom's taxonomy of the affective domain (Anderson, 2013).

I noted that research codes from multiple sources could be cross-coded in several elements of the adaptive leadership framework. For example, the code, 'living the spirit "is identified in three principles: identify the challenge, maintain disciplined attention and protect the voices of leadership. Within the codes, it was important to distinguish between technical work and operationalizing work. The evidence was coded as technical rational if the notes revealed a managerial task and coded as operationalizing if within an adaptive leadership challenge. Those are both technical rational tasks, but, the difference is how the tasks were situated between a technical challenge and adaptive challenge such as: "I need to hire two teachers vs. how we can we implement the engineering pathway and hire proper credentialed teachers".

Both the adaptive and technical are required in the role of principal supervisor and principal. As supervisor, I often needed to respond to the technical-rational needs in order to be in a position to help them think about the particular decision as an adaptive challenge, and they needed time and space to consider how to make decisions about whether the particular challenge was technical in the sense of simpler or whether it was complex and needed more reflection to address the adaptive challenge. We both had to change our practices to create a more balanced

approach to the work. Using the matrix of codes, I identified how we demonstrated adaptive leadership principles to learn where we were spending most of our time. The total number of coded adaptive leadership instances was 286 for PAR Cycle Three. Figure 22 demonstrates that the principals are not rushing to judgement or action but taking time to address challenges by employing the adaptive leadership, which I discuss more in the next section.

The most common principles were the following: identify the challenge (20%), protect the voices of leadership (19%), give back the work (19%) and maintain disciplined attention (18%). The lower numbers are in the areas of cook the conflict (6%) and create the holding environment (8%). The matrix of codes positioned within each principle of the adaptive leadership framework are found in Figure 23 shows the percentage each principle of the framework used in PAR Cycle Three. As a result, we were then able to fully consider the adaptive work needed and were thoughtful about the challenges and identify the gap between values/beliefs and attitudes/behaviors. The principals at times, got stuck in the heat and had difficulty moving through it, but they did protect the internal voices of teachers leaders against contradictions. The lower numbers in the two areas of cook the conflict and create the holding environment meant that it was more difficult to create the physical and social space to fully engage the adaptive work, to create the heat and regulate the distress.

In the next section, I present the two key findings supported by analysis of the evidence. The learning occurred because I created the possibility of using the CoP as a space for reciprocal learning and then supported principals at sites through coaching to encourage transfer. Both of these processes were critical to "going against the grain" because I shifted the traditional role of the district supervisor from one-way to collaborative and from compliance monitoring and bureaucracy and compliance developing professional capital.
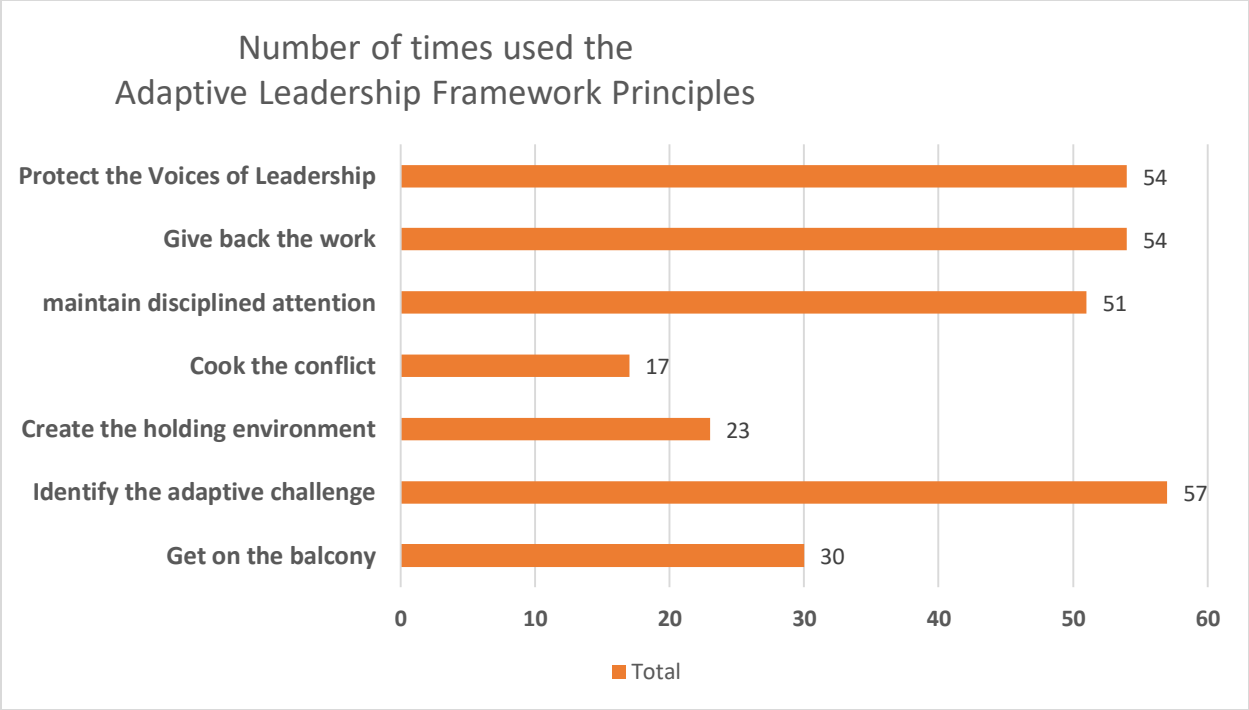
Figure 22. Principal and principal supervisor use of adaptive leadership framework principles.

Transfer of adaptive leadership principles

Protect the Voices of Leadership 19%

Get on the Balcony 10%

Identify the Adaptive Challenge 20%

Give back the work 19%

Create the Holding Environment 8%

Maintain Disciplined Attention 18%

Cook the Conflict 6%
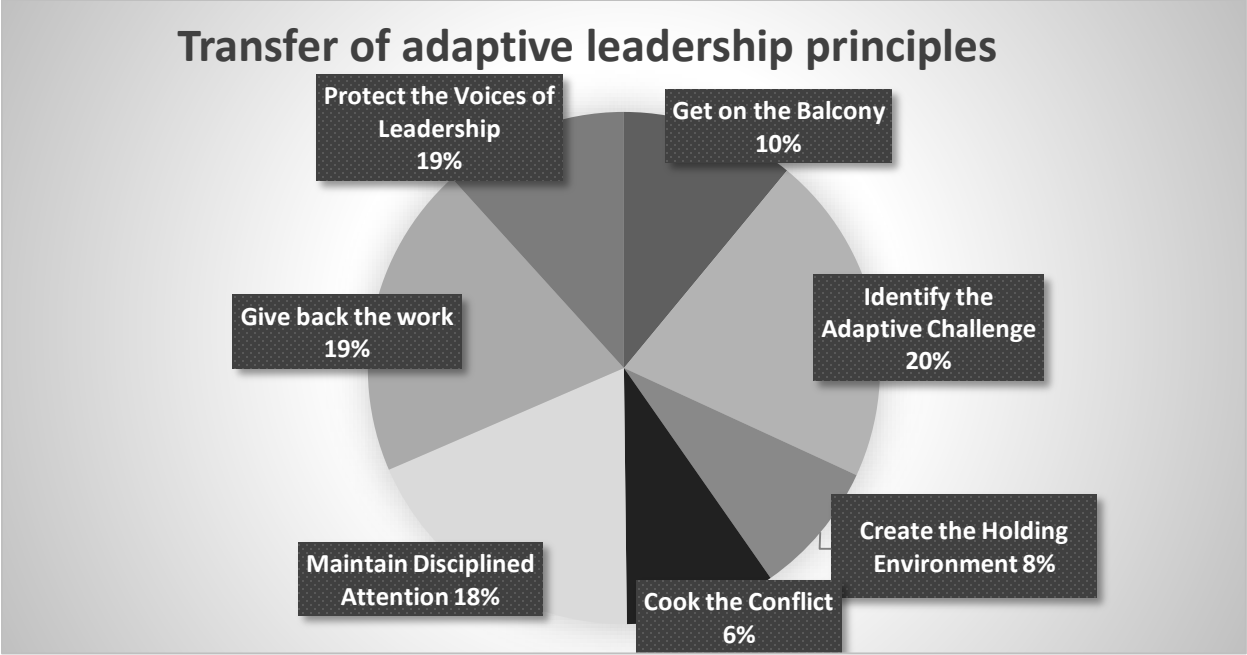
Figure 23. Transfer of adaptive leadership principles to principal work.

Creating Conditions for Impact and Transfer

The primary focus of my role as principal supervisor was to create the conditions for learning and impact for principals and then examine how the work with principals supported my learning about the role of a district supervisor in working with principals to implement small learning communities. The adaptive leadership framework affirmed my beliefs, changed my leadership practices, and impacted on my own leadership development (Heifetz, 1998). The framework enabled me to become more intentional in my practice, articulate my expectations and provide coaching support. The principals and I, as the principal supervisor, used the elements of gracious space more systematically and enacted principles of the adaptive leadership framework during our community of practice to make collective decisions and within their site work to improve high schools. In this section, I discuss my role in creating the conditions and then the impact and transfer that I observed and documented in principal practice. I end this section with a discussion of how the evidence relates to organizational theory.

Figure 24 describes the relationship between and among the principal supervisor, the principals, and the transfer and impact at the site. As the principal supervisor, I established conditions for learning by creating gracious space and applying the adaptive leadership framework to problems of practice. The principal learning represents what principals report to me and to others about their learning. The transfer of learning represents what they are doing at their sites that resulted from their learning. The arrows indicate the importance of a reciprocal relationship among the conditions, learning, and transfer. In this section, I discuss how I created the conditions for learning, when the principal learning was reflective and thoughtful, and how completely the principals were able to transfer this to their sites, using the master schedule development as an example of transfer.
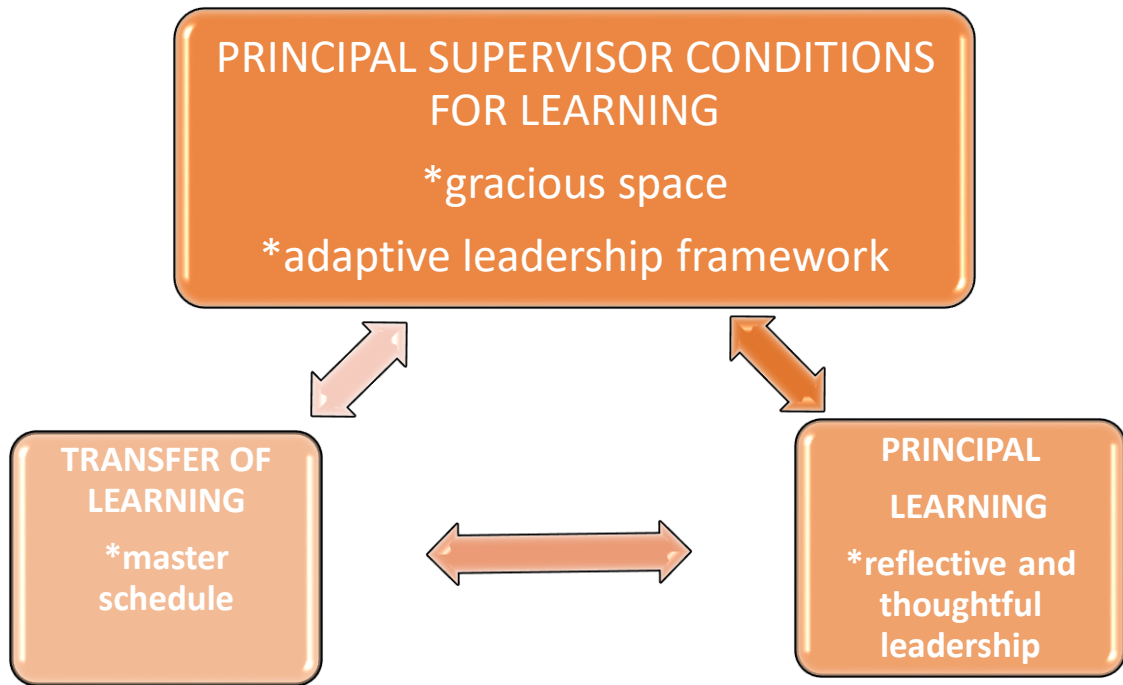
Figure 24. Cycles of learning and transfer.

Principal Supervisor Conditions for Learning

In reflecting on my leadership transformation and key learning, the work affirmed the importance of getting principals together to create collaborative and trusting relationships, provide an opportunity to slow down, become more thoughtful as a group, and establish common conditions and agreements. Some principals consider the work too "theoretical" when we slow down to read research and apply frameworks to our problems of practice. They believed they had the answers and wanted to get to the practical part of the work. I viewed the theoretical engagement as a way to slow down, bringing in other perspectives and then think through the adaptive challenges before moving forward. How do we honor principal wisdom and still include the consideration of theory is a dilemma that surfaced in our interactions? Because I observed uneven results of decision-making in principal practice, I pushed the thoughtful process using the adaptive leadership framework. As we saw in prior attempts at joint work in cycles one and two, when we made quick decisions, as in the newcomer decisions, we sometimes had issues crop up. On the contrary, when we slowed down to think about common dilemmas, as in the physical education requirement decision, we did not encounter as many issues in the implementation.

In this example of a school-level SLC decision, I needed to protect the principals from internal district contradictions when they were taking risks. One leader wanted to transition an SLC in her school to a different theme; however, the superintendent was critical of the change. I provided cover and coached her to provide the needed evidence for the change. Since much of the high school work required board approval, my role was to be a bridge and buffer for the principals, protect the voices of leadership, and communicate the needs of the students so thoughtful programs are implemented. In thinking of my role, district leadership is required to support this kind of work and leading through an adaptive leadership frame was essential to

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create meaningful change. We had to stop and think carefully about strategizing and then make careful moves that supported the principal.

Principal Learning

The principals displayed substantial movement on acting reflectively and thoughtfully, especially in CoP meeting and, at times, when I was in a coaching conversation at the school site. However, transfer was incomplete. I used the evidence from the analysis of how we used the adaptive leadership framework in the CoP but did not fully transfer its use to the school site.

Principal reflection and action. The CoP was a gracious space, and we collaboratively developed common agreements on an important high school process, developing district and site expectations for an equitable master schedule. The master schedule serves as an engine or "holy grail" and communicates what is important to ensure equitable access for all students to be prepared for college and career. It was an opportunity for our espoused values and beliefs to be enacted. The principals, however, had different points of entry into the work. One principal wanted technical support from district leadership; another did not see the need to make process changes such as inclusiveness and need for transparency, and the third principal was willing to engage with the process and offered thoughtful input. The environment was set up for learning and reflected in the evidence as stated by one principal: "This is a safe space to share our concerns and confidential information and make agreements that we can share in very few other places" (reflective memo, May 28, 2018). The use of the conceptual framework promoted reflection and action, specifically within these principles: to get on the balcony and identify the adaptive challenge. The elements of the adaptive leadership framework that recognized optimizing and system building were identifying the challenge, maintaining disciplined attention, and giving back the work; these categories were the ones with our highest evidence of building

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capacity. They represented 57% of the evidence from the coding of how we employed the adaptive leadership framework. The principles of maintaining disciplined attention and giving back the work required converting a technical-rational response to operationalizing the work in ways that were more reflective work. Technical-rational is the "go-to" response of principals before the CoP, approaching the managerial work without doing the adaptive thinking. What I noticed is that principals tended to engage more in technical-rational work during site visits when a new decision was at hand and operationalizing or adaptive work when leading the initiative on their focus of practice. During the joint work at the site or as a result of the relationships built with the principals, evidence of transfer were in the following:

- Callie: Due to the trusting relationship we built through collaboration, learning in public and coaching, a compelling grant application was submitted that was ultimately board approved and funded (a grant writer).

- Bianca: The SLC proposal and presentation partially showed evidence of transfer. The first proposal was a technical document and with coaching from the principal supervisor to identify the adaptive challenge, it became more coherent and thoughtful and was board approved. An example of a coaching conversation that shifted her thinking was when I asked the principal, "why do you want to transition to a new SLC?" and her response was, "we don't have the teachers who want to teach or have the proper credentials to teach in the current SLC". I then asked her, "why do you really want to have a promise academy?" She stated: "we want to provide more opportunities for students to college and career and think this is the way to do it". Through probing questions, we was able to identify the adaptive challenge and the gap between behavior and attitudes and revise a more compelling proposal.

- Apollo: The administrative team goal was to create an organizational vision and develop agendas with norms, outcomes and roles. Although the principal invited me to provide input on his administrative team planning sessions and we engaged in thoughtful planning using the adaptive leadership framework, transfer was uneven. The leader was able to get on the balcony, identify the challenge, yet not able to maintain disciplined attention or give back the work; both required the ability to keep people focused and assume responsibility for the work. He is a thoughtful and creative thinker with professional capital, but at times struggles when conflict arises and reverts to a more technical or transactional style of leadership, typical of many high school principals. He asked me to increase accountability and asked me to be sure to review previous actions at the start of each meeting.

The categories of identifying the adaptive challenge and protecting the voices of leadership were times when the principals identified the inequities that existed in the master schedule; they wanted to identify gaps in values and behaviors as well as ensure all voices were heard. The areas that showed up less often in the coding process were creating the holding environment and cooking the conflict; these were the areas in which the principals had to take risks and follow the tenet of gracious space of inviting the different idea. For example, one principal was cautious and carefully planned the conversations with counselors on the new expectations for the master schedule because the counselors were the key builders of the master schedule and could resist change. I wondered if there would have been a different outcome if the principal engaged the counselors in an adaptive process before moving into the technical rational work. The work is not yet intrinsic for the principals and therefore do not see the coherence. In a reflective memo (October 22, 2018) I wrote: "I need to consistently follow up with each

principal to support the transfer process"; if they could use the process with their staff instead of rely on it personally, they might have more success.

Transfer to school sites. The data confirmed that principals discuss their learning in CoP, but the overall impact is inconsistent and difficult to measure. For two years, we had been developing trust in the CoP and establishing our collective use of the principles of collaboration and the use of the adaptive leadership framework; thus, complete transfer of the use of the framework to their work at the sites would not yet be expected. At times, principals talked about their practice, yet did not follow through at their site. For example, one principal and I planned a difficult conversation; we convened a group of teachers and counselors to discuss a difficult issue – in other words, to cook the conflict. However, when we actually had the conversation, he was not able to fully regulate the distress or pace the work.

To summarize, two findings emerged in PAR Cycle Three that indicated I was operationalizing my intent to go against the grain of typical district leadership. First, the adaptive leadership framework affirmed my beliefs, changed my leadership practices, and impacted my own leadership development; I was more intentional and able to articulate expectations and provide coaching support. Secondly, principals enacted some elements of the adaptive leadership framework principles during community of practice and transferring some of the times to their site leadership. The two key findings that emerged from the PAR had a key to change embedded in them; they pushed us to make more thoughtful decisions and respond to deeper issues that promote equity in high schools. Next, I connect the leadership challenges we faced in transitioning our joint work to the adaptive leadership framework in the context of organizational theory, which helps to explain how we need to toggle back and forth during times of change between the new and the familiar.

Leadership Development as Organizational Theory of Change

The human resource frame of Bolman and Deal (2017) contends that investing in people for leadership development should be a key feature of the work. What I learned from my work as a leader in PAR Cycle Three was that I needed for fully support the leaders, but that support need to be mixed with accountability. I could not fully abandon the supervisory and, thus, accountability role in shifting to the adaptive leadership framework. I needed to pay attention to the evaluation process while implementing change, thus recognizing that the different needs require differentiated supports. While the adaptive leadership framework supported leadership development and fit with the human resource frame, we were able to identify gaps between values and behaviors and recognize that theory is useful but does not always provide direction, particularly when doing the joint work. We had to pay attention to the hidden implications of district policies, and principals converting to thinking in new ways needed support. Frameworks do not make decisions, people do. Thus, the mix of their engrained habits needed time to cook their own conflicts to be able to operationalize in more effective ways. In searching for ways to address these challenging issues, we referred back to the framework, and agreed to continue to create the holding environment, regulate the distress, keep people focused and engage in experimentation. It was a good reminder that is takes time and persistence.

Re-Imagining the Role of District Supervisor

The research question on my role and my growth as a district supervisor informed my inquiry throughout each cycle and apprised my learning about myself as a leader of leaders and how I co-constructed the work with three high school principals. That role definition informed my work as principal supervisor working in a system with traditional priorities because I needed to navigate the traditional expectations and be intentional in my leadership expectations toward

improving high school small learning communities. As such, I encountered some of the same issues that the principals encountered in trying to change my habits as well as the expectations of the principals and those persons in the district office with whom I worked. I needed to ensure that the principals acted as adaptive leaders and that thoughtful leadership actions were implemented to ensure students are prepared for college, career and civic engagement, but modeling that in my district level work was also not simple. I developed a deeper understanding of the work of leading high school principals toward changing our highs schools so they meet the needs of the students, particularly students in our system who have been continuously underserved and marginalized by the system. First, I address the research question about my own leadership and provide some insight into the process of learning that has occurred. Then I present discuss what it means to "go against the grain" of typical district leadership and fully co-engage as a principal supervisor to support principals and engage in joint work (Honig, 2012; Thessin et al., 2018)

Responding to Research Question

The research question about me as principal supervisor and how I differentiated support with each principal, given their context, leadership experience and leadership stance was a linchpin for the change in the principals. As we worked in the CoP, I offered ideas about how to fully engage their staff at the schools, and then I provided individual coaching, support and supervision at the site. I made the time for coaching and became more explicit in my expectations. As the supervisor and evaluator, I needed to maintain the proper balance of support because the evaluation process is a requisite part of the supervisor role, and the tension between principals sharing their challenges and the prospect of that contributing to an evaluation was never fully settled.

The most effective role I occupied was supporting principals to ensure that school communities were aligned to an equity-centered vision. That vision included empowering the teacher leaders to co-lead the work of SLCs and be an integral part of the decision making in designing and implementing new policies, practices and goals for SLCs. The teacher leaders wanted to make a difference in their schools, and they often wanted principals to get out of their way and let them lead. Using the adaptive leadership framework, I was able to protect the voices of leadership and re-emphasize the most important role of the site principal in that work.

To accomplish this, I co-designed meetings so that we modeled structures, supports and pedagogies in SLC core and retreats ---world café, learning exchange pedagogies, chalk talk, and visual representations – that were useful in establishing co-leadership. Thus, the principals and the SLC lead teachers co-constructed a vision, goals and plans. The SLC teacher leaders were thoughtful, respectful and brought professional capital to creating equitable schools. They offered creative ideas and grounded in the context of schools and embodied many of the principles of the adaptive leadership framework. However, because they are not always aware of the competing priorities of the school or have the big picture of high schools, they needed the principal to lead the systematic changes. It was a disservice to the teachers when the principals did not engage closely with the SLC leads to create changes because the teachers are informal leaders that use their agency to influence others, but it also was a disservice to the successful implementation for the teachers to try to do this "on their own".

Re-Imagining District and Site Leadership: Going Against the Grain

High schools are complex organizations that require extensive alignment, coherence and management. Principals need to manage the tensions among the competing priorities and maintain an equity-centered vision. Equity-minded leaders need to act thoughtfully and have

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time to for reflection with their colleagues. The fact that they were learning in public in CoPs and at their sites is evidence of their ability to start their own processes of leading against the grain. My leadership was effective and supportive in implementing SLCs primarily through the CoP. The focus of my work was on leadership development in supporting them to be adaptive leaders. However, I fully understood that going against the grain as a district supervisor meant that I needed to emphasize the time and space to be thoughtful and reflective collaborative leaders. I used the adaptive leadership framework to support leaders, and, while the balance tipped toward leadership development, I knew that I was trying to counteract the usual district operational style of expectations and accountability without the critical support principals need on a regular basis.

Thus, going against the grain meant that I tried to balance the traditional roles of the district supervisor while I was supporting all of us to learn to be more strategic in our abilities to identify technical and adaptive challenges. A balance of leadership expectations and leadership development was required. Figure 25 shows that I was spending more time on leadership development than leadership expectations and may reflect an imbalance for leaders who needed support and clarity to change their roles as leaders of SLCs.

I was working on the premise that, when I established conditions for learning, the principals would take up the work in their environment because it is important and good work. However, what I have learned is that moving to more thoughtful leadership happens on a continuum, and I needed to maintain expectations at the same time I provided support. The challenge of making decisions about whether a challenge was technical or adaptive is essential in managing leadership development. Figure 26 posits the difference between a technical and adaptive challenge; however, knowing the difference does not exactly provide the process for

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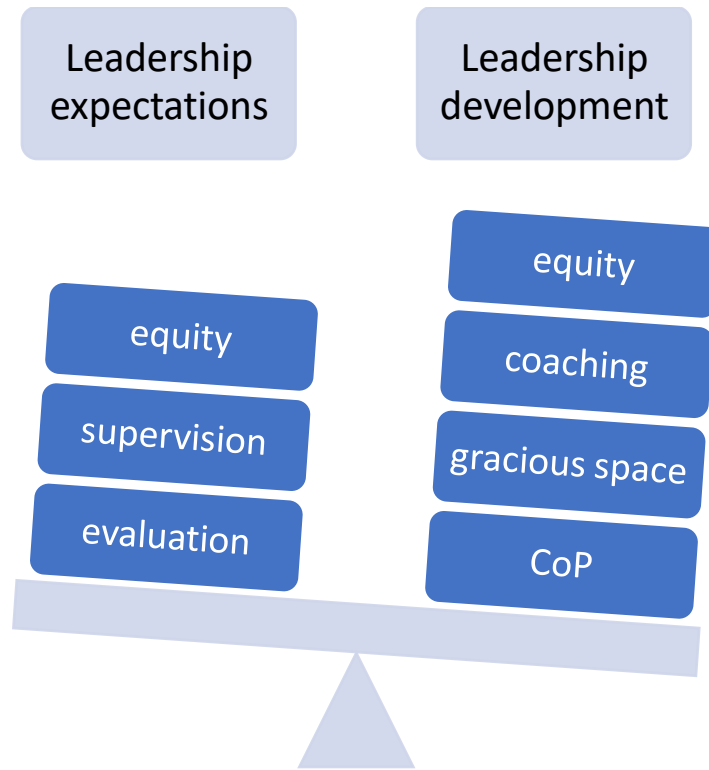
Figure 25. Balance of leadership expectations and leadership development.

Technical and Adaptive Challenge Overview	
Technical Challenge	**Adaptive Challenge**
Easy to identify	Difficult to identify (easy to deny)
Quick and easy solutions	Requires changes in values, beliefs and approaches to work
Requires small changes within known boundaries	Require a lot of changes across many, sometimes unknown, boundaries.
Can be solved by expert or 'authority'	Solved by people with the problem
Solutions can be implemented quickly	No quick fixes, requires constant experimentation

Figure 26. Technical and adaptive challenge overview, Ng, 2016.

how to engage principals so that they know when to employ and how to engage them in managing their own discomforts as they try on the new clothes of adaptive leadership.

The supervisor must provide both leadership development and leadership expectations. Principals often want their supervisors to be problem-solvers for technical-rational problems and solve issues within other departments, particularly human resources, business services and maintenance. They need the supervisor to remove the barriers to managing an effective school, and that was always a part of my role. However, I envisioned my role as developing them as leaders, and the adaptive leadership framework and gracious space helped me articulate my values, beliefs and behaviors that are essential for leaders. The community learning exchange practices supported us in the CoP and in the district meetings to sustain trusting relationships and keep moving the work of the SLC implementation forward.

However, what was missing was the middle space in which they were trying to become more proficient as leaders in understanding when and how to employ the adaptive leadership framework. That required more than support at the site; that required a roadmap that we did not fully develop – a roadmap that provided the bridge from the engrained ways they had learned to operate as school leaders to new ways of re-imagining their work. Because I was deeply engaged in their foci of practice, asked coaching questions, and supported site and district meetings, they often altered the typical transactional and technical-rational ways of responding. I was key to reshaping their thinking; however, by the end of PAR Cycle Three, they are not completely comfortable with how and when to shift their frames and responses without the support of me or peers. I was clear from the outset about using research evidence to re-imagine role of the district supervisor as a collaborator who engaged in joint work, which required going against the grain of the typical district leader role, the school leaders were not fully able to engage in adaptive

leadership independently (Honig, 2012; Thessin el al., 2018; Heifetz, 1998; Corcoran et al., 2013; Salzman 2016).

The final chapter is an opportunity to present summaries of the PAR inquiry cycles and discuss the important claims I can make as a result of the process. In that chapter, I reflect on my leadership journey and how the PAR process has influenced the ways I have altered my leadership approach and will continue to do in the future.

CHAPTER EIGHT: FROM A THEORY OF ACTION TO A THEORY IN ACTION

In my role as director of secondary education in a small urban school district, I partnered with three high school principals to improve high schools using the small learning communities (SLC) with career-themed pathways as a vehicle for change. At the outset of the study, I observed that, while principals managed the daily operations, the teacher leaders largely led the SLC work. Improvements that reflected 21st century classroom practices and access to college and career experiences, such as work based learning opportunities and dual enrollment were occurring, but they were inconsistent across the SLCs.

Over time, the focus of practice evolved to differentiate support for the high school principals as they fully implemented small learning communities. The operating theory of action was: If the principals and principal supervisor established a community of practice, used a values-driven approach to decision-making, engaged in differentiated coaching, and continued to focus on instructional leadership, then principals would be able to more fully address the adaptive challenges of high schools and create meaningful environments for students and meet the needs of the 21st century. The chapter summarizes the key actions in which the principals and I engaged, reviews the emergent and key findings from PAR Cycles One, Two and Three in relation to the extant literature and discusses three claims that are based on the research and evidence. I reflect on my learning and discuss the implications and recommendations for future practice, policy and research

Key Actions

I chose high school principals as the focus because high schools serving students who have been historically marginalized needed to improve, and principal leadership is a linchpin in school improvement (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005). I wanted to improve my leadership of the high

school principals as they supported small learning communities and teacher leaders at their schools. The moral imperative -- to create more equitable opportunities and outcomes for our students -- was clear, and leaders in our district had invested for over ten years on a mission to re-define academic and civic success in our high schools by developing the board-approved graduate profile, creating opportunities for students to understand the relevance of their high school experience to their futures, and stressing that college and career were viable options for all students. As the PAR project and the focus of practice unfolded, the principals and I engaged in 2016-17 in strengthening the SLCs and the district's connection to high schools. I inventoried assets and challenges of the school contexts by spending time at the sites, helped them to identify strategic goals, and continued to concentrate on deepening trusting relationships with them. As a result, the focus of practice for the three PAR cycles of inquiry (Fall 2017-Fall 2018) was: How could I differentiate support for the three high school principals as they fully implemented successful small learning communities? Concurrently, the district's secondary department focused on building the capacity of principals as instructional leaders by implementing instructional rounds, and the leaders participated in rounds with teachers, teachers on special assignment, me and their fellow principals (Elmore, Flarman, Teitel, Lachman, & City, 2009).

During the PAR project, in my district office leadership role, I analyzed district policy and practices, adapted and contextualized those policies for principals and their schools, and engaged the district leadership in the work to achieve equity and coherence. The fishbone process helped us identify the macro, meso, and micro assets and challenges in addressing the focus of practice and offered a starting place for our work so we could build on the assets and be intentional about tackling the challenges.

The PAR context was small urban school district with "wall-to-wall" small learning communities in two large comprehensive high schools and one small specialized school for the arts. The participant action research (PAR) helped us to understand how context matters and how using the general guidelines for SLC implementation, a community of practice approach, community learning exchange pedagogies, and differentiated support, the principals can, in turn, lead their teachers to collaboratively improve the systems and teaching practices to impact student outcomes. The key work and data collection for the PAR cycles are described in Table 9.

As a co-practitioner research (CPR) group of four persons, we engaged collectively in a community of practice and joint work at the sites, including instructional rounds. I made individual site visits, providing an opportunity for coaching and worked with the SLC teams monthly and district office leaders to ensure coherence of leadership support. We used community learning exchange (CLE) axioms and pedagogies, including a focus on establishing and maintaining gracious space, to create a setting and a spirit for co-learning, learn in public and take risks. As the PAR project emerged, the key framework that best applied to how we were planning and acting as leaders was the adaptive leadership framework; as a result, I used the seven principles of the adaptive leadership frame to code the evidence from meetings, site observations, and district meetings and conversations (Heifetz, 1998).

Figure 27 depicts the high school structures and district leadership used to manage the relationships of the teams and manage results. The arrows point to the relationships among the different organizational components: schools with SLCs and district components of the supervisor, the teachers on special assignment (TSAs) and district administrator for college and career. The SLC lead teachers at the school sites were integral to the improvement efforts because the principals and I identified the adaptive challenges at the sites.

Table 7

Leadership Actions of CPR Group

PAR Cycle	Leadership Actions of CPR group	Evidence
One (Fall 2017)	Shared vision and leadership development Identified common problems of practice Gained board approval of PE waiver policy Site visits that were instructionally focused	Proposals, policies, memos, transcriptions, art
Two (Spring 2018)	Applied the adaptive leadership framework as metacognitive reflection tool to district and site-specific challenges Site visits that were instructionally focused	Memos, agendas, notes, transcriptions, member check
Three (Fall 2018)	Created the high school master schedule expectations and guidelines. Collaborated with departments (Special Education, ROP, Business, and Human Resources) Site visits that were instructionally focused Engaged in joint work at the site level	Memos, agenda, notes, master schedule document
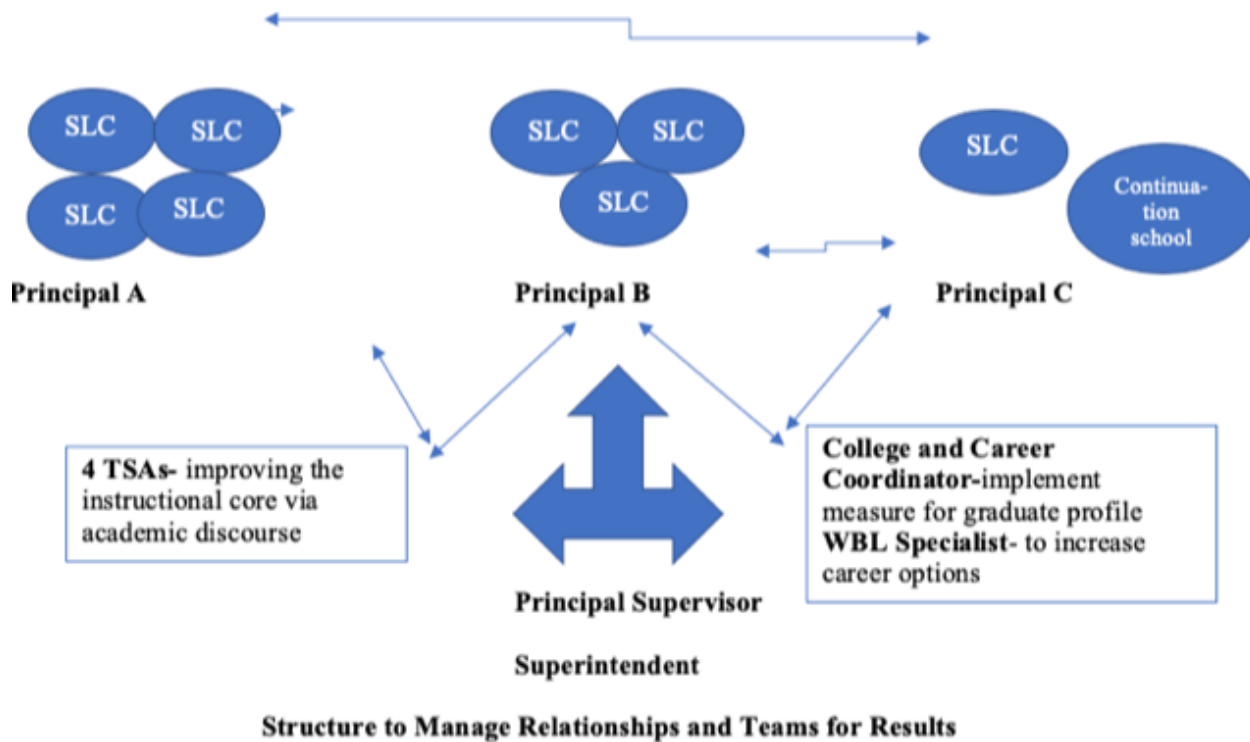
Figure 27. District structures to manage relationships and teams for results.

In examining the relationships, the principal supervisor and principals interacted with other organizational actors in SLCs and district to lead the improvement efforts. However, the principals needed to fully own their roles as school leaders with primary responsibility for the SLC success; they needed to effectively manage the relationships at the site and between the site and the district. If not, then progress on SLC implementation could be compromised. The structural frame (Bolman & Deal, 2017) offers a view on how the district was organized at the start of this project and reflects a belief in rationality; the organizational chart of the district or school identified formal roles and responsibilities. That organizational practice is supposed to minimize distracting personal static and maximize people's performance on the job. Yet, although structures were in place and principals had formal roles, without integration and differentiation at the site among all the organizational actors, the process was disjointed and, at times, incoherent. As the principal supervisor, I provided some cohesion by working with SLC leads and other teachers at the site and in the district; however, without daily follow-through of the school leader, often, we did not see traction and coherence at the school sites.

Key Findings from PAR One, Two and Three

The project was based on a theory OF action, and findings from the PAR cycles informed a theory IN action. In this section, I review the emergent themes and findings from the three participatory action research cycles and make three key claims that emerged from the evidence. Then I connect those claims to the extant literature. See Figure 28 for a diagram of the project process and how we developed a grounded theory of leadership development through the PAR process.

Differentiate support for three high
school principals as they fully
implement small learning communities

Theory **OF** Action
Community of Practice
Values-driven Coaching
Instructional Leadership focus

Adaptive Leadership

CLE pedagogies

Reflective metacognition

Reflective meta-affection

PAR CYCLE: **Emerging Findings**

Cycle One: CoP structure and CLE protocols provided opportunity for co-
designing joint work.

Cycle Two: Differentiated between technical and adaptive challenges; used
adaptive leadership framework as anchor for discussion and action

Cycle Three: Transfer of practices from CoP to school is complex because of the
uncertainty that exists with roles and structures in schools, and ability to stick to
one's guiding principles in the face of adversity.

Theory **IN** Action
"Going Against the Grain"
Intentional and Equity Focused Leadership
Matching Professional Accountability with
Professional Capital

Figure 28. From theory *of* action to theory *in* action.

Overview of Emergent Themes and Findings: Chapters 5, 6 and 7

The emergent themes in Chapter 5 and the findings from the evidence in Chapters 6 and 7 inform three claims that resulted from the PAR project. I first summarize the emergent themes and findings and then introduce each claim with a quote from a reading we used in our doctoral program. The quotes helped to keep me grounded in the work of building a community of practice in which I had to maintain a focus and longitudinal peripheral vision. I had to keep track of the immediate while keeping an eye on the whole to move the work forward, looking for opportunities in which I could change the typical ways of doing the complex work of principal supervision. I did not want to re-normalize past practices that had not worked; yet, new territory required risk-taking, and, as I learned again, the institutional pull of old habits sometimes overtakes our best intentions. As Mary Catherine Bateson (1989) says: "Many of the stories told … are stories of discovery, of hit-and-run epiphanies, but the retelling offers a kind of learning experience" (p. 115). MacDonald (1996) refers to these epiphanies as sightings—an "opportunity to see and understand the beliefs that animate the behaviors and policies of a school… a moment when a belief intersects with a practice that 'bubbles up' from constituents and causes one to rethink direction" (Tredway et al., 2010, p. 81). I begin each section with a key quote that captures our learning.

> The importance of [the adaptive leadership framework] lies in the impact it has on the techniques for trying to address the problems. Embarrassing or not, the organization prefers the current situation to trying something new where the consequences are unpredictable…[you have to be ready to] mobilize and sustain people through the period of risk that often comes with adaptive change, rather than trying to convince them of the rightness of the cause" (Heifetz, 2009 p. 18).

Using the adaptive leadership framework. First, the principals and I, as the principal supervisor, used the adaptive leadership framework to slow down and become more thoughtful and intentional as we developed policies, monitored practices, and made decisions. As a community of practice, we had to be thoughtful, using our knowledge base as experienced leaders, and, yet, what was more important was the how we had to match our values with our decisions. In our first foray into decision-making, we were precipitous in a decision we made about changing the newcomer program for English language learners. But we learned from that miscalculation when we proceed to changing the requirement for physical education in the SLCs. We wanted to free up time in student schedules to be able to take CTE (Career and Technical Education) classes, and that change had the potential to be contentious with the Physical Education teachers. However, our collaborative approach across three schools that included care about how to anticipate conflict and think about how to address the teachers proved successful. Agreeing on schedule changes together helped us think through the actual schedule and troubleshoot issues, remembering that the value we held as we made decisions was to optimize equitable possibilities for students to support college and career readiness. As a result, while we addressed typical technical challenges that were necessary elements in paving the way for SLC implementation, using the adaptive framework supported us to be more thoughtful in our decision-making. As the supervisor, I found it necessary to sustain principals through the change by modeling risk-taking and assuring them of support.

> To practice…is to repeat what appears to be the same action over and over, attentively
> mindful, in a way that makes the possible a gradual – almost imperceptible at times –
> process of change (Bateson, 1989, p. 115).

Using the community learning exchange axioms and pedagogies. Secondly, we used learning exchange axioms and pedagogies in our community of practice to guide our work, establish conditions of trust, and sustain a community of practice where we were able to take risks and learn in public. After two cycles, I conducted a member check with the principals where they reviewed the matrix of codes and my analysis of the evidence and asked them what they notice? When they saw the data on gracious space "living the spirit", two of the principals responded:

> "This appeared 13 times. Only three codes are higher. Gracious space was created. You created an agenda and created the space; we appreciated each other. It was authentic and it was intentional. It can be authentic and not intentional; sometimes we veered. The difference between what is intentional and authentic is we did not need always need norms and we used gracious space in other settings. It's all very useful. Because at the beginning we said we were going to create gracious space and I guess we are living gracious space or following the tenets. It is a part of our common practice, and we work collaboratively" (Member Check, October 9, 2018).

As a result of using operationalizing the CLE axioms through protocols, we were able to institutionalize certain practices as a way of being colleagues in the CoP space.

> Real education means to inspire people to live more abundantly, to learn to begin with life as they find it and make it better (Woodson, 1933).

Coaching with equity as a focus. Finally, as the principal supervisor, I recognized that coaching with equity as a focus meant I had to take care to differentiate observations and coaching conversations with each of the three principals, be fully aware of the specific context, and be culturally relevant. I needed to inspire them to lead more abundantly. I was fully aware of

two theoretical frames that have guided my work over my career as an educator: Dewey's (1938) criteria for experience and Freire's (1970) reminder that we need to meet people where they are to move them forward and base our work with them on their assets and knowledge and not their needs or deficits. Dewey indicates that all experiences must exhibit continuity and reciprocity. Thus, I had to differentiate support for each principal based on what I knew about each of them as the "starting point for organizing the program content of education…must be the present, existential, concrete situation" (Freire, 1970). In a phone conversation with a principal we discussed the challenges between the math department and the counselors. I asked him when the last time was they met together and he could not remember. He indicated his worry about how to navigate a hard meeting and asked for my assistance in creating the agenda. I offered to assist in facilitating the conversation and he was relieved and asked if he could hire me. He knew he wanted to have the conversation and support both groups; he did not want to appear to take sides, and he reached out for support. Previously, he would not have brought the groups together, even though we knew it was essential. My supervisor remarked that I was enabling him, but I consider that I met him where he was and supported his growth areas.

Support from Research and Practice Literature

> *One of the greatest challenges, especially for individualistic Americans, is to understand what institutions are – how we form them and how in turn they form us and to imagine that we can actually alter them for the better*. Bellah et al., 1991.

Next, I address how the research literature, particularly on the role of the principal supervisor, illuminates the findings in these ways: the principal supervisor acts as a bridge and buffer and the community of practice acted as a holding place for engaging in reflection and planning for action so that I could support principals to shift practices. As the supervisor, I felt

responsible for trying to work within an institution and imagine how to alter the experience for principals. However, the role of the institution, at times, compromised the ability of principals to fully transfer the learning from the community of practice to site leadership.

Principal supervisor as bridge, buffer, and broker. Honig and Hatch (2004) argue that what is largely missing from the research is evidence about how the principal supervisor acts as a bridge, a buffer, and a broker for school leaders in helping them make decisions. The principal supervisor bridges by connecting the principals to each other, the district staff responsible for key parts of their work, and to ideas and their values. A principal supervisor buffers by "articulating a system for filtering information, evaluating whether a decision of a system is equitable, optimizing by fostering a 'both-and' discourse, and urging constituents to focus on long term and productive solutions by maintaining transparency" (Tredway, Stephens, Leader-Picone & Hernandez, 2010, p. 15). The principal supervisor brokers decision-making by providing opportunities for problem-solving challenges, considering unintended consequences, and coaching them to make decisions based on their values and long-term goals.

Community of practice structures. The CoP gave us opportunity to operate as constructivist co-designers, identify focus of practice, develop policies and practices, and reflect on the practices using a systematic framework (Lave & Wenger, 1991). The monthly CoP became a place that we used to plan and reflect on the outcomes, to take time to think deeply about our work, and make collaborative decisions to act in concert as high school principals. In reflecting on the newcomer proposal and using adaptive leadership framework as a tool to "get on the balcony", the CoP structure and the adaptive leadership framework were complementary in terms of offering us processes and frames in which we could see the wider environment. We were able to draw on our latent and emerging funds of collective knowledge to identify the

adaptive challenge of the proposal such as developing empathy for the loss others were experiencing and engaging them in the decision-making process. We were able to distinguish between challenges that were technical or adaptive, keeping in mind the Heifetz (2009) caution: 'the most common failure in leader is produced by treating adaptive challenges as if they were technical problems" (p. 19). The newcomer proposal required an adaptive challenge, but we treated it like a technical change and the unintended consequences were grave. Because we had time in the CoP to reflect using the tool, it helped us to more thoughtfully plan moving forward on other technical issues. When we set aside time during CoP to apply the adaptive leadership framework to other challenges, we were able to engage in more thoughtful planning and learning and anticipate and prepare for reactions.

Transfer is complex. However, while leaders expressed the value of the CoP structure and the adaptive leadership frame, leaders were not able to fully transfer the use of an adaptive framework at their school sites without the support of their colleagues and/or the principal supervisor. The tension presented by immediate demands and competing priorities sometimes led the principals to make quick decisions. When we were together and I could facilitate conversations to provide a space for support and collegiality, we could productively engage in joint work and, for the moment, have a partnership in which the joint work was intentionally focused on applying the adaptive leadership principles and the principals were supported to be reflective leaders. When I made site visits, I could ask coaching questions about topics and principals could activate a reflective stance (Thessin et al., 2018). However, at times, I found it challenging as their supervisor to help them stay the path and consider issues from an adaptive lens and not opt for an immediate fix. The institutional pull to be transactional instead of transformative or technical rather than adaptive was rooted into their past experiences and how

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institutions as normative structures thwart change efforts (Heifetz, 2009). The challenges at the school site require one to be action-oriented; activating an adaptive leadership lens was difficult in the day-to-day work of the principals. However, I am encouraged by principals who are making attempts to change their practices. For example, one principal arranged a common prep for the SLC leads, and she meets weekly with them to engage in creative problem solving. She calls them a "the think tank." They have a space and place to create new norms and ways of doing the work. Another principal created a transition team that replaced her leadership team to garner new teachers and rebrand the work of the group. The third principal invited me to participate in his monthly administrative team planning session to help them use the adaptive leadership framework to address the school wide issues and create accountability. My goal is that they use the time for adaptive work, apply what we learned in COP to their site challenges, and engage their leadership teams.

Weiss (1995) asserts that high school reform is challenging because "high schools have a deep underlay of structures, rules, policy legacies, and norms. Institutions provide a set of rules, compliance procedures, and moral and ethical behavioral norms which buffer environmental influence, modify individual motives, regulate self-interested behavior, and create order and meaning" (p. 13). Bringing the principals together to think more deeply once a month resulted in collective support of each other and shared agreements in the CoP; yet, it did not transfer fully to their site when confronted by the daily exigencies of their work. Weiss (1995) argues that "hierarchy has an effect of how people act. We are caught in a web and we need to free up people to go beyond institutional culture and be more innovative" (p. 587). Transfer of learning takes time particularly when the strong force of institutional expectations pulls at principals. Principals were not always comfortable being innovative and leading differently without their

teachers' tacit approval. The context of high schools is complicated, and the role of the principal is to navigate a culture of collaboration, so it takes time to undo the institutional culture that is engrained in the schools, even though we know it is not best for students, and the data confirms it. Leading against the grain involves substantial risk-taking and clarity that we did not fully gain.

Nachmanovitch (1990) encourages us to think about how much time change takes; he speaks of a time of ripening in educative experiences. Deep and lasting change requires patience: "the inevitable price exacted by experience is that all kinds of obscuration, noise, fear and forgetting get interposed between us and our true self…we recognize that ideas and insights needed to cook over a period of time" (pp. 153, 155). While the PAR, for purposes of the dissertation is completed, the work we need to keep doing in high schools continues, and the full transfer will require constancy. The findings from the PAR cycles of inquiry and our attention to using protocols and processes that would support us to change practice set the stage for the claims and recommendations I make next.

Leadership Against the Grain: Intentionality about Interrupting Normative Practice

The intentionality of my leadership was mediated through key processes. The Community Learning Exchange processes provided glue for the entire project. I used them in the community of practice, the SLC meetings and district meetings. Because they are grounded in a set of principles that honor the wisdom of those we are working with and support learning in public as foundational to risk-taking and change, we were able to cohere the SLC goals across the districts and schools with teachers and administrators (Guajardo et al., 2015); using them helped me do what Heifetz (2009) suggests – sustain the principals over the period of risk to take on adaptive change. Secondly, the improvement sciences fishbone created understanding, in

particular, the relationship among the micro, meso and macro levels, and the driver diagram was useful in which I could continue to see the primary drivers of the SLC work, and cycles of inquiry based on the premise of Plan-Do-Study-Act; it supported my work as the co-researcher practitioner of the PAR process (Bryk et al., 2015). Finally, the community of practice framework and its tenet of using the funds of knowledge of the participants helped my ability to keep this process in mind helped me to keep grounding the work in incremental evidence and member checks so that we could stay focused as a district. While we did not attain full coherence, we have emergent coherence (Elmore, 2004; Grubb & Tredway, 2010). I returned to the frames again and again throughout the PAR; they provided the glue I needed to ground my work in the possible and continue to go against the grain of how district leadership typically occurs.

Three claims emerged as the key learning for the PAR cycles of inquiry that all center on my ability to lead against the grain with intentionality I derived from using processes that reflected my beliefs about leadership. As I sought to interrupt normative practices, we met with some successes, but, as is the story of school reform, we have more work to build fully cohesive high schools with SLCs that serve all students equitably (Elmore, 2004). The first claim deals with my role as the leader. Interrupting typical district supervisory-principal relations requires going against the grain of typical district practice. The second confirms the importance of having a framework to guide decision-making. The adaptive leadership framework provided a metacognitive and meta-affective framework that was useful, but insufficient, in principals fully transferring their reflection to school leadership practice. Finally, a district supervisor lives with the tension of being the evaluator and the coach; that tension requires the supervisor to blend

professional capital with professional accountability to achieve a balanced approach to supervising and coaching.

Interrupting typical district supervisor practices: Going against the grain. Going against the grain is a term that comes from sawing wood. When sawing against the grain, the wood often splinters. As a leader, the process of "going against the grain" meant that I interrupted the typical processes of district leadership and, while some splintering occurred, we were able to re-construct our ways of working as a CoP. However, going against the grain metaphorically means that an idea or practice may be difficult to accept as it does not comport with the usual operational culture. Instituting communities of practice and developing non-hierarchical, collegial relationships with principals is atypical for district supervisor-principal relationships and interrupts the usual practice. By modeling and using gracious space, community learning exchange pedagogies, and co-construction of learning, I systematically challenged the hierarchical model of leadership. I knew that relationships sustained by trust (non-confrontational as culturally relevant pedagogy) are critical to continuous improvement (Bryk et al., 2010). I find that, as a leader, I must honor the power of place and the wisdom of the people as a key principle of how I do the work (Guajardo et al., 2015). However, at times, the stance I took was complex in institutional structures that operated differently with expectations about leadership that I thought were unproductive (Weiss, 1995).

Slowing down to reflect. The use of adaptive leadership framework adds a key dimension to typical reflection that promotes slowing down the decision-making process to examine the work so that principals translate that to actions and inform their leadership moves. Principals need to resist applying technical solutions to adaptive problems and distinguish

challenges that are adaptive in nature. The process to understand adaptive challenges is both metacognitive and meta-affective.

The principals had to unlearn practices that did not serve them and think deeply about how they would or should respond. Principals have a "go-to strategy" of being good at solving problems for others – often precipitously and particularly with a technical problem-solving lens; that tendency to be too quick to look at solutions has implications for overall coherence because they sometimes make decisions that have unintended consequences and are incoherent within the SLC implementation (i.e. newcomer proposal). The adaptive leadership framework affirmed my beliefs, changed my leadership practices, and impacted my own leadership development (Heifetz, 1998; Heifetz, 2009). The framework enabled me to articulate my expectations, become more intentional in my practice, and provide coaching and support. I then was better able to reinforce the role of someone who listens, learns, provides support, and supervises/evaluates principals. Principals needed systematic and thoughtful coaching and supports as a regular place to reflect because it is still difficult to move beyond the institutional culture of normative practices that bind us to rules and hierarchy. Thus they had to be metacognitive and reflective to engrain a new way of understanding how to be a principal and then practicing being different, but knowing was not enough.

The principals also had to take on a meta-affective lens. That required that they look carefully at their values and ensure that decisions were made with a deeper sense of what they believed about equity as a cornerstone of their practice. Not only did they need to receive phenomena, the response to the phenomena needed to be filtered through a sense of their values – personal and organizational values that could guide them. If they did not get on the balcony and deeply interrogate decisions based on the ability to remain steadfast with a high degree of

integrity in their decisions. As Carter (1996) says, acting with integrity requires moral discernment, acting on one's beliefs grounded in values, and openly state the reasons for actions. The moral guideposts are the mark of responding in the affective domain, and through reflective practice, principals who are meta-affective can more effectively engage and guide others.

The balancing act of the supervisor: Professional accountability + professional capital. Matching professional accountability with professional capital is essential in the role of the principal supervisor (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). Either alone is not enough to improve leadership practices and improve high schools; however, the inevitable tension in the role requires attention to maintaining balance. A principal supervisor needs to communicate expectations and deliverables as well as consistently support principals to meet expectations. When pressure and support are a part of a trusting professional relationship, the supervisor can maximize the principal's performance. Developing professional capital is acquired in three areas: human capital by developing the talent of individuals; social capital by developing the collaborative power of the group; and decisional capital by using the wisdom and expertise to make sound judgements about learners that are cultivated over many years (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). I developed human capital through coaching and social capital through the processes of the focused community of practice. We continue to develop decisional capital. Decisional capital is what is needed for leaders to transfer the learning to site leadership. The adaptive leadership framework, used as grounding, can support leaders who fully develop human, social and decisional capital. Through the right blend of pressure and support and the use of effective protocols that we used in principal professional learning, SLC meetings, and district meetings, I was able to build principals' individual and collective capital.

Effective leaders move between pressure and support, building professional capital and professional accountability. The "new" or 're-informed" theory of action is the mobius loop of leadership, borrowed from the blended coaching model by Bloom et al. (2005); they use the mobius loop as a graphic for understanding how all coaching choices are interconnected. The mobius loop is a twisted cylinder with one side and one boundary; in tracing a line down the middle, it is continuous and creates a one-sided three-dimensional object and represents the leadership required for improvement. Depending on context and situation, the coach needs to maintain flexibility in the dynamic process, deciding when to be instructional and when to engage in cognitive coaching (Garmston, 1993; Knight, 2009).

In our roles as district leaders, we need to provide the right blend of pressure and support with fluidity to assist principals in solving real time challenges as adaptive leaders. I was intentional and explicit about expectations and principal professional accountability; however, I think at times the pressure was viewed from the older institutional and hierarchical frames that principals had operated in for their careers. While much of the work in the PAR focused on developing professional capital with the assumption that the learning would transfer to the site with coaching, high schools are so deeply embedded in institutional norms and practices, that without professional accountability, it was easier for principals to rely on past practices. Principals still need to fully learn to differentiate and apply technical solutions when necessary, but it is important that they move toward adaptive solutions when needed and not solve adaptive problems with technical and quick solutions that are often temporary fixes. And that could only happen if I was intentional about coaching choices (Bloom et al., 2005; Thessin et al., 2018).

<center>**Implications**</center>

In this section, I turn to larger implications, limitations and recommendations. The PAR project suggests a number of implications for research, policy, and practice. First, the research is limited to a central office leader interrogating his or her work as a co-practitioner researcher, and I was able to look and learn from the inside out. This was a study using a different methodology – participatory action research with co- practitioner researchers. Thus, the study provided an opportunity for a deep look at a slice of my professional work life to improve high schools and enlist the high school principals to go beyond the institutional culture and be innovative and risk takers to improve outcomes for students who are historically marginalized and move away from a system that is not working. After I discuss implications for research, policy and practice, I highlight the limitations of the project and recommendations for future research.

Research Implications

The research design attempted to analyze the work of three principals and the principal supervisor in understanding how leadership plays out in high schools and SLC development. There is limited research on the role of principal supervisors as co-participant researchers who are studying the work while doing the work. The context is never fully understood in many studies because they are looking from the outside in. I was able to cite evidence on the complexities of principal leadership in a traditional system and challenges with transfer due to engrained principal practices because we were in regular contact and the conversations with the principals were a part of the work. I was an insider researcher who studied my own self/practice (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Herr & Anderson, 2014; Pinnegar, 2001;), and we were able to conduct that generated grounded theory, a vehicle to generate 'middle range' or 'substantive' theories through a trustworthy process (Sutcliffe, 2016). In order to generalize the finding of this

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work, additional participant action research cycles would need to be considered to allow for transfer of leadership actions. The implication for future research suggests that we must continue the process for four to five years to see full transfer in the site level decision-making. The action research involved principals who were serving in their current roles, and further research needs to consider how principals are strategically placed to maximize their strengths. For those engaging in participatory action research, they may follow a model in Thessin et al. (2018) in which leaders were identified as not able to change, able to have some change or able to have robust change. The role of the principal is critical to the success in creating deeper learning experiences of high school students; however, many initiatives or research on high school reform rarely mentions the role of the principal as critical to a thoughtful implementation, or as an adaptive challenge. The methodological design fulfilled Herr and Anderson's (2014) key elements of action research in which co-researchers interrogate their own practices through cycles of inquiry, build a knowledge base, and used inform the literature. The research has implications for school principals, policymakers and district leaders as it explicitly identifies intentional behaviors and actions required to make meaningful improvements. It requires more principal supervisors to engage in PAR cycles and engage co-participant researchers using the communities of practice and community learning exchanges as a basis of their engagement.

Policy Implications

There are policy areas that require more emphasis to promote the work of high school transformation and to meet the needs of a new generation of learners. First, the role of high school principal requires an adaptive leader who does more than leading as a technical agent and act as cheerleader to leading the improvement efforts by engaging the staff through the distributed leadership model (Spillane, 2005); these leaders must be able to get on the balcony

and maintain disciplined attention while protecting the voices of informal leaders (Linsky, Grashow, & Heifetz, 2009). What we learned about instituting policies for the role of principal in the SLC implementation is that the relational aspects matter as much as the technical aspects of the work within a district and is important for other districts to consider (Bryk et al., 2010). A second policy implication involves the new measures of college and career readiness and the potential funding sources that are concentrated around career education. It requires a new kind of leadership that provides a safe space for risk taking, and creating guiding principles among principals and principal supervisors, and ultimately, for principals to lead at their sites. The typical policy documents do not state the importance of principals in the implementation and the joint role of principal supervisors and principals in building coherence and intentionality. A third area is the role of principal supervisors as cited in multiple Wallace Foundation reports (Corcoran et al., 2013; Goldring, Porter, Murphy, Elliott, & Cravens, 2009; Honig & Hatch, 2004; Mitgang, 2013) on the emerging role of principal supervisors to strengthen their role to lead the principals, reduce principal supervisors span of control, and strengthen central office structures to support. District office must rethink their roles so principal supervisors can create spaces to address adaptive challenges of high schools if they want schools to meet the needs of the 21st century and prepare students for post-secondary success. This means attention to the ratio of supervisor to numbers of principals. Coaching principals, differentiating the support, and partnering in joint work is the role of principal supervisors that requires critical policy changes for school districts who are bold enough to lead (Aguilar, 2016; Superville, 2018; Wise & Jacobo, 2010).

Practice Implications

The ECU focus of practice framework was critical to guiding the PAR and ensured that the research was asset-based and equity-focused, two criteria that other practice-based research efforts should hold as central to their outcomes. The research methodology could be replicated in cycle of inquiry processes in districts where a principal supervisor is engaged with principals in a safe space in documenting and analyzing evidence to learn and improve. I was able to identify root causes and adhere to the improvement science principles and CLE axioms as a way to engage others, and to help me deeply understand and address some of the key challenges in my role as principal supervisor and co-constructing learning for the high school principals. This offers a process to fully engage in using evidence and a research-based framework at the district office and at school sites.

Limitations

Having three people in the CPR was a small sample size for the community of practice and affected the outcomes. Thus, the sample size was small and, therefore, the results may not be fully representative. The relationship between principal and principal supervisor can inhibit the trust or the ability to be vulnerable and take risks, particularly if the principal is not performing well in other areas of the position. More research is needed on the impact of the adaptive leadership framework on principals' decision-making, particularly with the focus on deeper learning and college, career and civic readiness required of high school students.

Leadership Development

This section describes what I learned about role of principal and principal supervisor and ways to approach that work that is transformative. The principal supervisor needs to establish expectations for the leaders with equity mindset, create a gracious space for working together to

build trust and push each other, and support leaders to fulfill those expectations. Going against the grain in a small school district means prioritizing time on professional learning and professional accountability while partnering with district office leaders to create effective and efficient operational systems. Many experienced high school principals want to be left alone to lead their school and perceive district leaders as providing technical assistance or compliance officers. My goal was to be intentional about leadership development and expectations, prioritize adaptive and instructional leadership development, and practice non-judgmental coaching.

Intentionality

Because I am a reflective leader, a part of my work has been to think more deeply about leadership actions, including the use of new pedagogies throughout the PAR project. In analyzing the evidence throughout the PAR inquiry cycles, I noticed intentionality in my work to help the high school principals slow down, be more reflective and thoughtful leaders by developing the community of practice as power of place and wisdom of people and applying the adaptive leadership framework to their problems of practice as way to look at root causes rather than traditional "fixes." My intentionality became clearer when I presented the adaptive leadership framework at the CoP (CoP, January, 2018); the principals were able to address their leadership challenges in a new way. When I engaged in the member check strategy with the principals, it was validating to learn that reflection and gracious space codes were some of the most common practices utilized in CoP and site visit coaching. We noticed other codes that did not surface in the evidence such as willingness to share or validation of others' ideas. The principals contend that they intentionally created a safe and supportive environment in the CoP because of the norms we established through gracious space. The two areas that I have grown as a leader are: (1) providing intentional time and space for principals within the community of

practice to focus on their o leadership development, and (2) being less judgmental in my

coaching stance by promoting authentic dialogue about real challenges at their sites yet be more

explicit about expectations for their leadership actions. I maintain that the transformation has not

been a single epiphany or sighting (McDonald, 1996), but to paraphrase Atul Gawande (2014),

the change has been incremental over time. I discuss the two areas I have furthered my

leadership development and growth over time and how the project has influenced my

professional work.

Prioritizing Leadership Development

Using CLE axioms and pedagogies, including gracious space has been key to building

trust in the CoP. Figure 29 represents the key elements in leadership that have been important to

me and key to the leadership development work I lead through the PAR, particularly elements of

gracious space.

The theoretical underpinnings of gracious space is that when people feel safe and valued,

they are better able to work collectively on change initiatives, rather than when they feel

threatened and/or insignificant. It fostered the ability to be a "warm demander" of a colleague

because the spirit of trust was fostered and the ability to them work through difficult ideas (one

form of invite the stranger) is supported by trusting relationships (Grace, 2011). They cited

examples of transfer of practices such as calling each other for support or advice after work

while in the supermarket, achieving consensus for the good of the group and engaging in difficult

conversations. One principal stated: "I am going to speak my truth, I said my peace, and no one

reacted defensively" (meeting notes, March 21, 2018).

Most principals experienced their supervisors as managers of compliance and the

recipients of checklists. I've prioritized building trust, building teams, and coaching as key in my
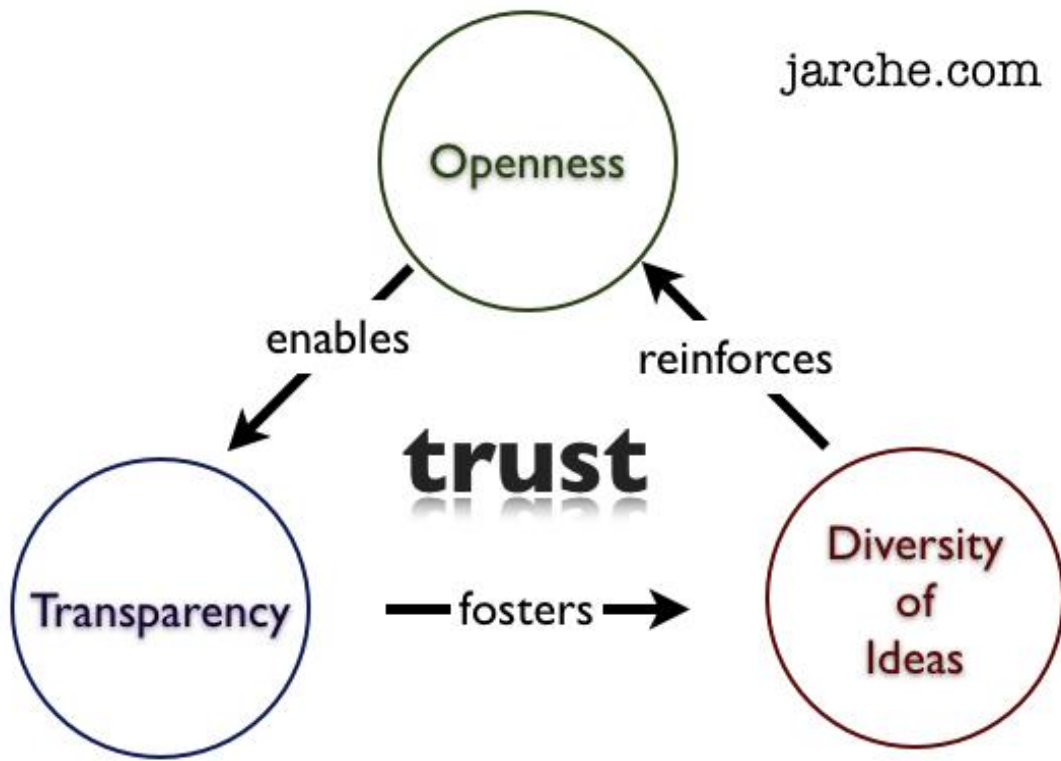
Figure 29. Trust as key to leadership development.

role as supervisor, and what was recently revealed in the Wallace report (Superville, 2018) was: Principals Say Coaching, Not Compliance Is What They Want from Central Office. The Wallace Foundation report supports the findings that by providing intentional time and space for principals to focus on their own leadership development using CLE pedagogies, gracious space and the adaptive leadership framework is essential and what principals want. It was foundational to my beliefs around leadership and reinforced in the eight years working at UC Berkeley, Principal Leadership Institute (Tredway, 2002) in the principal preparation program. I worked for the last nine years as a principal supervisor in two districts and supervised as many as twenty-five principals at one time. I was fortunate to supervise seven principals in the current district. Although in the current system as a whole, compliance is prioritized over instructional leadership and meetings emphasize technical assistance over classroom practices. That's what I push up against on a daily basis. One high school principal recently said to me, "I know exactly your priorities; instructional leadership and successful small learning communities" (coaching visit notes, September 30, 2017). We've worked together for four years and was glad to hear that she was able to articulate areas I consistently focus, given the competing priorities.

Non-Judgmental Supervision

We are experienced leaders; thus, being non-judgmental is probably impossible, but it is possible to reserve judgment and proceed with coaching practices that recognize the right starting point and coach from the leader's assets (Freire, 1970). Secondly, my goal was being less judgmental in my coaching stance so the principals could open up and share the challenges at their sites. However, I needed to balance a non-judgmental stance with explicit expectations for leadership actions. I needed to stay true to my beliefs and values, continue to listen to people who are closest to the work, and collaborate with teachers and principals around improving the

teaching and learning in each classroom. However, as I dedicated time and resource to building capacity in others, and trusted that will contextualize for their setting, I needed to follow up with each principal to ensure their follow-through.

Conclusion

"By making the lives of people around you better, leadership provides meaning in life. It creates purpose." Linsky

I would go further to say that making the lives of people who have been historically marginalized better, leadership provides meaning in life. The reason I engaged in this work is because high schools needed to become more engaging places for students -- places of rigor, relevance and relationships. Principals and principal supervisors are critical for improving the lives of children and adults in the school and my research about how my role as principal supervisor demonstrates how intentional and purposeful interactions with principals can establish the conditions for improving outcomes for the students. The Theory IN Action that resulted from the emerging themes was to "go against the grain" of traditional district office leadership, be intentional and equity-focused in my leadership, and match professional accountability with professional capital. We created the structures and pedagogies collectively and individually to get to the Theory IN Action. With the vision and structures of the community of practices, principals were able to be more thoughtful about their decisions and built trusting relationships with each other; we began to observe transfer to site practices. What we achieved in the CoP was collective work, and coaching was instrumental to support transfer to the site. The coaching allowed me to differentiate support by balancing pressure and support. Ultimately the three principals and I put in place structures for cohesiveness and alignment across the high schools and used small learning communities as a vehicle for change.

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The PAR project has influenced my professional and personal work by compelling me to learn new pedagogies and practices that support my foundational beliefs about how adults learn and improve. I remain steady in the work and continue to find allies who believe in the moral imperative of equitable and adaptive leadership. The work with PAR has served me well as a leader, kept me grounded in being a lifelong learner, and remains intellectually, morally, and emotionally challenging to my own growth and development as a leader for social justice. Although there have been and will continue to be challenges, I fully engaged in the work. I knew that the project required that I be a risk-taker so that I could continue to learn and be a more effective leader.

"However gentle your style, however careful your strategy, however sure you may be that you are on the right track, leading is risky business." Heifetz

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APPENDIX A: INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL LETTER

EAST CAROLINA UNIVERSITY
University & Medical Center Institutional Review Board
4N-64 Brody Medical Sciences Building· Mail Stop 682
600 Moye Boulevard · Greenville, NC 27834
Office 252-744-2914 · Fax 252-744-2284 ·
www.ecu.edu/ORIC/irb

Notification of Continuing Review Approval: Expedited

From: Social/Behavioral IRB
To: Janette Hernandez
CC:
    Matthew Militello
Date: 8/3/2018
Re: CR00007098
    UMCIRB 17-001478
    High Schools Uncontained

The continuing review of your expedited study was approved. Approval of the study and any consent form(s) is for the period of 8/3/2018 to 8/2/2019. This research study is eligible for review under expedited category #7. The Chairperson (or designee) deemed this study no more than minimal risk.

Changes to this approved research may not be initiated without UMCIRB review except when necessary to eliminate an apparent immediate hazard to the participant. All unanticipated problems involving risks to participants and others must be promptly reported to the UMCIRB. The investigator must submit a continuing review/closure application to the UMCIRB prior to the date of study expiration. The Investigator must adhere to all reporting requirements for this study.

Approved consent documents with the IRB approval date stamped on the document should be used to consent participants (consent documents with the IRB approval date stamp are found under the Documents tab in the study workspace).

The approval includes the following items:

Document	Description
Adult consent form(0.02)	Consent Forms
Interview protocol(0.01)	Interview/Focus Group Scripts/Questions
J.Hernandez proposal(0.01)	Study Protocol or Grant Application

The Chairperson (or designee) does not have a potential for conflict of interest on this study.

IRB00000705 East Carolina U IRB #1 (Biomedical) IORG0000418
IRB00003781 East Carolina U IRB #2 (Behavioral/SS) IORG0000418

Graduate Profile

The San Lorenzo Unified School District graduate profile represents a set of attributes to guide TK-12 students toward achieving a strong academic foundation that prepares them for life, work, and study beyond high school. For the district, it serves as a tool to assess the extent to which we are accomplishing our vision and to determine future priorities.

I. College and Career Ready
by displaying:

- Mastery of core knowledge as outlined by the California Standards.
- Ability to use core knowledge for further inquiry and exploration in a variety of fields and areas of interest.
- Transferable skills that support future success in college such as bilingualism, critical thinking, teamwork, etc.
- The ability to navigate and explore college and career opportunities.
- Clearly articulated post graduate plan.

II. Socially and Civically Engaged
by displaying:

- A clear understanding of self, personal needs, and identity.
- The ability to be independent thinkers who are resilient, empathetic, healthy, and collaborative.
- An aptitude to critically analyze information with which to make informed decisions.
- Cultural competence and value of/for diversity.
- Knowledge and confidence to be an up stander.
- A disposition to act as agents of change for social justice.

III. Effective Communicators
by displaying:

- Proficiency to listen with purpose and intent.
- Skills to articulate ideas clearly and appropriately for the audience.
- Negotiation and resolution strategies.
- Capability to give and receive feedback.
- Effective use of written language supported with evidence.

IV. Creative and Innovative
by displaying:

- Visionary solutions to problems.
- Ability to evaluate the effectiveness of a solution.
- Capacity to respond to real world challenges.

V. Technologically Proficient and Responsible
by displaying:

- Computational, research, and information fluency.
- Responsible digital citizenship and appropriate use of social media.
- Ability to engage with new technology.

Board Approved 12/1/16

APPENDIX C: METAPHORS FOR THE GP DOMAINS BY SLC CORE TEAMS

College, Career Readiness is like [a sailboat being built]
because
- build/identify
- plan/navigate
- explore!
Repeat!
Just keep sailing! Just keep sailing!

Socially and Civically Engaged is like [a tree] (an upstander)
because
- they have roots in their community
- they are independent thinkers, as each tree is unique
- they're resilient + strong (tall + proud) like the trunk, but flexible → move in wind
- like there is more than one tree in the forest + they coexist peacefully
- give oxygen into the air
- provide safe haven + eco system, protection, you can lean on a tree

Effective Communicators are like somatic body cells! [eukaryotic cell]
because all the descriptors of an effective communicator can be compared to all the working organelles within a cell. Effective communicator would be like a cell but it can take on the role and transition from one situation to another
Examples:
- Cell division → email → proficient purpose, intent
- nucleus + ribosomes → articulate idea manipulate → action!

Creative and Innovative is like [square, wheel, bicycle]
because
our students are growing up in a changing world and need to learn adaptability.

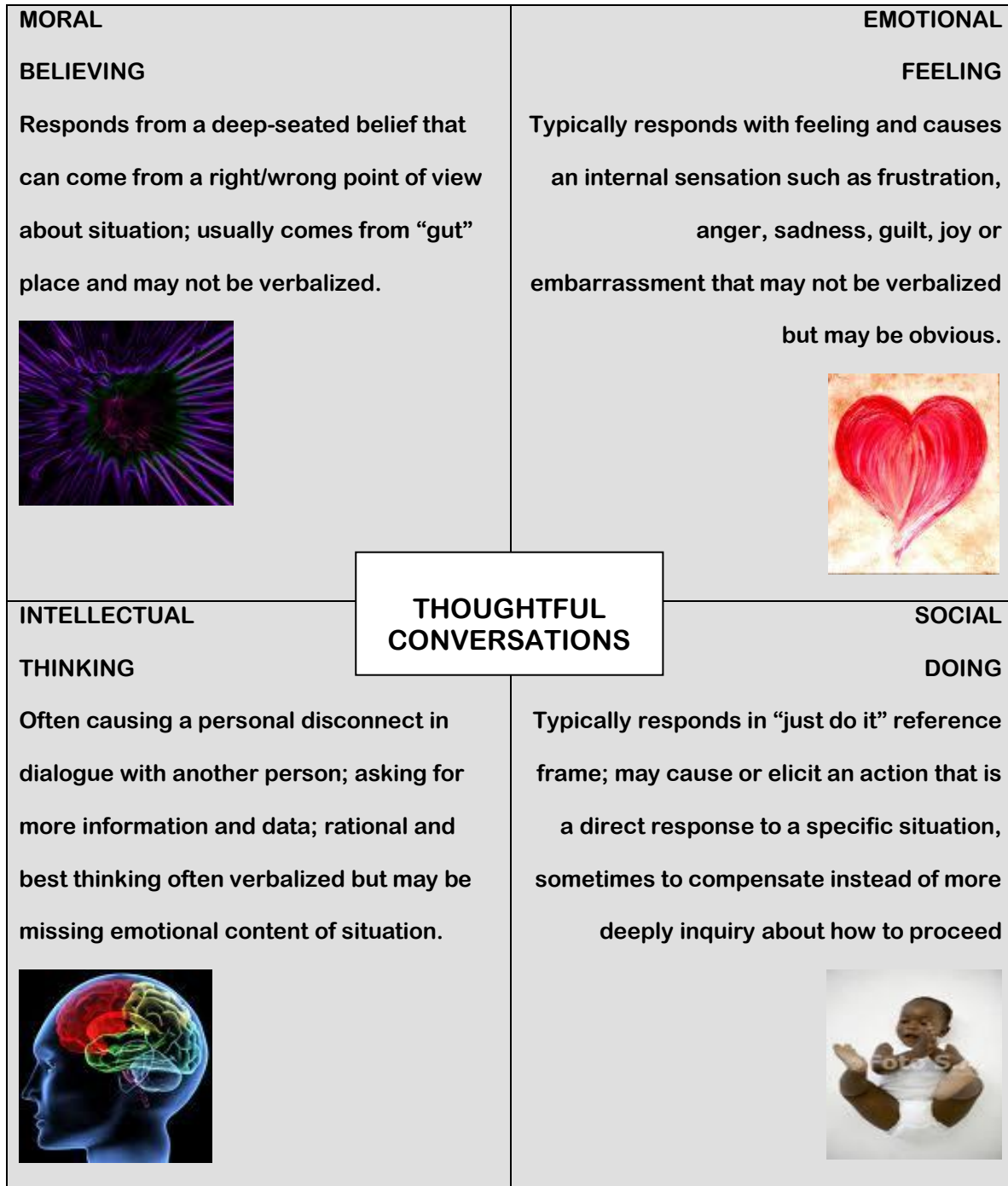**Technologically Proficient and Responsible is like** a S.M.A.R.T refrigerator
because
- what goes inside requires informational + research literacy good vs bad
- "fruits" of knowledge
- nourishment
- monitors use → temperature
- "Pinterest" worthy ingredients inside
- must use appropriately for health

APPENDIX D: LOGIC MODEL FOR CYCLE OF INQUIRY

Cycles	Structured learning and pedagogies	Researcher Methodology	Anticipated Outcomes
Cycle one- fall 2017 Use (COP) with principals to identify problems of practice, implement learning exchange pedagogies and structures, and engage in coaching at the site to meet specific needs.	Peer learning LLE protocols Coaching Community of practice Fishbowl Journey lines	Analysis of Memos, and emails using content analysis. Analysis of interview to identify needs. Use qualitative data to plan cycle two.	Identify strengths and barriers. Shared leadership and planning for 2018-19. Integrating WBL goals into SLC's. Principal is leading vision of SLCs.
Cycle two- winter 2018 Use COP to identify barriers with principals as leads. Use analysis of memos to plan with the principals and use the vision as guide for decision making process. We will co construct the decision-making process and I will coach each leader based on their context and needs. Review District Office policies and practices to support SLCs in vision and resource alignment.	Peer learning LLE protocols Community of practice Coaching	Analysis of memos using content analysis and grounded theory as iterative process Use qualitative data to plan cycle three. Broad scan and analysis of reports and documents to inform practice.	Teacher and Principal driven SLC's that district office supports and leads the vision of the work. Level of conversation among principals is critical, reflective and equity principled.
Cycle three- fall 2018 Analyze data, reflect, and readjust for identifying leadership skills and practices of co-practitioners. Review District Office policies and practices to support SLC's in vision and resource alignment.	Peer learning LLE protocols Community of practice Coaching	Analysis of memos using content analysis and use of grounded theory. Use data to inform findings from research question. Analysis of final interview to identify critical leadership practices that promote effective SLC's as vehicle for change.	A vision and goals document with district office to integrate work-based learning embedded in core of school day. Lead with distributive leadership model both in District and school sites

APPENDIX E: THE COMPASS OF THOUGHTFUL CONVERSATIONS

MORAL **BELIEVING** Responds from a deep-seated belief that can come from a right/wrong point of view about situation; usually comes from "gut" place and may not be verbalized. 	**EMOTIONAL** **FEELING** Typically responds with feeling and causes an internal sensation such as frustration, anger, sadness, guilt, joy or embarrassment that may not be verbalized but may be obvious.
INTELLECTUAL **THINKING** Often causing a personal disconnect in dialogue with another person; asking for more information and data; rational and best thinking often verbalized but may be missing emotional content of situation. 	**SOCIAL** **DOING** Typically responds in "just do it" reference frame; may cause or elicit an action that is a direct response to a specific situation, sometimes to compensate instead of more deeply inquiry about how to proceed

THOUGHTFUL CONVERSATIONS

Note: Adapted from *(Singleton & Linton, 2006; revised by Hernandez & Tredway, 2009).*

APPENDIX F: MATRIX OF CODES DERIVED FROM EVIDENCE

IN PAR CYCLE THREE

Symbol	Category /Principle	Code	Site visit	memo	Joint work & COP	Total
A	protect	Advocacy	0	2	2	4
CB	Identify	Changing beliefs/ explicitness of core beliefs	0	3	3	6
CP	create	Changing practices	3	3	2	8
CH	maintain	Characterizing	3	0	2	5
CR	balcony	Collaborative culture- relationships	0	3	6	9
CT	create	Communication-transparency	2	0	3	5
C	give	Creates	0	2	3	5
DI	balcony	Data based inquiry	4	0	2	6
D	Identify protect	Discernment	0	0	2	2
E	identify	Equity and social justice	7	1	6	14
EV	give	Evaluates				0
IS	Cook create	Invite the stranger	2	1	3	6
L	Create identify maintain protect	Living the spirit /responding/valuing/willingness to share and validates	2	1	4	7
OP	maintain	Optimizing	3	2	10	15
OG	Maintain identify	Organizing/prioritizing	4	0	3	7
PP	Give	Paraphrasing		1		1
PA	Create protect	Presence/attitude	1	1	2	4
RP	identify	Reflecting on practice/receiving	6	3	4	12
RT	Cook maintain	Risk taking	2	2	1	5
SB	Give	System building	10	2	10	22
TR	identify	Technical/rational Operationalizing	13	0	8	21
TP	cook	Theory to practice	1	1	6	8
V	balcony	Vision-big picture thinking	7	1	7	15

APPENDIX G: 2017 - 2018 COLLEGE AND CAREER DATA SUMMARY

The College and Career Indicator (CCI) is a complex indicator that can be met in a variety of ways. The chart below visualizes the possibilities. The required items (green) must be met by the student. In measures A, C, D, and E there are also choices (blue). One of these choices must be met. The rectangles with a dark blue border indicate both of the criteria within it must be satisfied for it to count as one of the choices. See the following page for the data summary of your district.

Measures	Required Items			Choices			
A	High School Diploma	CTE Pathway Completion		Dual Enrollment 1 semester Passing Grade CTE or Academic Subject	Smarter Balanced Level 3 Standard Met in ELA or Math	Smarter Balanced Level 2 Nearly Met in the other subject	
B	High School Diploma	Smarter Balanced Level 3 Standard Met in ELA	Smarter Balanced Level 3 Standard Met in Math				
C	High School Diploma			Dual Enrollment 2 semesters Passing grades in CTE subject	Dual Enrollment 2 semesters Passing grades in academic subject	Dual Enrollment 1 semester passing grade in a CTE subject	Dual Enrollment 1 semester passing grade in an academic subject
D	High School Diploma			Advanced Placement Passing scores on 2 exams	International Baccalaureate Passing scores on 2 exams		
E	High School Diploma	a-g UC/CSU criteria met		CTE Pathway Completion	Dual Enrollment 1 semester in an academic or CTE subject	Smarter Balanced Level 3 Standard Met in ELA or Math	Smarter Balanced Level 2 Standard Nearly Met in the other subject

☐ = required   ☐ = a choice   ☐ = a choice, but both items within it must be satisfied.

School(s)	% SED	% EL	2015-2016 Grade Rate	% Prepared on CCI	% Of Those Prepared Who Satisfied:					% Approaching Prepared on CCI	% Of Those Approaching Prepared Who Satisfied:				% Not Prepared on CCI
					Measure A	Measure B	Measure C	Measure D	Measure E		Measure A	Measure B	Measure C	Measure D	
	73.2	36.3	92.2%	36.7	28.5	45.9	0	33.3	84.8	30.1	60.2	22.2	0	25.3	33.2
	64.4	29.5	95.7%	40.2	28.3	50.6	0	44	82.5	31.7	58	27.5	0	22.9	28.1
	81.8	27.3	90.9%	50	36.4	27.3	0	0	90.9	36.4	62.5	12.5	0	25	13.6
	85.2	46.6	88.0%	31.2	28	39.8	0	18.3	88.2	27.5	63.4	14.6	0	29.3	41.3

Adaptive Leadership Framework Seven principles (Heifetz, 1998)	Codes from the research
Get on the Balcony A place from which to observe the patterns in the wider environment as well as what is over on the horizon.	• Collaborative culture & relationships • Data-based Inquiry • Vision/big picture thinking
Identify the Adaptive Challenge A challenge for which there is no ready-made technical answer. A challenge requiring the gap between values, beliefs, attitudes and behaviors to be addressed	• Changing belief • Discernment • Equity and social justice lens • Living the spirit • Organizing/prioritizing • Reflecting on practice
Create the Holding Environment May be a physical space in which adaptive work can be done. The relationship or wider social space in which adaptive work can be accomplished	• Changing practices • Communication • Inviting the stranger • Presence/attitude
Cook the Conflict Create the heat; Sequence & pace the work Regulate the distress	• Inviting the stranger • Risk taking • Theory to practice
Maintain Disciplined Attention Work avoidance Use conflict positively Keep people focused	• Characterizing • Living the spirit • Optimizing-Risk taking • Technical rational/operationalizing
Give back the work Resume responsibility Use their knowledge Support their efforts	• Creates • Invite the stranger • System building • technical rational/operationalizing
Protect the Voices of Leadership Ensuring everyone's voice is heard is essential for willingness to experiment and learn Leaders have to provide cover to staff who point to the internal contradictions of the organization	• Advocacy • Presence/attitude • Living the spirit • Discernment • Optimizing • System building